

# SAMUEL THE PROPHET



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.

1 Samuel 3:9 (KJV)

**BY**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION. . . . .	Page 2	1 Samuel 8:1-3	Page 35
		1 Samuel 8:4-9	Page 35
		1 Samuel 8:10-18	Page 36
		1 Samuel 8:19-22	Page 37
CHAPTER ONE. . . . .	Page 3	CHAPTER NINE. . . . .	Page 38
1 Samuel 1:1-2	Page 3	1 Samuel 9:1-2	Page 38
1 Samuel 1:3-5	Page 3	1 Samuel 9:3-10	Page 39
1 Samuel 1:8	Page 4	1 Samuel 9:11-14	Page 40
1 Samuel 1:9-11	Page 5	1 Samuel 9:15-21	Page 41
1 Samuel 1:12-18	Page 6	1 Samuel 9:22-27	Page 42
1 Samuel 1:19-20	Page 7	1 Samuel 10:1-8	Page 44
1 Samuel 1:21-23	Page 7	1 Samuel 10:9-16	Page 47
1 Samuel 1:24-28	Page 7	1 Samuel 10:17-24	Page 48
CHAPTER TWO. . . . .	Page 9	1 Samuel 10:25-27	Page 50
1 Samuel 2:11	Page 9	CHAPTER ELEVEN. . . . .	Page 51
1 Samuel 2:12-17	Page 10	1 Samuel 11:1-4	Page 51
1 Samuel 2:22-25	Page 11	1 Samuel 11:5-11	Page 52
1 Samuel 2:26	Page 13	1 Samuel 11:12-15	Page 54
CHAPTER THREE. . . . .	Page 16	CHAPTER TWELVE. . . . .	Page 55
1 Samuel 3:1	Page 16	1 Samuel 12:1-5	Page 55
1 Samuel 3:2-9	Page 16	1 Samuel 12:6-11	Page 56
1 Samuel 3:10-14	Page 17	1 Samuel 12:12-18	Page 57
1 Samuel 3:15-18	Page 17	1 Samuel 12:19-25	Page 58
1 Samuel 3:19-21	Page 18	CHAPTER THIRTEEN. . . . .	Page 61
CHAPTER FOUR. . . . .	Page 20	1 Samuel 13:1-7	Page 61
1 Samuel 4:1-4	Page 20	1 Samuel 13:8-14	Page 64
1 Samuel 4:5-9	Page 21	1 Samuel 13:15-18	Page 65
1 Samuel 4:10-11	Page 21	1 Samuel 13:19-23	Page 66
1 Samuel 4:12-18	Page 22	CHAPTER FOURTEEN. . . . .	Page 67
1 Samuel 4:19-22	Page 23	1 Samuel 14:1-5	Page 67
CHAPTER FIVE. . . . .	Page 24	1 Samuel 14:6-15	Page 69
1 Samuel 5:1-5	Page 24	1 Samuel 14:16-23	Page 71
1 Samuel 5:6-9	Page 25	1 Samuel 14:24-30	Page 72
1 Samuel 5:10-11	Page 25	1 Samuel 14:31-35	Page 73
CHAPTER SIX. . . . .	Page 27	1 Samuel 14:36-42	Page 74
1 Samuel 6:1-5	Page 27	1 Samuel 14:43-46	Page 75
1 Samuel 6:6-9	Page 28	1 Samuel 14:47-52	Page 76
1 Samuel 6:10-12	Page 29	CHAPTER FIFTEEN. . . . .	Page 77
1 Samuel 6:13-16	Page 29	1 Samuel 15:1-9	Page 77
1 Samuel 6:17-21	Page 30	1 Samuel 15:10-23	Page 79
CHAPTER SEVEN. . . . .	Page 32	1 Samuel 15:24-35	Page 81
1 Samuel 7:1-12	Page 32	CHAPTER SIXTEEN. . . . .	Page 84
1 Samuel 7:13-17	Page 34	1 Samuel 16:1-11	Page 84
CHAPTER EIGHT. . . . .	Page 35		

1 Samuel 16:12-23	Page 85		
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN. . . . .	Page 88		CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE. . . . .
1 Samuel 17:1-16	Page 88		Page 130
1 Samuel 17:17-27	Page 90		CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX. . . . .
1 Samuel 17:28-40	Page 91		Page 131
1 Samuel 17:41-58	Page 94		CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN. . . . .
			Page 132
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN. . . . .	Page 97		CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT. . . . .
1 Samuel 18:1-9	Page 97		Page 133
1 Samuel 18:10-19	Page 98		CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE. . . . .
1 Samuel 18:20-29	Page 100		Page 134
1 Samuel 18:30	Page 101		CHAPTER THIRTY. . . . .
			Page 135
CHAPTER NINETEEN. . . . .	Page 102		CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE. . . . .
1 Samuel 19:1-3	Page 102		Page 136
1 Samuel 19:4-7	Page 102		REFERENCES
1 Samuel 19:8-10	Page 103		. . . . .
1 Samuel 19:11-17	Page 103		Page 137
1 Samuel 19:18-24	Page 105		
			BIBLIOLOGY. . . . .
			Page 143
CHAPTER TWENTY. . . . .	Page 107		
1 Samuel 20:1-11	Page 108		
1 Samuel 20:12-17	Page 109		
1 Samuel 20:18-23	Page 111		
1 Samuel 20:24-34	Page 111		
1 Samuel 20:35-42	Page 113		
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE. . . . .	Page 115		
1 Samuel 21:1-6	Page 115		
1 Samuel 21:8-9	Page 116		
1 Samuel 21:10-15	Page 117		
CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO. . . . .	Page 118		
1 Samuel 22:1-5	Page 118		
1 Samuel 22:6-10	Page 119		
1 Samuel 22:11-13	Page 119		
1 Samuel 22:14-19	Page 120		
1 Samuel 22:20-23	Page 122		
CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE. . . . .	Page 123		
1 Samuel 23:1-5	Page 123		
1 Samuel 23:6-14	Page 124		
1 Samuel 23:14-29	Page 125		
CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR. . . . .	Page 127		
1 Samuel 30:1-6	Page 127		
1 Samuel 30:7-10	Page 127		
1 Samuel 30:11-21	Page 128		
1 Samuel 30:21-31	Page 129		

## INTRODUCTION

Before beginning, it would be proper to give credit for the cover picture to:

<http://thebiblerevival.com/clipart/>

As far as an introduction to the book is considered, it should be known that I Samuel and II Samuel are but one book. The content was too much to put on a single scroll so it was divided into two scrolls. In that sense, I and II Kings might also be appended. In the Septuagint the four books are named I Kings, II Kings, III Kings, and IV kings. But I shall stick with Samuel.

If you have been in many of my Bible studies, you might guess that the "el" at the end of "Samuel" is the name for God (Elohim). **שְׁמׁוּאֵל** = shemûêl. The name means "name of God" or "head of God."<sup>1</sup>

While Eli the high priest was judging Israel, and at the time when Samson was beginning to fight against the Philistines, a pious Israelitish woman prayed to the Lord for a son (vv. 1-18).  
Keil and Delitzsch

According to the above, this book begins while Samson was delivering Israel.

Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee.

And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock. And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith. And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramathlehi.

Judges 15:11-17 (KJV)

The Book of Judges ends with,

*In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

Judges 21:25 (NASB)

The Book of Samuel will end with a king in Israel. But it will not be an improvement! The book ends with David as a dying king. The book the follows (I Kings) begins with,

*Now King David was old, advanced in age; and they covered him with clothes, but he could not keep warm. So his servants said to him, "Let them seek a young virgin for my lord the king, and let her attend the king and become his nurse; and let her lie in your bosom, that my lord the king may keep warm." So they searched for a beautiful girl throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. The girl was very beautiful; and she became the king's nurse and served him, but the king did not cohabit with her.*

1 Kings 1:1-4 (NASB)

So, this book deals with the ministry of Samuel, Saul, and David

<sup>1</sup>Complete Word Study Dictionary

**CHAPTER ONE**

Now there was a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. He had two wives: the name of one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

1 Samuel 1:1-2 (NASB)

The book begins in the region between Samara and Judah as shown on the map. Who Elkanah was we can only gain from this passage, אלקנה = Elkanan is a name meaning "God has created, or taken possession"<sup>2</sup> This man had two wives. According to the teachings of the Word, a man is supposed to have only one wife. But, then, what can I say about people like David and, especially, Solomon?

The Hebrew names give us no insight into the two wives. One had children but poor Hannah had none. It was even worse in those days to have no children than it is now because the child (or children) were their "Social Security" in their old age.

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. 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.

1 Samuel 1:3-5 (KJV)

The location of Shiloh is given below.

<sup>2</sup>Brown-Driver-Briggs

Then they said, Behold, there is a feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly in a place which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonan.

Judges 21:19 (KJV)

It is said that he went to sacrifice to "The LORD of hosts" This title is found quite frequently in Isaiah and some of the Minor Prophets.



Yahweh-Sabaoth "The Lord of hosts" (1 Sam. 1:3; Jer. 11:20; cp. 1 Sam. 17:45). This can also be rendered "the Lord Almighty." It represents God's power over the nations and was closely tied to Shiloh, to the ark of the covenant, and to prophecy. The title designates God as King and Ruler of Israel, its

armies, its temple, and of the entire universe.  
Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary.

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The name is probably used here, as noted above, because he went up to Shiloh. As he did this, he would give not only to the Lord but to his wives as well.

*The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.* Dr. McGee made an observation here that I agree with fully.

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This verse disturbed me for a long time. Why in the world did Samuel have to tell us that the sons of Eli were at the tabernacle? Later on we will find out. Going to worship God at the tabernacle was not all that you might suppose it to be. Actually it was a dangerous place to be, because these sons of Eli were "sons of Belial," or sons of the devil, if you please.

Some churches are the worst places you can be in and the most dangerous places for you. I have heard people say concerning the Upper Room, "How wonderful to have been there with Jesus!" Would it have been? Do you know who was in the Upper Room? Satan! He was not invited, but he was there. The record tells us that Satan entered into Judas. The Upper Room was the most dangerous place to be in Jerusalem that night. So, going to worship God had its difficulties in Samuel's day. Evil was present there in the persons of Eli's sons. It is interesting that this is mentioned at this juncture in 1 Samuel.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

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One exception to the above statement - Eli was an old man and so the two sons were the ones that Elkanah had to deal with.

*He gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:* Each person had to have a sacrifice to offer. Thus a number of portions were given to Peninnah so each would have a portion. BUT, *But unto*

*Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.* Since she needed only one portion and since she was childless, she was given more than her share to make up for her barrenness. I doubt that this helped very much!

*He loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.* Are we to understand that the Lord purposely kept her from having children or is this "just an expression?" This is said twice.

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*But he gave a double portion to Hannah, for he loved her even though the Lord had kept her from conceiving. Her rival would taunt her severely just to provoke her, because the Lord had kept Hannah from conceiving.*

1 Samuel 1:5-6 (HCSB)

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The author of Hebrews wrote,

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*But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way. For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.*

Hebrews 6:9-10 (NASB)

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God had not "forgotten" Hannah in leaving her childless - He had something better for her. In many churches today, when children are dedicated, the "Prayer of Hannah" is read. Have you ever heard "the prayer of Peninnah read?" God was going to reward Hannah.

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*Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"*

1 Samuel 1:8 (NASB)

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This sounds like a very weak response on the part of Elkanah. He may have been a great husband but that never takes the place of a

child.

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Elkanah's attempt to console Hannah is weak. While their relationship on a human level could be argued to meet Hannah's emotional needs, there is much more involved here. First, there is the social stigma of barrenness. Second, there is the extension of the family into the future. Children were relied upon to care for parents in their old age, to provide proper burial and to carry on their memory. In some cases it was believed that one's comfort in the afterlife was dependent on provisions carried out by succeeding generations. Hannah's status in society and hope for the future are dismal. These concerns give Elkanah's well-meaning question an empty ring.

Bible Background Commentary

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*Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. She, greatly distressed, prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. She made a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head."*

1 Samuel 1:9-11 (NASB)

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The following, I think, best explains Eli's situation here.

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Eli was perhaps too advanced in years to continue officiating, but he could still serve a public relations function, greeting worshipers at the entrance and offering advice or instruction.

Bible Background Commentary

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*She, greatly distressed, prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.* The tone here would suggest that she was exceptionally distressed on this particular day. Perhaps the following expresses her situation better.

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*Deeply hurt, Hannah prayed to the Lord and wept with many tears.*

1 Samuel 1:10 (HCSB)

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*She made a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head."*

Even though there are many people who do not keep vows, I don't think it is necessary to explain what a vow is.

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*And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name. And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'"*

Judges 13:3-7 (NKJV)

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Samson is the most notable Nazirite (Not Nazarite). His mother was also barren and then God informed her that she would give birth and that the son would be a Nazirite. So this is what Hannah does.

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During the period covered by his vow, the Nazirite kept three special laws. First, he

refused wine and anything that was likely to produce it, to demonstrate his refusal of life's enjoyments and to avoid any possibility of drunkenness. Second, he let his hair grow long, as an open sign to all that he was living under the conditions of a Nazirite vow. Third, he avoided anything dead, to emphasize to himself and to others the holiness that his service for God demanded (Num 6:3-8).

The AMG Concise Bible Dictionary.

It seems a bit strange that she longs so much for a son and then prays, if God will give her one, she will, in effect, give him back! But, Nazirite or not, he still would be her son. In addition, she would have, at least, the joy of bringing him up.

*Now it came about, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli was watching her mouth. As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk. Then Eli said to her, "How long will you make yourself drunk? Put away your wine from you." But Hannah replied, "No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord. "Do not consider your maidservant as a worthless woman, for I have spoken until now out of my great concern and provocation." Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him." She said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.*

1 Samuel 1:12-18 (NASB)

Eli may have been old and in partial retirement, but he was still observant. As Hannah prayed, *Eli was watching her mouth.* "I wonder what she is saying?" he may have thought. According to the text, he thought she might be drunk. Why he would think that, I do not know.

The suspicion of the aged priest seems to indicate that the vice of intemperance was neither uncommon nor confined to one sex in those times of disorder. This mistaken impression was immediately removed, and, in the words, "God grant," or rather, "will grant," was followed by an invocation which, as Hannah regarded it in the light of a prophecy pointing to the accomplishment of her earnest desire, dispelled her sadness, and filled her with confident hope (1Sa 1:18). The character and services of the expected child were sufficiently important to make his birth a fit subject for prophecy.

—Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

*But Hannah replied, "No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord. "Do not consider your maidservant as a worthless woman, for I have spoken until now out of my great concern and provocation. She explained her situation to Eli with very well chosen words. To these words, Eli gave a great promise. "Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him." Some commentators have Eli's words wrong from a misinterpretation in the KJV. Eli did not state that God would help her. This word of the high priest was not a prediction, but a pious wish, which God in His grace most gloriously fulfilled.<sup>3</sup>*

*So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. She was still childless but no longer sad. This is a definite sign of faith. She believed that God would answer with a son.*

*Then they arose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord, and returned again to their house in Ramah. And Elkanah had relations with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her.*

*It came about in due time, after Hannah had*

<sup>3</sup>Keil and Delitzsch



*conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of the LORD."*

1 Samuel 1:19-20 (NASB)

They "arose early" in the morning. Interestingly, the Hebrew has a word for this -שָׁמַר = "to rise up early (to load ones animals for a trip). The term is found six times in the Old Testament, four of which are in the first nine chapters of I Samuel.

They returned home and "the LORD remembered her." It is strange that none of the commentaries I checked say anything about *Elkanah having relations with Hannah his wife*. Is there something here that should not be talked about? Is there something her that is implied? Was Elkanah not in the practice of doing this and hence her barrenness? I don't think so but I can not account for the silence other than what one commentary noted, *In most miracles touching human lives, the Lord chooses to achieve his desired ends with the assistance of people.*<sup>4</sup> Certainly this was true in Hannah's case.

*It came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of the LORD."* We noted the significance of the name in the introduction (see page #2)

*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.*

1 Samuel 1:21-23 (KJV)

To understand what is written above one must understand two things: (1) The wife (wives) were not required to accompany their husband in the yearly sacrifice, but they generally did. (2) The period of weaning was about three years. Hannah wished to fulfill her vow and did not wish to go until she could fulfill it - after he was weaned.

*Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word.* Elkanah agreed with Hannah but made sure it was known that this delay was ONLY until he was weaned.

*Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with a three-year-old bull and one ephah of flour and a jug of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh, although the child was young. Then they slaughtered the bull, and brought the boy to Eli. She said, "Oh, my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord. "For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. "So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord." And he worshiped the Lord there.*

1 Samuel 1:24-28 (NASB)

*Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with a three-year-old bull and one ephah of flour and a jug of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh, although the child was young.* The Hebrew here is somewhat obscure and has the following sense: *early childhood in 1 Samuel 1:24 hanna'ar na'ar "the boy was a child"*,<sup>5</sup> It has been assumed by some commentators

<sup>4</sup>New American Commentary

<sup>5</sup>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

that women who remained permanently at Shiloh would look after the child. I would assume that Hannah made frequent trips to see his progress. If she was like my wife, she would have knit him all sorts of clothes and brought them to him.

*Then they slaughtered the bull, and brought the boy to Eli. She said, "Oh, my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord. "For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. "So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord." Hannah kept her vow, something that too many people fail to do these days. She repeated the fact that he was to act as a Nazirite in his service to the Lord. So Samuel live there from then on.*

## CHAPTER TWO

Then Hannah prayed and said,  
*"My heart exults in the LORD;  
 My horn is exalted in the LORD,  
 My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies,  
 Because I rejoice in Your salvation.*

*"There is no one holy like the Lord,  
 Indeed, there is no one besides You,  
 Nor is there any rock like our God.*

*"Boast no more so very proudly,  
 Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth;  
 For the Lord is a God of knowledge,  
 And with Him actions are weighed.*

*"The bows of the mighty are shattered,  
 But the feeble gird on strength.  
 Those who were full hire themselves out for  
 bread,  
 But those who were hungry cease to hunger.  
 Even the barren gives birth to seven,  
 But she who has many children languishes.*

*"The Lord kills and makes alive;  
 He brings down to Sheol and raises up.  
 "The Lord makes poor and rich;  
 He brings low, He also exalts.*

*"He raises the poor from the dust,  
 He lifts the needy from the ash heap  
 To make them sit with nobles,  
 And inherit a seat of honor;  
 For the pillars of the earth are the Lord'S,  
 And He set the world on them.*

*"He keeps the feet of His godly ones,  
 But the wicked ones are silenced in  
 darkness;  
 For not by might shall a man prevail.  
 "Those who contend with the Lord will be  
 shattered;  
 Against them He will thunder in the heavens,  
 The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;  
 And He will give strength to His king,  
 And will exalt the horn of His anointed."*

1 Samuel 2:1-10 (NASB)

How needful it is to praise the Lord in poetry and in song (i.e in psalms). We find the first instance below.

*And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*  
 Exodus 15:21 (KJV)

*Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name.*

2 Samuel 22:50 (NKJV)

I need not mention that there are 150 of them in the book of Psalms. I shall not go through this song of praise in detail - it is to be read and enjoyed. I will, however, make a few comments on the wording.

*"My heart exults in the LORD;  
 My horn is exalted in the LORD,*

She is not referring to the horn on her car! The term *describes strength, honor, rulership, dignity, fertility, descendants*<sup>6</sup>

*Then Elkanah went to his home at Ramah. But the boy ministered to the Lord before Eli the priest.*

1 Samuel 2:11 (NASB)

The vow has been fulfilled. Samuel is now in the service of the Lord, although only a young boy.

At this point, we are given a distinct contrast.

*Now the sons of Eli were worthless men; they did not know the Lord and the custom of the*

<sup>6</sup>Complete Word Study Dictionary

priests with the people. When any man was offering a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand. Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. Thus they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give the priest meat for roasting, as he will not take boiled meat from you, only raw." If the man said to him, "They must surely burn the fat first, and then take as much as you desire," then he would say, "No, but you shall give it to me now; and if not, I will take it by force." Thus the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for the men despised the offering of the Lord.

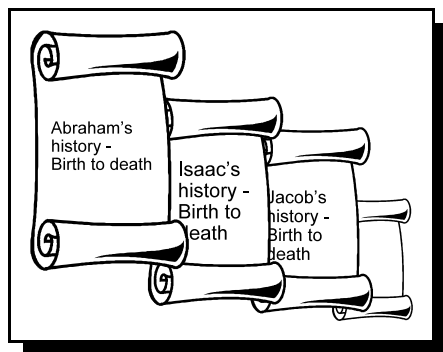
1 Samuel 2:12-17 (NASB)

Now the sons of Eli were worthless men (See "worthless" on page #6;) they did not know the Lord and the custom of the priests with the people. They had no idea what they were really supposed to be doing. There are a lot of people today, both secular and "religious" who do not know what they are supposed to be doing. This is especially true because *they did not know the LORD!*

*NOTE: The NASB does not transfer the name "LORD" (Yehweh) properly into my word processor, converting it to "Lord" (Adonai).*

There are virtually no references to Adonai in 1 Samuel so you should interpret all references as "LORD"

They not only did not know the LORD, they did



not know the custom of the priests with the people.

They would take additional offerings and keep

them for themselves.

*The priest's servant would come while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand. Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. At this point, we need to review what was proper.*

*'Now when anyone presents a grain offering as an offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it. ~'He shall then bring it to Aaron's sons the priests; and shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all of its frankincense. And the priest shall offer it up in smoke as its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord. ~'The remainder of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons: a thing most holy, of the offerings to the Lord by fire. 'Now when you bring an offering of a grain offering baked in an oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers spread with oil. ~'If your offering is a grain offering made on the griddle, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil; you shall break it into bits and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. ~'Now if your offering is a grain offering made in a pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. ~'When you bring in the grain offering which is made of these things to the Lord, it shall be presented to the priest and he shall bring it to the altar. ~'The priest then shall take up from the grain offering its memorial portion, and shall offer it up in smoke on the altar as an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord. ~'The remainder of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons: a thing most holy of the offerings to the Lord by fire.*

Leviticus 2:1-10 (NASB)

The boiling of the meat is not mentioned except below.

*Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the altar and*

*sprinkled [them] on Aaron and his garments, as well as on his sons and their garments. In this way he consecrated Aaron and his garments, as well as his sons and their garments. Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the meat at the entrance to the tent of meeting and eat it there with the bread that is in the basket for the ordination offering as I commanded: Aaron and his sons are to eat it. You must burn up what remains of the meat and bread. You must not go outside the entrance to the tent of meeting for seven days, until the time your days of ordination are completed, because it will take seven days to ordain you. The Lord commanded what has been done today in order to make atonement for you. You must remain at the entrance to the tent of meeting day and night for seven days and keep the Lord's charge so that you will not die, for this is what I was commanded." So Aaron and his sons did everything the Lord had commanded through Moses.*

Leviticus 8:30-36 (HCSB)

This was a one time event in setting up the tabernacle sacrifices. Thereafter, boiling of the offering is not mentioned. I shall not go into detail in the remaining verses (through 17) as they outline other violations that Eli's sons made.

*Now Samuel was ministering before the Lord, as a boy wearing a linen ephod. And his mother would make him a little robe and bring it to him from year to year when she would come up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "May the Lord give you children from this woman in place of the one she dedicated to the Lord." And they went to their own home. The Lord visited Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the Lord.*

1 Samuel 2:18-21 (NASB)

Before commenting on this passage, I need to make a note on Hebrew History. Perhaps a

diagram would be more illustrative.

The life of one patriarch is covered from birth to death. Then the history "backs up" to cover the next from his birth to death, and so on. So you have sections of overlapping history. If you keep this in mind, it should help explain things.

*And the boy Samuel grew before the Lord.* This sentence concludes the making of a prophet by the name of Samuel. Now we start another narrative.

*Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting. He said to them, "Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people? "No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the Lord'S people circulating. "If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the Lord desired to put them to death.*

1 Samuel 2:22-25 (NASB)

We now embark on the short history of Eli's sons. In addition to taking that which was not their's they were also guilty of prostitution - they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

The following may surprise you.

Trading of sexual services for pay. It is the result of a double standard whereby men insist on the sexual purity of their wives and daughters, while desiring access to other women. This dynamic is seen clearly in Gen. 38. Judah, thinking that his daughter-in-law Tamar was a prostitute, had intercourse with her; but upon hearing that she was pregnant as the result of "playing the harlot," he demanded that she be burned. Hosea criticized the attitude which called for the punishment of prostitutes (and women committing adultery)

while tolerating the men with whom these acts were committed (Hos. 4:14). Because of this double standard, the prostitute or harlot, as she is also called, has had an ambiguous status in society. She was tolerated in ancient Israel—as long as she was not married—but her profession was not socially acceptable

Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary.

It seems that men could get away with it but women could not. However, regardless of the above dictionary statement,

*And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

Genesis 2:21-24 (KJV)

From the beginning, God wanted a one man - one woman relationship. R. B. Thieme, Jr. wrote the following:

**THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROMISCUITY**  
Lest promiscuous women become satiated with your vigor, and your earthen vessel shattered in a whorehouse (Prov. 5:10).

And you groan in distress at your end, when your flesh [body] and your phallus are ruined (Prov. 5:11).

The word translated "strangers" in your English Bible is a word we are going to see frequently throughout the rest of the passage. The stranger here is the woman who is promiscuous, who is a chippie or a whore, or who is just "free and easy." Remember, the woman is insatiable; and when an insatiable woman latches on to the wrong man, he is squandering his wealth or vigor by satiating a promiscuous woman. This has to do with

sexual performance. It can be translated academically, "Lest adulteresses be satiated with your sex performance."

This section is emphasizing the male, but the "vessel" can refer to either the male or female body. The man who gives his body to a whore has shattered it for his right woman, and vice versa. He kept taking his earthen vessel — his human body — to a whorehouse or its equivalent, until finally one day it had wasted away. And what does he do? He groans in distress when his body functions fail. For the male, the end result of fornication is frustration, unhappiness and finally, impotence. The female either becomes a nymphomaniac and is totally indiscriminate, or she becomes completely and totally frustrated to the point that she is regarded as sexless. Both the general health and the genital system are adversely affected by sex with the wrong man or wrong woman.

And say [groan], Eek, I have hated disciplinary warning, and my right lobe despised and ridiculed corrective punishment (Prov. 5:12).

Now we get to the death cry of the roue. He cries, "Eeeek!" That's the screeching of the brakes as the whole gear box falls apart. It's like the final wailing trumpet of the bull elephant as he leaves the herd and goes off alone to die. Now the roue had a warning or two, but he refused to listen. He rejected discipline and authority under the principle of the laws of divine establishment. And here is a young man whose parental and pastoral warnings not only went unheeded but were ridiculed.

And I have not listened and obeyed the voice of my instructors, nor concentrated on the message of those who have taught me (Prov. 5:13).

Connecting this with the foregoing verses, the point he is making is that if people would use the organ of perception, they would use the organ of sex to better advantage. But Solomon, who wrote this after it had been fulfilled, admittedly failed.

Shortly I was in all evil in both the worship assembly and in the function of the nation (Prov. 5:14).

"In all evil" refers to his reversionism plus the

practice of reverse process reversionism in Category Two love — hence, Solomon's promiscuity. Why was he in this situation? Because he had refused to listen to his pastor and his teachers in the worship assembly, as well as to the instruction of his own father. Negative volition toward doctrine led to scar tissue, emotional revolt and reversionism. This, in turn, led to the rejection of the principle and doctrine of right man — right woman. The inevitable result was fornication and promiscuity. As far as the function of the nation was concerned, Solomon was the king, and it is difficult for a people to rise above the failure and apostasy of its leadership.

The rest of this chapter is vitally important to the doctrine of right man — right woman; yet it is so poorly translated and so obscured by anachronism that it's almost impossible for anyone to derive the intended blessing from this passage as it stands in the Authorized Version. It is intended not only to emphasize the first of the three great gifts from God the Son — right man — right woman — but also to ward off its many dangers and enemies. The fact that God has designed one right man for one right woman does not guarantee automatic happiness or that everyone will find his right woman or right man. Therefore, in verse 15 we have an analogy which is always used in connection with grace gifts.

R B. Thiem, Jr.

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*Now the boy Samuel was growing in stature and in favor both with the Lord and with men.*

1 Samuel 2:26 (NASB)

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This is just a short note of comparison.

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*Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, 'Did I not indeed reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house? ~'Did I not choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be My priests, to go up to My altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before Me; and did I not give to the house of your*

*father all the fire offerings of the sons of Israel? ~'Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling, and honor your sons above Me, by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of My people Israel?' "Therefore the Lord God of Israel declares, 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever'; but now the Lord declares, 'Far be it from Me—for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed. ~'Behold, the days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house. ~'You will see the distress of My dwelling, in spite of all the good that I do for Israel; and an old man will not be in your house forever. ~'Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from My altar so that your eyes will fail from weeping and your soul grieve, and all the increase of your house will die in the prime of life. ~'This will be the sign to you which will come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: on the same day both of them will die. ~'But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always. ~'Everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and say, "Please assign me to one of the priest's offices so that I may eat a piece of bread.'"*

1 Samuel 2:27-36 (NASB)

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You can sin with not immediate consequences. Perhaps this can go on for some time. BUT, someday you will have to account for it. Eli did (and his two sons).

*Then a man of God came to Eli. Who was this "man of God?"*

None of my commentaries will say or venture a guess. But the Scriptures, I believe, give us an adequate clue.

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*And the men rose up from thence, and looked*

toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

Genesis 18:16-22 (KJV)

So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name.

Judges 13:6 (NKJV)

In these two passages we have a pre-incarnate appearance of God. I will not state positively that this is the case here but I believe it is likely. In any case, the Lord was not happy with the way things were going!

- 'Did I not indeed reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house?
- 'Did I not choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be My priests, to go up to My altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before Me;
- Did I not give to the house of your father all the fire offerings of the sons of Israel?

The Lord reviews with Eli all He had done for Israel. What is He getting in return?

'Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling, and honor your sons above Me, by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of My people Israel?'

Why do you KICK? טעב a primitive root; to trample down, i.e. (figurative) despise :- kick<sup>7</sup> In his old age, Eli was no longer directing his two sons and allowing them to make mockery of the sacrifices brought to them. Now comes the bad news!

"Therefore the Lord God of Israel declares, 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever'; but now the Lord declares, 'Far be it from Me—for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed. ~Behold, the days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house. I like another translation which is a bit clearer.

"Therefore, [this is] the declaration of the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Although I said your family and your ancestral house would walk before Me forever, the Lord now says, "No longer!" I will honor those who honor Me, but those who despise Me will be disgraced.

1 Samuel 2:30 (HCSB)

'Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from My altar so that your eyes will fail<sup>8</sup> from weeping and your soul grieve, and all the increase of your house will die in the prime of life. In simple terms, God was not going to take Eli's life. He was going to leave Eli to see the death of his sons and grieve over them. 'This will be the sign to you which will come concerning your two sons, Hophni and

<sup>7</sup>Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary.

<sup>8</sup>Refer to Eli's eye site on page #22



*Phinehas: on the same day both of them will die. He will loose both of the on the same day.*

*But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always. Who might this be? I will leave that for you to say! What is the name of this book? But Samuel was only a type of the priest who was to come - Jesus Christ.*

*Everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and say, "Please assign me to one of the priest's offices so that I may eat a piece of bread.""*

*"Therefore the Lord God of Israel declares, 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever'; but now the Lord declares, 'Far be it from Me—for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed. ~'Behold, the days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house.*

"I will break the strength . . . The NKJV has a more literal rendering of this.

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*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.* 1 Samuel 2:31 (NKJV)

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That sounds a little bloody - but it is not. It is an expression which is given in the NASB translation - I will break your strength. Sometimes the judgement of the Lord is quick. Sometimes it is a long time in coming. The final judgement has not yet come

*Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from My altar so that your eyes will fail from weeping and your soul grieve, and all the increase of*

*your house will die in the prime of life.* In other words, God is going to prolong this judgement. As is often the case, God gives Eli a definite sign, a terrible sign in Eli's eyes. *This will be the sign to you which will come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: on the same day both of them will die.* If they were to die at different times, this would not be much of a sign. Dying on the same day surely was.

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Eli descended from Aaron through Ithamar, Aaron's fourth son, but God would abandon that line and turn to the sons of Eleazar, Aaron's third son and successor in the high priesthood

Bible Exposition Commentary

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*But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always. ~'Everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and say, "Please assign me to one of the priest's offices so that I may eat a piece of bread.""*

Who is this "faithful priest?" Dr. McGee wrote,

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Who is this verse talking about? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. In Hannah's prayer, you remember, He is mentioned as the King, the Messiah, who is to come. He has been mentioned by Moses as a prophet and now in 1 Samuel is mentioned as a priest. The Lord Jesus Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King. He is the only One who ever fulfilled all of these offices.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee

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## CHAPTER THREE

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*Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord before Eli. And word from the Lord was rare in those days, visions were infrequent.*

1 Samuel 3:1 (NASB)

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God did not speak much to Eli and He could not speak at all to Eli's sons. So the people seldom heard any new revelation from God.

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*It happened at that time as Eli was lying down in his place (now his eyesight had begun to grow dim and he could not see well), and the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was, that the Lord called Samuel; and he said, "Here I am." Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, lie down again." So he went and lay down. The Lord called yet again, "Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he answered, "I did not call, my son, lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor had the word of the Lord yet been revealed to him. So the Lord called Samuel again for the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli discerned that the Lord was calling the boy. And Eli said to Samuel, "Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.*

1 Samuel 3:2-9 (NASB)

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It really bothers me when the text reads "It HAPPENED" as it make it sound like some "chancy" thing - it just happened that! Consider the following translation.

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*One day Eli, whose eyesight was failing, was lying in his room.*

1 Samuel 3:2 (HCSB)

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This is a much more satisfactory definition as far as I am concerned.

Before proceeding, we need to get a matter straightened out. The "LORD called Samuel." Did He do so in an audible voice that Samuel could hear? Some say it was a dream. They may have never heard the Lord speak to them. The Lord DOES speak, audibly to people at times. How could a man be a prophet of the Lord if the Lord did not speak to him? The Lord was calling Samuel to service here.

When I was in a high school camp at Mt. Hermon Christian Conference Grounds, I had retired for the night in the top bunk of my dorm. It was not long before someone "walked up beside my bunk" and began to speak. It was the Lord. He, quite obviously did not really walk up to my bunk - no one could possibly have seen Him, no one but I would have heard him. But He did speak to me - for quite some time! He said he wanted to be the LORD of my life, even though I was already saved. I bargained with Him for some time. How about you being Lord of my life for 95% of the time. My parents were unsaved and made all kind of fun on my (older) sister because she would get on her knees at night and pray before going to bed. I really did not wish to receive that ridicule so, if I still had 5% of my life as my own, I could get by. Eventually I became quite tired and said, "OK, you can have it all if you will let me get some sleep." He took me at my word and has not let go since. YES, the Lord can and does speak in an audible voice at time. This is how the "prophets" could speak God's word to the people - God spoke to them first.

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So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day

dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2 Peter 1:19-21 (NASB)

So the Lord spoke directly to Samuel. Finally, after Eli's instructions, he said the well know statement, "Speak Lord for thy servant heareth." This we come to next.

*Then the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening." The Lord said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. "In that day I will carry out against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. "For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them. "Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."*

1 Samuel 3:10-14 (NASB)

*"Samuel! Samuel!"  
And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening."*

The first thing the Lord said to Samuel was *behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.* There are other Scriptures where the people's ears will "tingle."

*therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle.*

2 Kings 21:12 (NKJV)

*'Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah*

*and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle.*

Jeremiah 19:3 (NKJV)

Another passage which contains a variation on the Hebrew term is,

*Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals!*

Psalms 150:5 (NKJV)

*"For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them. God did not spare Samuel any of the details of what He would do. He was going to judge Eli and his house. Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."* "Forever" is a very long time. The Lord's judgements are final (unless He adds a provisions to them.

*So Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. But Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." He said, "What is the word that He spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. May God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the words that He spoke to you." So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him."*

1 Samuel 3:15-18 (NASB)

*So Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord.*

Samuel then slept till the morning; and when he opened the doors of the house of Jehovah,

he was afraid to tell Eli of the revelation which he had received. Opening the doors of the house of God appears to have been part of Samuel's duty. We have not to think of doors opening into the holy place, however, but of doors leading into the court. Originally, when the tabernacle was simply a tent, travelling with the people from place to place, it had only curtains at the entrance to the holy place and court. But when Israel had become possessed of fixed houses in the land of Canaan, and the dwelling-place of God was permanently erected at Shiloh, instead of the tents that were pitched for the priests and Levites, who encamped round about during the journey through the desert, there were erected fixed houses, which were built against or inside the court, and not only served as dwelling-places for the priests and Levites who were officiating, but were also used for the reception and custody of the gifts that were brought as offerings to the sanctuary. These buildings in all probability supplanted entirely the original tent-like enclosure around the court; so that instead of the curtains at the entrance, there were folding doors, which were shut in the evening and opened again in the morning. It is true that nothing is said about the erection of these buildings in our historical books, but the fact itself is not to be denied on that account

— Keil and Delitzsch

- *Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. but*
- *Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He responded*
- *"Here I am." Eli then said*
- *"What is the word that He spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. May God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the words that He spoke to you."*

Eli made it quite clear that he wished to know what the Lord spoke to Samuel. I think I would also have been quite insistent.. *May God do so to you, and more also*

*Then all the people came to persuade David to eat bread while it was still day; but David vowed, saying, "May God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun goes down."*

2 Samuel 3:35 (NASB)

*"Say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? May God do so to me, and more also, if you will not be commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab.'"*

2 Samuel 19:13 (NASB)

*Then King Solomon swore by the Lord, saying, "May God do so to me and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life."*

1 Kings 2:23 (NASB)

This expression appears several times in the Scriptures as seen above. JF&B have,

God do so to thee, and more also—This was a very solemn adjuration: he suspected that God had threatened severe judgments, for he knew that his house was very criminal; and he wished to know what God had spoken. The words imply thus much: If thou do not tell me fully what God has threatened, may the same and greater curses fall on thyself.

Adam Clark

*So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him." Be sure to notes that "and he said, 'It is the Lord'" were spoken by Eli. He realized what the message to Samuel meant.*

*Thus Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fail. All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, because the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord.*

1 Samuel 3:19-21 (NASB)

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*Thus Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fail.* Most translations here can be misleading. But,

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*Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and He fulfilled everything Samuel prophesied.*

1 Samuel 3:19 (HCSB)

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*let none of his words fail* should be *let none of His words fail.*

*All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba* Dan was on the northern border, Beersheba on the southern, thus emphasizing all Israel.

*And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, because the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord.* There was a test to see if a man were a true prophet or not.

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*And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'-- when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.*

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 (NKJV)

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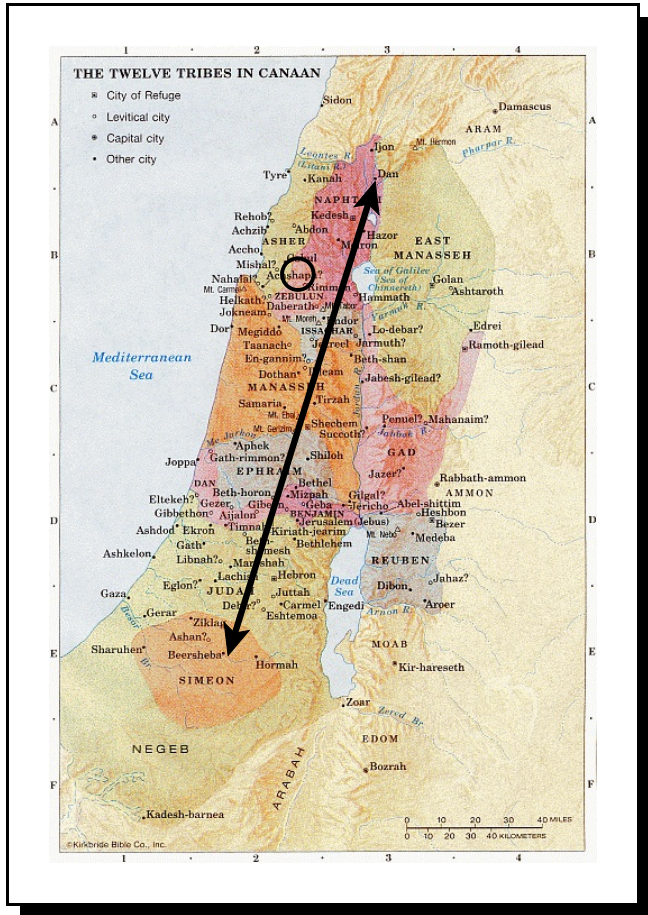


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## CHAPTER FOUR

Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and camped beside Ebenezer while the Philistines camped in Aphek. The Philistines drew up in battle array to meet Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield. When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the Lord, that it may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies." So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts who sits above the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

1 Samuel 4:1-4 (NASB)



Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel. The double headed arrow on the map to the right points to Dan and Beersheba. The round circle, near the Mediterranean is the approximate location of Aphek.

The Philistines drew up in battle array to meet Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield. This was a serious defeat! What did they do wrong?

Oh, I know, they should have had the Ark of the Covenant with them on the battlefield. They said, When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the Lord, that it may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies. Sounds good to me. But wait, let's see what McGee wrote.

This section of Scripture gives us a revelation of Israel's superstition and just how far they are from God. It shows us how strong their self-sufficiency and selfishness are. With no thought of seeking God's direction, they go out to battle against the Philistines. What happens? They are defeated. What is lacking? They think perhaps they should have taken the ark with them into battle. Knowing the history of the ark -- that as it had been carried down into the Jordan River, the water had been cut off so that Israel could cross over -- they took the ark of the covenant into battle. The thought was that its presence would bring victory. My friend, this reveals the superstition and paganism of these people who thought there was some merit in the object. The merit was not in that box because God was not in that box. You cannot get God into a box! The merit was in the presence and person of God.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Well, for good or bad, here comes the ark.

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*As the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth resounded. When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What does the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" Then they understood that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp. The Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. "Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. "Take courage and be men, O Philistines, or you will become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you; therefore, be men and fight."*

1 Samuel 4:5-9 (NASB)

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*As the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth resounded. As I write this I wonder if just giving a great shout without the ark would have sufficed. It certainly "put the fear of God in them" (literally). "God has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. "Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? The "great shout" was similar to that described below.*

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*So Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon; and they have gone up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. This is the noise that you have heard.*

1 Kings 1:45 (NKJV)

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The Philistines refer to the "mighty gods." They apparently did not know that the Lord had a plural title - Elohim. So they referred to the "gods" of Israel. Clark notes that this should be translated "god" rather than "gods" but the Philistines, like others, were accustomed to multiple gods.

*These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. Israel's relation with God was well known by the people in the land (the people they were supposed to have destroyed).*

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*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.*  
Isaiah 55:8 (NASB)

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The Israelites plan to put the Philistines to flight may have sounded good to them, but they were not what God had in store. Instead of scaring the Philistines into running, it further their resolve to stand and fight!

*Take courage and be men, O Philistines, or you will become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you; therefore, be men and fight." All the Israel accomplished was the fulfillment of the prophecy that had been given to Eli.*

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*So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent; and the slaughter was very great, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.*

1 Samuel 4:10-11 (NASB)

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As a result of their actions, Israel lost the Ark and Eli's two sons died as prophesied. The news traveled fast.

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*Now a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn and dust on his head. When he came, behold, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road eagerly watching, because his heart was trembling for the ark of God. So the man came to tell it in the city, and all the city cried out. When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What does the noise of this commotion mean?" Then the man came hurriedly and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set so that he could not see. The*

*man said to Eli, "I am the one who came from the battle line. Indeed, I escaped from the battle line today." And he said, "How did things go, my son?" Then the one who brought the news replied, "Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken." When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. Thus he judged Israel forty years.*

1 Samuel 4:12-18 (NASB)

*Now a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn and dust on his head. No, he had not fallen down on the way and torn his clothes, the torn clothes and the dust on the head were a sign of mourning.*

*Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.*

Joshua 7:6 (NKJV)

Of course, you can read the book of Job who sat on a pile of ashes for some time!

*When he came, behold, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road eagerly watching, because his heart was trembling for the ark of God. Of course Eli was "trembling." He knew better than to let the ark be taken from the tabernacle, but he did not stop it.*

*So the man came to tell it in the city, and all the city cried out. When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What does the noise of this commotion mean?" Then the man came hurriedly and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety-eight*

*years old, and his eyes were set<sup>910</sup> so that he could not see. Eli's time was about to run out. He was "blind" (meaning of "eyes set") and he had lost control of his sons, the Ark, everything.*

Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside -- 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. 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. The calamities announced to Samuel as about to fall upon the family of Eli [1Sa 2:34] were now inflicted in the death of his two sons, and after his death, by that of his daughter-in-law, whose infant son received a name that perpetuated the fallen glory of the church and nation [1Sa 4:19-22]. The public disaster was completed by the capture of the ark. 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 overindulgence, 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-Brown

*The man said to Eli, "I am the one who came from the battle line. Indeed, I escaped from the battle line today." And he said, "How did things go, my son?" Then the one who brought the news replied, "Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead,*

<sup>9</sup>See page 22

<sup>10</sup>In other words, he was blind.



*and the ark of God has been taken.*

The news was as bad as it gets! Which was the worst?

- Israel has fled before the Philistines
- Your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead
- The ark of God has been taken.

I would suspect that the loss of the ark was the most bitter news. He already knew what the eventual fate of his sins would be. He knew there could be more battles and they might turn out differently. But, the thing he dreaded the most was the loss of the Ark. *When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. Thus he judged Israel forty years.* In the previous book, the Book of Judges, we can read time and time again, "the land had rest for forty years" Jdg 3:11, Jdg 5:31, Jdg 8:28. Israel would stray and God would send a judge who would give that generation (40 years) rest.

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*Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas's wife, was pregnant and about to give birth; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she kneeled down and gave birth, for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer or pay attention. And she called the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken."*

1 Samuel 4:19-22 (NASB)

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*Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas's wife, was pregnant and about to give birth; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she kneeled down and gave birth, for her pains came upon her.* I am not an obstetrician

but I would assume that this kind of news would, indeed, cause the birth to begin.

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When it rains, it pours it seems. The wife of Phineas was with child. The bad news shocks her into premature labor. She was concerned about her family and the Ark of God. You could say she was a pearl among pebbles; a rose among thorns; a grain of wheat in a heap of chaff. She gives birth to her baby and has time to name him Ichabod before she dies. Ichabod means "no glory; the glory is departed." The loss of the Ark meant the absence of glory in Israel

Mattoon's Treasures from 1 Samuel.

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If God were not a loving god, the story might have ended here. But God is extremely patient with weak willed men and continues to help him. *"The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken."* The "glory" had departed but not the God of that glory.

## CHAPTER FIVE

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*After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod, brought it into the temple of Dagon and placed it next to his statue. When the people of Ashdod got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and returned him to his place. But when they got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. [This time], both Dagon's head and the palms of his hands were broken off and lying on the threshold. Only Dagon's torso remained. That is why, to this day, the priests of Dagon and everyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod do not step on Dagon's threshold.*

1 Samuel 5:1-5 (HCSB)

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*After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod, brought it into the temple of Dagon and placed it next to his statue.* Something is fishy here and it is the bottom half of Dagon. Pagan people make up such ridiculous images of their god's. I've heard of mermaids but a "merman?"

Well, the Philistines had it good now, they not only had Dagon but they had Israel's Ark to place before him. This should surely please Dagon. *When the people of Ashdod got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord.* Whoops! Maybe there was an earthquake and the image fell over.

*So they took Dagon and returned him to his place. But when they got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. [This time], both Dagon's head and the palms of his hands were broken off and lying on the threshold. Only Dagon's torso remained.* If they didn't get the picture the first time, they should

have gotten it now. This was no earthquake, It was the work of God.

*That is why, to this day, the priests of Dagon and everyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod do not step on Dagon's threshold.*

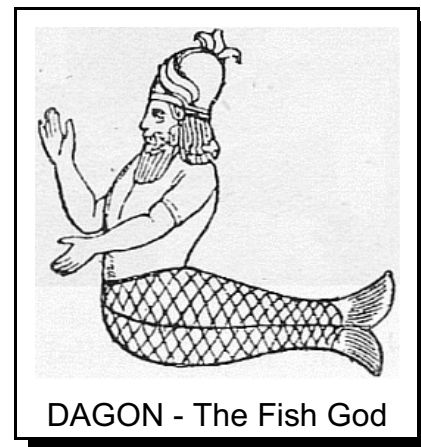
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From the fact that their god Dagon lay upon its face before the ark of Jehovah, i.e., lay prostrate upon the earth, as though worshipping before the God of Israel, the Philistines were to learn, that even their supreme deity had been obliged to fall down before the majesty of Jehovah, the God of the Israelites. But as they did not discern the meaning of this miraculous sign, the second miracle was to show them the annihilation of their idol through the God of Israel, in such a way as to preclude every thought of accident.

The disgrace attending the annihilation of their idol was probably to be heightened by the fact, that the pieces of Dagon that were smitten off were lying upon the threshold, inasmuch as what lay upon the threshold was easily trodden upon by any one who entered the house—



DAGON - The Fish God

Keil and Delitzsch

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The only part of this idol that was not crushed was the fishy part. Apparently it was left that way and so one had to be careful in entering the temple.

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*Now the hand of the Lord was heavy on the Ashdodites, and He ravaged them and smote them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories. When the men of Ashdod saw that*

*it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is severe on us and on Dagon our god." So they sent and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to them and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they said, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." And they brought the ark of the God of Israel around. After they had brought it around, the hand of the Lord was against the city with very great confusion; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.*

1 Samuel 5:6-9 (NASB)

*Now the hand of the Lord was heavy on the Ashdodites, and He ravaged them and smote them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories.* It, apparently, was clear to the people of Ashdod that the tumors that grew on them was because of their possession of the Ark. They were smart enough to know what to do about it.

*When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is severe on us and on Dagon our god." They had to get rid of the Ark and get rid of it soon. I might have thought they would give it back to the Israelites, but God had a better plan for them.*

*So they sent and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to them and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they said, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath."*

The following citation is a rather humorous assessment of the situation.

Get rid of the Ark! Send it to Gath! The Ark of God has become one very hot potato. The Philistines are in the "Pass the Buck" Syndrome. Pass the potato please! Pass it to somebody else! We don't want it here anymore!

They still don't send it back to where it belongs.

They missed the mark about the Ark. From the town of Gath they send the Ark to Ekkron. The potato gets even hotter there. The buck is passed again. Pass the potato please somewhere else! The problem of me Ark was too hot to handle. Notice the problem is STILL not solved! Running from problems, avoiding them, giving them to someone else does not solve the problem.

Notice the response of the town of Ekkron in verse 10. They (referring to the people of Gath) want to slay us. The Philistines of Gath did not care about the Philistines of Ekkron. An important truth is found here. If you die and go to Hell, your friends will not be concerned about you. They will only be concerned about themselves and the pain they are experiencing. Hell is not going to be a big party as many believe.

Mattoon's Treasures from 1 Samuel.

*And they brought the ark of the God of Israel around. After they had brought it around, the hand of the Lord was against the city with very great confusion; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.* Well, if they didn't "get the picture" the first time, they should have now. Get rid of that Ark! Give it back to the Israelites.

So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And as the ark of God came to Ekron the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel around to us, to kill us and our people." They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, so that it will not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly confusion throughout the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

1 Samuel 5:10-11 (NASB)

Finally, they get the picture. But there is another picture here that goes unnoticed.

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The longer the Philistines resisted and refused to recognise the chastening hand of the living God in the plagues inflicted upon them, the more severely would they necessarily be punished, that they might be brought at last to see that the God of Israel, whose sanctuary they still wanted to keep as a trophy of their victory over that nation, was the omnipotent God, who was able to destroy His foes.—

Keil and Delitzsch

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Had Israel really lost the battle? It appears that, in the end, the Philistines suffered even more! In spite of the errors we make, God still does right and watches over us. If we are His people, we can trust that Paul's words are true.

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*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

Romans 8:28-30 (NASB)

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God, even today, has not forgotten the Israelites as the New Testament teaches us.

## CHAPTER SIX

Now the ark of the Lord had been in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us how we shall send it to its place." They said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but you shall surely return to Him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you." Then they said, "What shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to Him?" And they said, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, for one plague was on all of you and on your lords. So you shall make likenesses of your tumors and likenesses of your mice that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will ease His hand from you, your gods, and your land.

1 Samuel 6:1-5 (NASB)

Now the ark of the Lord had been in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? It took seven month for the Philistines to realize they needed to be done about the ark. So they turned to their priests and diviners. What have seen quite a few priests but here the "diviners" are in on the situation. God had forbidden it.

For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you.

Deuteronomy 18:14 (NKJV)

**They practiced continued on in to New Testament times.**

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour.

Acts 16:16-18 (NKJV)

Tell us how we shall send it to its place." HOW? They knew what they needed to done but how to do it?

The plagues that had followed the ark around Philistia made it clear that they were dealing with an angry god. Appeasement of the deity would require certain gifts and rituals. Popular belief would have expected that such appeasement would only work if acceptable gifts were offered, correct words were spoken, and appropriate actions performed. Incorrect procedures might prove entirely fruitless or might make the deity angrier still. This all took place in the realm of magic, a science that required precision.

Bible Background Commentary

They said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but you shall surely return to Him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you." I am not sure why the punctuation of this verse is such that we have "God" of Israel and "Him." I don't think they ought to be capitalized because, while you and I would capitalize them as proper nouns and pronouns, there is no reason why the **Philistines would**.

It appears that some of the practices of Israel were also practiced by the Philistines and others - i.e. guilt offerings." *Then they said, "What shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to Him?" And they said, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, for one plague was on all of you and on your lords.*

First, there was to be one guilt offering for each of the "lords" of the Philistines.

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The famous Philistine pentapolis was composed of (1) Gaza, strategically located a few miles from the Mediterranean and controlling the Maritime Plain and caravan routes to Egypt and Arabia; (2) Ekron, a wealthy market in the valley of Sorek, close to Danite territory; (3) Ashdod, on the main road to Joppa and lying east of Lydda; (4) Ashkelon, a strong fort on the coast, controlling principal caravan routes; (5) Gath, NE of Gaza and bordering on the Shephelah.

— New Unger's Bible Dictionary

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The offering was to be a "golden tumor" for each group. Tumors? This seems very strange to me but,

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Votive or thank offerings were commonly made by the heathen in prayer for, or gratitude after, deliverance from lingering or dangerous disorders, in the form of metallic (generally silver) models or images of the diseased parts of the body. This is common still in Roman Catholic countries, as well as in the temples of the Hindus and other modern heathen. —

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

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*"Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had severely dealt with them, did they not allow the people to go, and they departed? "Now therefore, take and prepare a new cart and two milch cows on which there has never been a yoke; and hitch the cows to the cart and take their calves home, away from*

*them. "Take the ark of the Lord and place it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you return to Him as a guilt offering in a box by its side. Then send it away that it may go. "Watch, if it goes up by the way of its own territory to Beth-shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we will know that it was not His hand that struck us; it happened to us by chance."*

1 Samuel 6:6-9 (NASB)

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*"Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? God had promised that their deliverance from Egypt would not go unnoticed. Word had been passed around so the Philistines knew how Israel got out of Egypt. They did not wish to have experiences similar to the Egyptians.*

*"Now therefore, take and prepare a new cart and two milch cows on which there has never been a yoke; and hitch the cows to the cart and take their calves home, away from them. "Take the ark of the Lord and place it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you return to Him as a guilt offering in a box by its side. These people knew enough that, whatever they did, they needed to do it well. So, rather than look around for an old cart, they made a new one. This was not the way it was supposed to be transported but the Philistine advisors had a reason for it in mind. Later, in 2 Samuel we shall also see the ark on a cart.*

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*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.*

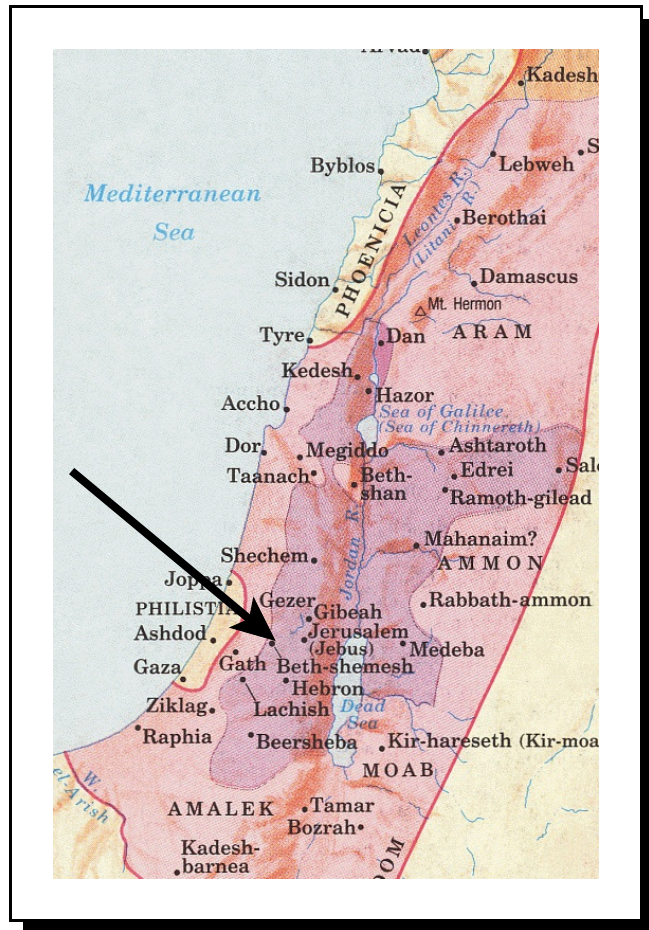
2 Samuel 6:6-7 (KJV)

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This time the Israelites had the Ark. It seems strange that God would slay a man for reaching out steadying it. We shall wait until that point to answer this. Nothing was

overlooked here. They planned on using two *milch* cows to haul the Ark. "Milch" cows are cows which were still nursing their calves. This might seem strange - such a cow would not likely wander far from its young. That was the exact point of it. If the cows DID go somewhere else, it had to be Israel's God that was directing the animal.

*"Take the ark of the Lord and place it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you return to Him as a guilt offering in a box by its side. Then send it away that it may go. That it may go where? That, they figured would tell them whether or not God accepted. If the two cows pulled it to the Israelites, God must be in it. Watch, if it goes up by the way of its own territory to Beth-shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we will know that it was not His hand that struck us; it happened to us by chance."* Beth-shemesh is indicated by the arrow on the map to the right.



*lords of the Philistines followed them to the border of Beth-shemesh. Mission accomplished!*

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*Then the men did so, and took two milch cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. They put the ark of the Lord on the cart, and the box with the golden mice and the likenesses of their tumors. And the cows took the straight way in the direction of Beth-shemesh; they went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right or to the left. And the lords of the Philistines followed them to the border of Beth-shemesh.*

1 Samuel 6:10-12 (NASB)

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*Sure enough, these untrained cows left their young nursing calves and made a beeline to Beth-shemesh. And the cows took the straight way in the direction of Beth-shemesh; they went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right or to the left. And the*

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*Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they raised their eyes and saw the ark and were glad to see it. The cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and stood there where there was a large stone; and they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. The Levites took down the ark of the Lord and the box that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices that day to the Lord. When the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned to Ekron that day.*

1 Samuel 6:13-16 (NASB)

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Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they raised their eyes and saw the ark and were glad to see it. The ark had finally come home . . . well, at least into the possession of Israelites.

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Beth-shemesh -- that is, "house of the sun," now Ain Shems [ROBINSON], a city of priests in Judah, in the southeast border of Dan, lying in a beautiful and extensive valley. JOSEPHUS says they were set a-going near a place where the road divided into two -- the one leading back to Ekron, where were their calves, and the other to Beth-shemesh. Their frequent lowings attested their ardent longing for their young, and at the same time the supernatural influence that controlled their movements in a contrary direction.

—Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

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*The cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and stood there where there was a large stone; and they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord.* Notice the words "Joshua the Beth-shemite" which make it clear that this is not the Joshua who lead Israel across the Jordan river. This time they did right. They used the cart for wood and the cows for a sacrifice which they offered unto the Lord. Not only was a sacrifice offered, but this rid them of anything belonging to the Philistines (except the hemorrhoids).

*When the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned to Ekron that day.* Apparently, they were satisfied that they had done the right thing and so could go home in peace.

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*These are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned for a guilt offering to the Lord: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fortified cities and of country*

*villages. The large stone on which they set the ark of the Lord is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite. He struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. He struck down of all the people, 50,070 men, and the people mourned because the Lord had struck the people with a great slaughter. The men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God? And to whom shall He go up from us?" So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the Lord; come down and take it up to you."*

1 Samuel 6:17-21 (NASB)

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It is apparent what the reason for the tumors was, *These are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned for a guilt offering to the Lord: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron.* One for each affected city. Why the "golden mice." I have checked a number of commentaries and none of them had a specific reason for the mice other than that the mice had probably plagued them and so they threw them in "for good measure."

*The large stone on which they set the ark of the Lord is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite. He struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the Lord.* There's the old saying "curiosity killed the cat" and in this case, it killed some of the Israelites. How many? *He struck down of all the people, 50,070 men, and the people mourned because the Lord had struck the people with a great slaughter.* The Hebrew here is strange and an equivalent



A tumor (hemorrhoid) on the face



statement would be "He killed 70 50,000 men. Not only is there no connection between the "70" and the "50,000" but it stands in the wrong place (i.e. 50,000 and 70). Most commentaries agree that there is something missing here and God would not have slain 50,000 men nor could that many have looked into the ark.

In any case, *they said "Who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God? And to whom shall He go up from us?" So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the Lord; come down and take it up to you."* They wanted it out of their territory, and for good reason!

## CHAPTER SEVEN

Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served the Lord only. And Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you." So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the Lord. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the Lord." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah. Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. So the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines." And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. Then Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us."

1 Samuel 7:1-12 (NKJV)

Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. Nothing has been said about a man named Abinadab up to this point. Within the Book of Samuel, three men by this is the first. אַבִּינָדָב is mentioned here. The name is a compound meaning *my father is noble*<sup>11</sup> His son was Eleazer, אֱלֵעָזָר = God has helped<sup>11</sup> There are six people by this name in the Old Testament.

So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. Twenty years may be a long time or a short time, depending on the circumstances. In this case, the Ark was not where it belonged and all Israel longed for the day when it would be returned to its rightful place.

Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." By this time Samuel was known to be Israel's judge and had to be over 35 years old since that it how long the ark had been gone. His answer to Israel was to put away their foreign gods. Who were they? The TV, the Fraternity or just plain money! Even a church can be a "strange God" when the church is worshiped more than the head of the church - Jesus Christ.

So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served the Lord only. K&D make a point out of the fact that verses 2

<sup>11</sup>Brown-Driver-Briggs

and 3 are grammatically connected. They give a plausible translation,

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"And it came to pass, when the days multiplied from the time that the ark remained at Kirjath-jearim, and grew to twenty years, and the whole house of Israel mourned after Jehovah, that Samuel said," etc.

— Keil and Delitzsch

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In other words, the text does not say that, after twenty years the people began to complain. They complained all through that time and, finally, Samuel made a decree. After twenty years the people were, apparently, quite willing to give up their other Gods. Why Samuel only mentioned the Ashtoreths, the following verse says they also rid themselves of their (images of) Baal. Baal was the most "general" of the foreign gods" of Canaan.

*And Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you." So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the Lord. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the Lord. I believe their repentance was real*

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Drawing water and pouring it out before Jehovah was a symbolical act, which has been thus correctly explained by the Chaldee, on the whole: "They poured out their heart like water in penitence before the Lord." This is evident from the figurative expressions, "poured out like water," in Ps 22:15, and "pour out thy heart like water," in Lam 2:19, which are used to denote inward dissolution through pain, misery, and distress (see 2 Samuel 14:14). Hence the pouring out of water before God was a symbolical representation of the temporal and spiritual distress in which they were at the time,—a practical confession before God, "Behold, we are before Thee like water that has been poured out;" — Keil and Delitzsch

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*And Samuel judged the children of Israel at*

*Mizpah Everything was now well - for a while! But, when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. So the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines." They had already been through the anguish of dealing with the Philistines. They now needed some new help - Samuel. Samuel would deliver them or, at least, the Lord would hear Samuel's petitions and answer them.*

*And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. Then Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel.*

The "but" above is an incorrect translation for the waw consecutive. It should be "and," or as the HCSB has it,

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Samuel was offering the burnt offering as the Philistines drew near to fight against Israel. The Lord thundered loudly against the Philistines that day and threw them into such confusion that they fled before Israel.

1 Samuel 7:10 (HCSB)

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*And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." Eben Nezer is "Stone of Help."*

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*So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. Then the*

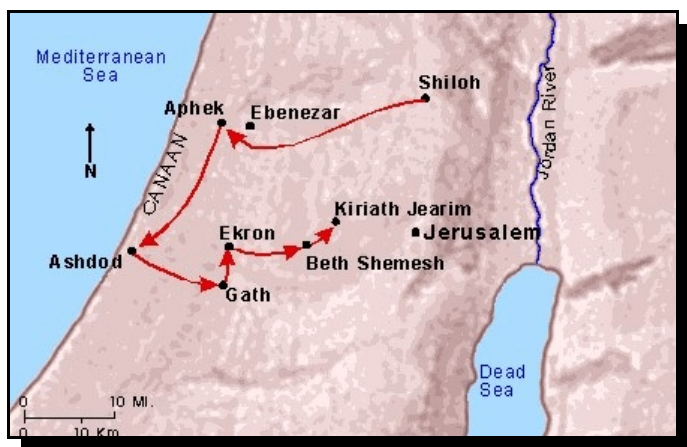
*cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered its territory from the hands of the Philistines. Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. But he always returned to Ramah, for his home was there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the Lord.*

1 Samuel 7:13-17 (NKJV)

*So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel.* This statement can easily be misinterpreted. Here is the proper one.

Through this victory which was obtained by the miraculous help of God, the Philistines were so humbled, that they no more invaded the territory of Israel, i.e., with lasting success, as they had done before. This limitation of the words "they came no more" (lit. "they did not add again to come into the border of Israel"), is implied in the context; for the words which immediately follow, "and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel," show that they made attempts to recover their lost supremacy, but that so long as Samuel lived they were unable to effect anything against Israel

—Keil and Delitzsch



This is born out by the statement, *And the*

*hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.*

*Then the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered its territory from the hands of the Philistines*

*Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.*

*He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. But he always returned to Ramah, for his home was there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the Lord*

With this statement we have reached one of those places I noted in the introduction. We have traced the history of Samuel and have completed it. Yes, Samuel is mentioned many times in the chapters to follow, but we are now embarking on the life of King Saul. We shall now carry that to the end.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

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*And it came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judging in Beersheba. His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice.*

1 Samuel 8:1-3 (NASB)

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Eli was not the only one who had trouble with sons. This seems to happen all too often. Was Samuel so tied up in his ministry that he did not spend enough time with his sons?

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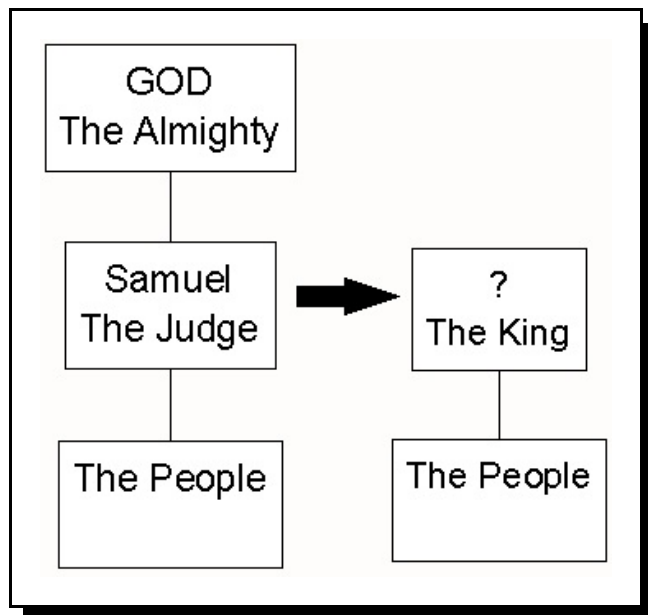
*Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations." But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. The Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. "Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them."*

1 Samuel 8:4-9 (NASB)

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*Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. We can, hopefully, keep ourselves right before the Lord but there is no way we can insist that sons or daughters do likewise. Eli could not nor could Samuel. I suspect it is pretty much the same in all families. So, they needed another judge*

This time, however, the people erred in what they asked for. *Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.*" Now they wanted a king to rule over them.



In "Business Terms" they wanted a change in the organization chart for Israel. The old system didn't work right - they had to keep getting new judges. BUT! They could get new judges. Once they had someone as king, God would no longer be the ultimate authority, they would have to follow the king. So, "Please find us a king!"

*But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. The Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. By then, to use common terms, they wanted to be like the other nations who had a king they could see and speak to. Samuel knew this would not be right and did not want to listen to them but God had the last word. THEY HAVE REJECTED ME! So now, if it were not for God's providence, they would really be like other nations and come to nothing. How many*

nations that existed in Samuel's day exist now? None except Israel.

*"Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. "Don't feel too bad, Samuel, they have treated Me like they are treating you!"*

*Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them."*

God is going to give them a chance, Once they have heard what it would be like with a king, if they still want one, they would have one. BUT, they could have said, "No, we think maybe we are better off the way we are."

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*So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king. He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. "He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. "He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants. "He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants. "He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use them for his work. "He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. "Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."*

1 Samuel 8:10-18 (NASB)

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*So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king. He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: Get ready for a long list of things. I think you would have used the "long 1040 form" with this king. You think income taxes are bad. See what Samuel told the people this king would do TO them (not FOR them)!*

SONS:

(1) "The Secret Service" *He will place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots.*

(2)"The Draft" *He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties*

(3) People to provide provisions: *some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest*

(4) Equal rights for women. The women would have to work as well. *He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers.*

(5) Taxes. *"He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants. "He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants. "He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use them for his work. "He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants.*

What would be the result of all this? The same sort of revolt that we see happening here in the U.S. *"Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."* People would then call on God but the king would supercede in this,

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*Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge*

*us and go out before us and fight our battles." Now after Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the LORD'S hearing. The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice and appoint them a king." So Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."*

1 Samuel 8:19-22 (NASB)

*Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles. I would supposed that people back then were as naive as they are today. They wanted someone to go fight their battles for them so they could stay home. But they never considered that they would be the ones the king would draft into his army to fight. The people really did not understand the role of a king. They, without thinking, thought the king would solve all their problems. They gave no thought to the problems they would have with a king.*

*Now after Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the LORD'S hearing. Samuel was a good man, He went straight to the Lord and told Him what was going on (even though, of course, God would have already known - He is omnipresent and omniscient.*

*The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice and appoint them a king." God told Samuel, "Do it!" Samuel obeyed and begin by sending each man to his own city. Why? I suppose we will have to look at the next chapter for the answer.*

## CHAPTER NINE

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*Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor. He had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.*

1 Samuel 9:1-2 (NASB)

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*Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor.*

Bible commentaries are somewhat strange.

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A mighty man of power—Literally, a strong man; this appears to be the only power he possessed; and the physical strength of the father may account for the extraordinary size of the son. See 1 Samuel 9:2.

Adam Clark

a mighty man of power -- that is, of great wealth and substance. The family was of high consideration in the tribe of Benjamin, and therefore Saul's words must be set down among the common forms of affected humility, which Oriental people are wont to use.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

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One commentary says "a mighty man of valor" refers to his physical strength, the other says it refers to his financial strength, I believe the first is correct consider the use of this phrase in other places in the Scriptures.

The tribe a Benjamin is a very interesting one.

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*Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath,*

*Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor. When she was in severe labor the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for now you have another son." It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.*

Genesis 35:16-18 (NASB)

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Rachel named he child "Son of my Sorrow." I would not like going through life with a name like that. His father named him Benjamin which means "son of my right hand."

I suppose I may be alone in this interpretation, but if Jacob and reached out with his right hand to take his son's hand, he would naturally reach out to his son's left hand. Many of the Benjamites were left handed.

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*But when the sons of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. And the sons of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab.*

Judges 3:15 (NASB)

*From the cities on that day the sons of Benjamin were numbered, 26,000 men who draw the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah who were numbered, 700 choice men. Out of all these people 700 choice men were left-handed; each one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.*

Judges 20:15-16 (NASB)

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Perhaps King Saul was also left handed but we are not told this.

*Saul, a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.*

Dr. McGee wrote,



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This boy Saul was handsome. Physically he looked like a king, but he was an actor that played a part. He was not a king at heart. The people, however, were choosing their king by his outward appearance and not according to his character.

It is this emphasis on "outward appearance" that places our nation in such a dangerous position today. The most dangerous enemy we have is the television. The man that will ultimately control this country is the man who has a good television appearance. Why? Because we choose men by the way they look and the way they talk rather than by their character. If only we had an X-ray -- instead of the television -- that would reveal the true character of a man!

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

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*Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to his son Saul, "Take now with you one of the servants, and arise, go search for the donkeys." He passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them. When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, and let us return, or else my father will cease to be concerned about the donkeys and will become anxious for us." He said to him, "Behold now, there is a man of God in this city, and the man is held in honor; all that he says surely comes true. Now let us go there, perhaps he can tell us about our journey on which we have set out." Then Saul said to his servant, "But behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread is gone from our sack and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" The servant answered Saul again and said, "Behold, I have in my hand a fourth of a shekel of silver; I will give it to the man of God and he will tell us our way." (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say,*

*"Come, and let us go to the seer"; for he who is called a prophet now was formerly called a seer.) Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.*

1 Samuel 9:3-10 (NASB)

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*Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to his son Saul, "Take now with you one of the servants, and arise, go search for the donkeys. The search for a king of Israel began with a simple search for some lost donkeys. One might say that some politicians are a bunch of donkeys as well!*

*" He passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them. They conducted a rather thorough search, going through Ephraim, Shalishah, Shaalim, and the land of Benjamin. They, thus, covered a lot of territory looking for the donkeys.*

*When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, and let us return, or else my father will cease to be concerned about the donkeys and will become anxious for us." Saul was a good son. He realized that they had been gone so long his father would be concerned about him. This was one credit to Saul.*

*Then his servant said to him, "Behold now, there is a man of God in this city, and the man is held in honor; all that he says surely comes true. Now let us go there, perhaps he can tell us about our journey on which we have set out." The servant evidently knew about Samuel's whereabouts and his reputation and wisely suggested they ask for his help.*

People do not realize that their pastors have a lot of other things to do besides preach on Sunday. They have to be available to help those people whom come to him.

*Then Saul said to his servant, "But behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread is gone from our sack and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"* Here is another plus for Saul. He, no doubt, knew that Samuel might be able to help them but you do not ask favors of people without being able to give in return. What did they have they could give him?

*The servant answered Saul again and said, "Behold, I have in my hand a fourth of a shekel of silver; I will give it to the man of God and he will tell us our way."* A fourth of a shekel weighed about 1/10th of an ounce - it did not represent very much value. Yet there are two things to note: (1) It is better to give what you have than to expect to get something for nothing. At least it shows good intent, and (2) the servant seemed to have some God-given knowledge that Samuel would, indeed, help them.

*(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, "Come, and let us go to the seer"; for he who is called a prophet now was formerly called a seer.)*

*Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was. The matter was settled, they would go see this man and enlist his help in finding the donkeys. This is what they thought anyway. God's ways are not always our ways and God had different plans which we shall come to.*

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*As they went up the slope to the city, they found young women going out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?" They answered them and said, "He is; see, he is ahead of you. Hurry now, for he has come into the city today, for the people have a sacrifice on the high place today. "As soon as you enter the city you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up for you will find him*

*at once." "As soon as you enter the city you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat*

1 Samuel 9:11-14 (NASB)

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*As they went up the slope to the city, they found young women going out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?" They had running water in the city - the young women were running out to get water!*

Now, what a coincidence! The ladies answered *,them and said, "He is; see, he is ahead of you. Hurry now, for he has come into the city today, for the people have a sacrifice on the high place today.*

By chance they decided to consult the "seer." By chance the ladies had seen him and where he was going and what he was about to do. Surprising enough, there are some Christians who would believe that. Chance was not a factor - God was orchestrating the whole scene.

Not only did they know where Samuel was, they knew about what was to happen - *"As soon as you enter the city you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. They "guaranteed" them that they would find Samuel.*

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*Now a day before Saul's coming, the LORD had revealed this to Samuel saying, "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over My people Israel; and he will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to Me." When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, "Behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall rule over My people." Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said,*

*"Please tell me where the seer's house is." Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and in the morning I will let you go, and will tell you all that is on your mind. "As for your donkeys which were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's household?" Saul replied, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me in this way?"*

1 Samuel 9:15-21 (NASB)

Years before, Samuel had said, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth. The day before Saul went to the city, the Lord spoke again to Samuel.

*Now a day before Saul's coming, the LORD had revealed this to Samuel saying, "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over My people Israel; and he will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines.*

The king which the people asked for was to meet Samuel the next day. I wonder what must have gone through Samuel's mind at that point!

This man would be Israel's king and, as such, he would deliver them from the Philistines.

Would Saul actually deliver them from the Philistines? Well, partly. But consider what happened after David slew Goliath.

*And Saul was very wrath, 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?*

1 Samuel 18:8 (KJV)

Going on with Samuel's meeting with Saul. For

*I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to Me." God tell's Samuel, "This is the man I have chosen." When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, "Behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall rule over My people."*

"The Lord said to him" is not really a proper translation of the phrase. The verb is "to answer," not "to say."

When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord answered him, sc., in reply to the tacit inquiry, 'Is this he?' "Behold, this is the man of whom I spake to thee." רצע , coercere imperio.

—Keil and Delitzsch

I make a point of this because, as I noted previously in the beginning of this book, the Lord sometimes speaks to people in an audible voice. How He does it is beyond my ability to comprehend but I know this is so because He has spoken in an audible voice to me on a few occasions.

*Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Please tell me where the seer's house is." Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and in the morning I will let you go, and will tell you all that is on your mind.*

This is a bit strange. Neither man, at this point, spoke of the thing that was foremost in each man's mind. "Where are my father's donkeys" "This is Israel's new king!" Instead they would go up for the sacrificial meal and they would discuss "business" on the next day. When I was a boy, it was rather difficult to find any kind of business that was open on Sunday. There might have been a grocery store or two but that was about it. Now, we use the Lord's day to conduct all sorts of business!

*"As for your donkeys which were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for*

*they have been found.* So that Saul might concentrate of the sacrificial meal, Samuel informed him that the donkeys had been found so he could put that to rest.

Then the conversation becomes somewhat complicated. *And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's household?" Saul replied, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me in this way?"* Samuel was indicating that Saul was the man Israel was seeking but it does not appear that Saul understood the full impact of this, only that why should anyone be concerned with him. He was of the smallest tribe and the least of the families of the tribe. Why?

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*Then Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who were invited, who were about thirty men. Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion that I gave you, concerning which I said to you, 'Set it aside.'" Then the cook took up the leg with what was on it and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, "Here is what has been reserved! Set it before you and eat, because it has been kept for you until the appointed time, since I said I have invited the people." So Saul ate with Samuel that day. When they came down from the high place into the city, Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof. And they arose early; and at daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the roof, saying, "Get up, that I may send you away." So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street. As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Say to the servant that he might go ahead of us and pass on, but you remain standing now, that I may proclaim the word of God to you."*

1 Samuel 9:22-27 (NASB)

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*Then Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who were invited,*

*who were about thirty men.*

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When they arrived at the high place, he conducted Saul and his servant into the cell (the apartment prepared for the sacrificial meal), and gave them (the servant as well as Saul, according to the simple customs of antiquity, as being also his guest) a place at the upper end among those who had been invited. There were about thirty persons present, no doubt the most distinguished men of the city, whilst the rest of the people probably encamped in the open air.

— Keil and Delitzsch

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*Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion that I gave you, concerning which I said to you, 'Set it aside.'" Samuel had previously (previous to the meal) instructed the cook to prepare a special part of the animal for Saul.*

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*Also the right thigh you shall give to the priest as a heave offering from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. He among the sons of Aaron, who offers the blood of the peace offering and the fat, shall have the right thigh for his part.*

Leviticus 7:32-33 (NKJV)

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Saul was given the right thigh to eat. Expositors do not agree on how much of the thigh Saul was given. Given Saul's side, they should have given him a considerable portion. There is also not a good deal of agreement when Samuel gave the instructions to the cook. It would seem that the instructions had been given before Saul's arrival - a sign that this had been told Samuel ahead of time.

*Then the cook took up the leg with what was on it and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, "Here is what has been reserved! Set it before you and eat, because it has been kept for you until the appointed time, since I said I have invited the people." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.*

*When they came down from the high place into*

*the city, Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof. I don't know about you but I have not spoken to anyone on a roof since I was a small boy. (I fell of the garage roof of the boy next door and broke my leg!)*

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sleeping quarters on roof. Though the presence of stairways and supporting pillars (among other evidences) show that many houses had second (or even third) stories, archaeologists are usually not able to recover more than the floor plan of houses in the remaining rubble of occupation levels. Second stories (rooms on the roof) were desirable for family activities and sleeping because they offered better ventilation.

Bible Background Commentary.

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*And they arose early; and at daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the roof, saying, "Get up, that I may send you away." So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.* I have previously noted that the Hebrew language has a word for "rising early" It comes from the word for shoulder and the derivation is that one rose up early to place things on the shoulders of their animals in preparation for a trip.

*As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Say to the servant that he might go ahead of us and pass on, but you remain standing now, that I may proclaim the word of God to you." What was to happen next was a private matter between Samuel and Saul.*

## CHAPTER TEN

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*Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: "Is it not because the LORD has anointed you commander over His inheritance? When you have departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?" ' Then you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive from their hands. After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying. Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. And let it be, when these signs come to you, that you do as the occasion demands; for God is with you. You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do."*

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1 Samuel 10:1-8 (NKJV)

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*Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: "Is it not because the LORD has anointed you commander over His inheritance? Saul must have been surprised to have oil poured on his head. I will not comment on Samuel's "kissing" of Saul. This was a different culture and a different age!*

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Anointing with oil as a symbol of endowment with the Spirit of God; as the oil itself, by virtue of the strength which it gives to the vital spirits, was a symbol of the Spirit of God as the principle of divine and spiritual power (see at Lev 8:12). Hitherto there had been no other anointing among the people of God than that of the priests and sanctuary (Ex 30:23ff.; Lev 8:10ff.). When Saul, therefore, was consecrated as king by anointing, the monarchy was inaugurated as a divine institution, standing on a par with the priesthood;

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Keil and Delitzsch

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*When you have departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?" ' These words are remarkable in the detail with which they describe what was to befall Saul that day.*

The events to follow were to be a Rachel's tomb

It was set up as noted below.

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*And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.*

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Genesis 35:20 (NKJV)

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The actual tomb is no longer in existence. Several "restorations" have been made by the exact place is not really known. It was fitting that the tomb of the mother of Benjamin was the place where Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin was to meet.

Saul was told exactly who he would see (two men) and what they would tell him. Saul's father was worried about him (as was

expressed by Saul's servant previously).

Next in the events which would unfold is given *Then you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive from their hands*

In discussing the great detail given in these accounts, one commentator has written,

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This was a good experience for the young king, for it assured him that God could solve his problems. One of Saul's greatest failures as a leader was his inability to take his hands off of situations and let God work. In modern language, Saul was a "control freak." Yet while Saul and his servant were dining with Samuel, God was at work saving the lost animals.

Bible Exposition Commentary

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*After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying*

The next thing that would happen that day would be to meet a group of prophets accompanied by musicians. Because of the presence of the instruments, it probably was some sort of celebration.

As far as the instruments being played,

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Nebel and Kinnor are stringed instruments which were used after David's time in connection with the psalmody of divine worship (1 Chron 13:8; 15:20; Ps 33:2; 43:4, etc.). The nebel was an instrument resembling a lyre, the kinnor was more like a guitar than a harp.

Toph: the tambourin, which was played by Miriam at the Red Sea

Keil and Delitzsch

It has been noted by others that the tambourine did not have metal disks around the side - it was basically a small drum. Some drawings and a photo of these instruments are shown to the right.



*Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.*

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*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB)

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God would get hold of Saul and make him to be the kind of man that was needed to be Israel's king. The text does not indicate what changes may have come over him other than he began to prophesy.

Before we continue, there is a prophetic point here that is easy to miss.

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*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB)

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As the Holy Spirit (i.e. Spirit of the Lord) came upon Saul, he became a "new creature" - a "new man." BUT

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*And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.*

1 Samuel 16:23 (NKJV)

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This giving of the Spirit in the Old Testament was not permanent. God could and would take it away. so the Psalmist wrote,

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*Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit.*

Psalms 51:10-12 (NASB)

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So, you and I are much better off since the Holy Spirit will not leave us!

*And let it be, when these signs come to you, that you do as the occasion demands; for God is with you. All the events we have been studying were meant to show Saul without a doubt that God was going to use him. It is a very strong statement to say that God was with him.*

Moses' successor, Joshua, was told,

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*"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

Joshua 1:8-9 (NASB)

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The Lord would be with Saul - for a time as we shall see later.

*You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do."* In concluding, Samuel gave Saul his "marching orders." He was to go to Gilgal and wait for Samuel who would then instruct him in what the Lord had for him to do. Why in Gilgal? What had happened there to make it significant?

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. Gilgal was assigned to Benjamin's tribe when Canaan was divided among the tribes of Israel. For many years it was a center of religious, political, and military importance, especially during the periods of the conquest of Canaan and the early monarchy under Saul.

Gilgal was the first place where Israel encamped in Palestine after the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River (Jos 4:19). No doubt the tabernacle was set up here, since Israel occupied Gilgal for some time and used it as the center of the commonwealth. Several significant religious events occurred at Gilgal: the circumcision of all Hebrew males born in the wilderness during the 40 years of wandering (5:2-9), the celebration of the Passover (v 10), the cessation of the manna (v 12), and a divine manifestation to Joshua by the "commander of the army of the Lord" (vv 13-15).

Tyndale Bible Dictionary

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Since Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin and since so many important events ("firsts") happened there, that was Samuel's choice for the place to meet.

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*Then it happened when he turned his back to leave Samuel, God changed his heart; and all those signs came about on that day. When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them. It came about, when all who knew him previously saw that he prophesied now with the prophets, that the people said to*



one another, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" A man there said, "Now, who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place. Now Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?" And he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that they could not be found, we went to Samuel." Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you." So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But he did not tell him about the matter of the kingdom which Samuel had mentioned.

1 Samuel 10:9-16 (NASB)

Then it happened when he turned his back to leave Samuel, God changed his heart; and all those signs came about on that day. When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them.

As I have noted a number of times, I get tired of the expression "Then it happened. . ." Things just "don't happen" to God's people. The Holman Bible has here,

When Saul turned around to leave Samuel, God changed his heart, and all the signs came about that day.

1 Samuel 10:9 (HCSB)

When God gets started, He wastes no time. In Isaiah we read,

"But these two things will come on you suddenly in one day: Loss of children and widowhood. They will come on you in full measure In spite of your many sorceries, In spite of the great power of your spells.

Isaiah 47:9 (NASB)

Saul's confirmation was not a long drawn out affair, it was all accomplished in one day. Dr.

McGee didn't think Samuel was all that smart!

When Saul left Samuel, I think Samuel watched him walk away and said, "My, he is a fine fellow." But even a prophet can be wrong. The prophet Nathan was wrong when he told David to build God a house. God had to intervene, and Nathan had to correct himself. Samuel was wrong about Saul. As he looked at this young man Saul, he saw a big, husky, fine-looking fellow. He would have been able to play in the line of any professional football team. But he was no king at all.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Saul's transformation was quite astounding. The people said, *When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them. It came about, when all who knew him previously saw that he prophesied now with the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"* Until then, Saul was a nobody. A son of the smallest tribes in Israel.

Now in Gibeon, Jeiel, the father of Gibeon lived, and his wife's name was Maacah; and his firstborn son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, Gedor, Ahio and Zecher.

1 Chronicles 8:29-31 (NASB)

Kish was the third born of Jeiel. On the other hand,

The description of Saul as being from the humblest family of the tribe of Benjamin is probably a good example of oriental modesty (1 Sam. 9:21).

Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary

A man there said, "Now, who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" JFB wrote,

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a man without any previous instruction, or any known taste, entering with ardor into the spirit, and skilfully accompanying the melodies of the sacred band, was so extraordinary a phenomenon, that it gave rise to the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

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*When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place. Now Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?" And he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that they could not be found, we went to Samuel."*

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How Saul could live so close to Israel's spiritual leader and not know about him is a bit of a mystery and suggests that Saul simply lived and farmed with his family at Gibeah and minded his own business. Apparently he didn't attend the annual feasts and wasn't greatly concerned about spiritual matters. Like many people today, he wasn't against religion, but he didn't make knowing the Lord a vital part of his life. It's a good thing the servant knew about Samuel and that Saul heeded his advice!

Bible Exposition Commentary

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*Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you." So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." So far so good. He told his father about hearing the donkeys had been found - BUT - he did not tell him about the matter of the kingdom which Samuel had mentioned. I suppose it is not unusual that a person's family is the last to find out what has happened to a son or daughter. Saul was, apparently, afraid to tell Kish about what else happened.*

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***Thereafter Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah; and he said to the sons of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought Israel up from Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the power of all the kingdoms that were oppressing***

*you.' "But you have today rejected your God, who delivers you from all your calamities and your distresses; yet you have said, 'No, but set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans." Thus Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. Then he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its families, and the Matrite family was taken. And Saul the son of Kish was taken; but when they looked for him, he could not be found. Therefore they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?" So the LORD said, "Behold, he is hiding himself by the baggage." So they ran and took him from there, and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people." So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!"*

1 Samuel 10:17-24 (NASB)

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*Thereafter Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah; and he said to the sons of Israel. From the map in the next column, it may be seen that Mizpah, as well as some of the other places mentioned, are all in the vicinity of Jerusalem.*



*"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought Israel up from Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the power of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.' "But you have today rejected your God, who delivers you from all your calamities and your distresses; yet you have said, 'No, but set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans. There is the sound of disgust in Samuel's statement here. The Lord had done great things for them in the past but now - they wanted a human king to reign over them. You and I know who the "King of Kings" is and it would be far better to be under His leadership than that of an ordinary man (even if he was tall).*

It was time to select a king. Even though Samuel knew who it would be, he goes through the selection process often used in Israel to select a certain person.

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According to biblical usage, lots seem to have been used only when the decision was important and where wisdom or biblical injunctions did not give sufficient guidance. One of the advantages of the casting of lots was the impartiality of the choice. It was held that the Lord directed the lots

Tyndale Bible Dictionary

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*Thus Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. Then he brought the tribe of Benjamin near*

*by its families, and the Matrite family was taken. And Saul the son of Kish was taken; As one might expect, the lot fell upon Saul. What was not expected is that no one could find him! This in spite that he stood a head taller than all the other men!*

*They inquired of the Lord who told them "Behold, he is hiding himself by the baggage.*

Where the found him depends on the translation you read:

- "the equipment." (NKJV)
- "among the stuff (KJV)
- "by the baggage." (NASB)
- "among the supplies." (HCSB)

"baggage" seems to be the most common interpretation.

Why would he be hiding? This was to be his big day! *So they ran and took him from there, and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward.* Yep, he was still a head taller than anyone else.

*Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people." So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!"* Well, it sound like the happy ending to a fairy tale. But this was for real. "Long live the King!" They people were, at this point, elated. One commentator noted that this is the beginning of the proclamation "Long live the king!" The only problem is that is not exactly what was said. The KJV is even worse with "God save the King!" (Since this is the "King James" translation, I suppose you might expect this! I suppose we will have to stick with "Long live the king!" even though the Hebrew equivalent of "long" is not found in the text.

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*Then Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote them in the book and placed it before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his house.*

*Saul also went to his house at Gibeah; and the valiant men whose hearts God had touched went with him. But certain worthless men said, "How can this one deliver us?" And they despised him and did not bring him any present. But he kept silent.*

1 Samuel 10:25-27 (NASB)

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The people then divided into three, more or less logical groups:

- The ordinary people went home
- The men with warrior's hearts
- The jealous ones who did nothing.

Even though Saul was now, officially, king, he went to his own home, The men who were "with him" followed him there. The text does not say how long they remained at Gibeah or, even, if they took up residence there.

Saul knew that there were some who did not like him or approve of him, but the text says that Saul kept silent. At this point, he let them be,

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

Now Nahash the Ammonite came up and besieged Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us and we will serve you." But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "I will make it with you on this condition, that I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you, thus I will make it a reproach on all Israel." The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Let us alone for seven days, that we may send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to deliver us, we will come out to you." Then the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and spoke these words in the hearing of the people, and all the people lifted up their voices and wept.

1 Samuel 11:1-4 (NASB)

Well, I do not know what period of time passed between this passage and the previous one. But, one day, the people would need Saul.

The Ammonite people lay siege<sup>12</sup> on Jabesh Gilead. See the map to the right, A siege might last a long time, depending on how much food and water the people had within the city walls.

All the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us and we will serve you." They would rather be slaves that killed by the



<sup>12</sup>siege >n. 1 a military operation in which enemy forces surround a town or building, cutting off essential supplies, with the aim of compelling the surrender of those inside

sword!

The response was something else. *But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "I will make it with you on this condition, that I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you, thus I will make it a reproach on all Israel."* Who would want to go around the rest of their life with the right eye missing? This was a rather extreme demand,

I may thrust out all your right eyes—This cruel condition would serve at once as a badge of their slavery, and a means of incapacitating them from being effective warriors. Theodoret observes, "He who opposes his shield to the enemy with his left hand, thereby hides his left eye, and looks at his enemy with his right eye; he therefore who plucks out that right eye makes men useless in war." Josephus gives the same reason.

Adam Clark

*The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Let us alone for seven days, that we may send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to deliver us, we will come out to you."* The people wanted time to weigh their options. Perhaps they could obtain deliverance someday, So, they asked for a week to make up their minds.

*Then, if there is no one to deliver us, we will come out to you."* If they spend the week looking for help and find none, they really would have no choice. Interestingly, the Ammonites agreed to the delay.

*Then the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and spoke these words in the hearing of the people, and all the people lifted up their voices and wept.* What a sad situation. The people "lifted up their voices and prayed." Nope! They lifted their voices to cry and weep. They were making a wrong choice. But don't get too critical - how often do we do the same sort of thing?

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*Now behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen, and he said, "What is the matter with the people that they weep?" So they related to him the words of the men of Jabesh. Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily when he heard these words, and he became very angry. He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout the territory of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen." Then the dread of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out as one man. He numbered them in Bezek; and the sons of Israel were 300,000, and the men of Judah 30,000. They said to the messengers who had come, "Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh-gilead, 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you will have deliverance.'" So the messengers went and told the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. Then the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do to us whatever seems good to you." The next morning Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp at the morning watch and struck down the Ammonites until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.*

1 Samuel 11:5-11 (NASB)

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*Now behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen, and he said, "What is the matter with the people that they weep?"* Apparently, Saul had not began his "official duties" as king but was still working on his fathers farm.

When he came to town he saw people crying - why? Of course, the answer is because of the condition of people in Gilead.

*So they related to him the words of the men of Jabesh. Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily when he heard these words, and he became very angry.* The Spirit of God came "mightily" on Saul. This was not the first time that the Spirit enabled a man to deliver

Israel.

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*[Othneal] The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.*

Judges 3:10 (NASB)

*[Gideon] So the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him.*

Judges 6:34 (NASB)

*[Jephthah] Now the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, so that he passed through Gilead and Manasseh; then he passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he went on to the sons of Ammon.*

Judges 11:29 (NASB)

*[Samson] Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of them and took their spoil and gave the changes of clothes to those who told the riddle. And his anger burned, and he went up to his father's house.*

Judges 14:19 (NASB)

(There are several more passages regarding Samson)

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Was Saul wrong to get "very angry?" Well,

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*BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.*

Ephesians 4:26-27 (NASB)

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Paul, here, quoted from the Psalms.

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*Know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD will hear when I call to him. In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah*

Psalms 4:3-4 (NIV)

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Anger can be good if it causes you to react and correct the thing that is the source of your anger. It is wrong when you let it simmer (overnight) and grow out of proportion.

Saul acted immediately. *He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout the territory of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen."*

It does not say whose oxen he cut up, it is not important. It sending the cutup portions to all the tribes which constituted a call to warfare.

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This particular form of war summons was suited to the character and habits of an agricultural and pastoral people. Solemn in itself, the denunciation that accompanied it carried a terrible threat to those that neglected to obey it. Saul conjoins the name of Samuel with his own, to lend the greater influence to the measure, and to strike greater terror unto all contemners of the order. The small contingent furnished by Judah suggests that the disaffection to Saul was strongest in that tribe. — Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

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*Then the dread of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out as one man. He numbered them in Bezek; and the sons of Israel were 300,000, and the men of Judah 30,000. They came out as "one man," - they were united.*

A number of expositors disagree with the numbers given here. They also disagree with each other! So the following is the most reasonable.

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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.— Keil and Delitzsch

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*They said to the messengers who had come, "Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh-gilead, 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you will have deliverance.'" So the messengers went and told the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. In modern English, the message was that by mid-day their deliverance would come. Of course this made those in Jabesh "glad." The Psalmist enlarges upon this feeling with*

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*Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part is destruction; Their throat is an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue. Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, For they have rebelled against You. But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You. For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield.*

Psalms 5:8-12 (NKJV)

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*Then the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do to us whatever seems good to you." This verse is not real clear. The men were speaking to their enemies, the Ammonites. The message seems to say, "O.K., we give up, come here tomorrow and you can do whatever you want. Of course, they did not mention that 330,000 men of Israel would be there too!*

*The next morning Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp at the morning watch and struck down the Ammonites until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them*

*were left together.* They came into the camp "at the morning watch." This was 2:00 AM until sunrise. Thus, by the time the Ammonites came into the camp, there were greeted with this vast army. "No two were left together." So much for the Ammonites - for several hundred years anyway.

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*Then the people said to Samuel, "Who is he that said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death." But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished deliverance in Israel." Then Samuel said to the people, "Come and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there." So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they also offered sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.*

1 Samuel 11:12-15 (NASB)

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*Then the people said to Samuel, "Who is he that said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death." Now that Saul had proved himself, those who opposed his becoming king were in trouble. The people behind Saul wanted to execute them. No so with Saul! But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished deliverance in Israel."*

Saul gave the credit to the LORD and pardoned these people.

*Then Samuel said to the people, "Come and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there." So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal.* As noted before, Saul didn't really take over as king while he was plowing in the field. Now that he has proved himself (or, more specifically, God's working through him), it was time to make it official.

It must have been a glorious day for Israel. They now had the king they desired so much.

they had been freed from the Ammonites (for a time) and thus *they also offered sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.* Saul is now king!



## CHAPTER TWELVE

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*Then Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me and I have appointed a king over you. "Now, here is the king walking before you, but I am old and gray, and behold my sons are with you. And I have walked before you from my youth even to this day. "Here I am; bear witness against me before the LORD and His anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? I will restore it to you." They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." He said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day that you have found nothing in my hand." And they said, "He is witness."*

1 Samuel 12:1-5 (NASB)

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*Then Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me and I have appointed a king over you. "Now, here is the king walking before you, but I am old and gray, and behold my sons are with you.*

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Chapter 12 begins with the swan song of Samuel.

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 [1Sam. 12:1].

This is Samuel's swan song, his final speech. He was a remarkable man, and he was now succeeded by Saul. Although Israel's choice was a king rather than God, He would still bless the people if they would obey. That is evident. Saul was king, and God would give him every opportunity.

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 [1Sam.

12:2].

Samuel was brought up in the tabernacle. His life was spent in a "fish bowl" -- he was always in public view. Probably no man ever had quite the public life that Samuel had. Many times in our age a man moves into public life and the people accept him. Then suddenly someone finds out about his black past, and the hero comes falling to the ground. Such was not the case with Samuel. He was brought as a little boy, by his mother, to the tabernacle. He lived his entire life before the people. Then he put in this sad note of a fond father, "My sons are with you." In other words, "Why didn't you accept them?" Samuel tried to put them in position but God would not have them. They were boys who were not acceptable to Him.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

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*And I have walked before you from my youth even to this day. "Here I am; bear witness against me before the LORD and His anointed.*

- *Whose ox have I taken,*
- *Whose donkey have I taken,*
- *Whom have I defrauded?*
- *Whom have I oppressed,*
- *From whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it?*

*I will restore it to you."* Samuel went through a list of things that he could have done, but didn't. It is certainly not a conclusive list - it is representative. Samuel's life was an open book. People observed him from the time Hannah brought him to Eli until that present day.

When the Scribes and Pharisees brought the woman taken in adultery to Jesus, He said,

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*"Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?" They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. But when they persisted in*

*asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."*

John 8:5-7 (NASB)

No one threw a stone. None was sinless. I would suppose that you could say that Samuel had sinned because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." But, from a practical standpoint, there was nothing in his life to hide. He had done nothing that he might be accused of.

*They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." None accused him!*

*He said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day that you have found nothing in my hand." And they said, "He is witness." Now Samuel has been declared innocent of any wrongs, he goes on.*

*Then Samuel said to the people, "It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. "So now, take your stand, that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did for you and your fathers. "When Jacob went into Egypt and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron who brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place. "But they forgot the LORD their God, so He sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. "They cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth; but now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve You.' "Then the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Bedan and Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around, so that you lived in security.*

1 Samuel 12:6-11 (NASB)

*Then Samuel said to the people, "It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. "So now, take your stand, that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did for you and your fathers.*

In the passage above and that which follows, Samuel recounts the history of Israel.

Samuel is covering somewhere between 800 and 850 years of history in five short verses. That would be like a contemporary speaker addressing the failures of Christianity from the Crusades to the present in one hundred words or less. Bible Background Commentary

Others have referred to Acts 7 where, in 52 verses, Stephen recounted the entire history of Israel. Samuel begins by establishing the starting point - Egypt. Moses and Aaron could not have delivered them had not the Lord commissioned them to do so.

*"When Jacob went into Egypt and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron who brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place. Not only were they delivered from Egypt, but God settled them in the land they now possessed.*

*"But they forgot the LORD their God, so He sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. "They cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth; but now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve You.' Time after time they had strayed away from God and, when they got into trouble, they cried out to God for help. They must have been the same kind of people as us!*

*"Then the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Bedan and Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around, so that you lived in security. All through this history, God raised up Judges to deliver them up. (See Judges 7 for Jerubball, Bedan and Jephthah).*

Finally, for many years they had Samuel to intervene for them. This was just manifest in the battle with the Ammonites. Samuel goes into detail here.

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*"When you saw that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' although the LORD your God was your king. "Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen, whom you have asked for, and behold, the LORD has set a king over you. "If you will fear the LORD and serve Him, and listen to His voice and not rebel against the command of the LORD, then both you and also the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God. "If you will not listen to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the command of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers. "Even now, take your stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes. "Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the LORD, that He may send thunder and rain. Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of the LORD by asking for yourselves a king." So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.*

1 Samuel 12:12-18 (NASB)

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Samuel tells them it was not because of Saul they defeated the Ammonites, *"When you saw that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' although the LORD your God was your king.* God was still their "king." That is why they won the battle.

Samuel warns, *"Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen, whom you have asked for, and behold, the LORD has set a king over you. "If you will fear the LORD and serve Him, and listen to His voice and not rebel against the command of the LORD, then both you and also the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God. IF There is so much embodied in the word "if." If they would continue to fear the Lord, things would go right. But rebel against the command of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers.*

They had chosen a king. But God had another king in mind as we shall see later in this book, a shepherd boy named David. There was an interesting difference between Saul and David.

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*Now behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen, and he said, "What is the matter with the people that they weep?" So they related to him the words of the men of Jabesh.*

1 Samuel 11:5 (NASB)

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*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. 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. 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 Samuel 16:11-13 (KJV)

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These two passages point out a significant difference between Saul and David. Saul was a ploughman - David was a shepherd. Saul drove his animals with a whip. David led his sheep. Can you imagine this version of the 23 Psalm?

"The Lord is my herdsman, he maketh me work hard!"

There is an interesting observation here between shepherds and others..

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Thus, he would miss the practical illustration of the shepherd in the East who always leads his flock, never drives it. The story goes that a traveller in the East once saw a man driving a flock of sheep. He said to the man, "I thought that eastern shepherds always led their flocks, never drove them." Replied the man, "Oh, I am not the shepherd. I am the butcher." —

Wuest's Word Studies

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Saul was a butcher, David was a shepher. But, at this point in time, Israel had chosen Saul for their king.

*Even now, take your stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes. "Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the LORD, that He may send thunder and rain. Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of the LORD by asking for yourselves a king. Samuel was a man of faith! Would you make a statement like this and really believe that the Lord would answer it? What happened? So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.*

The Lord very definitely showed in the people that what Samuel said was true and they "greatly feared the Lord,." - for a while!

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*Then all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, so that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil by asking for ourselves a king." Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. "You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things*

*which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. "For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself. "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way. "Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. "But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away."*

1 Samuel 12:19-25 (NASB)

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*Then all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, so that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil by asking for ourselves a king."*

The comments related to this verse are few, one says,

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Samuel's revised role. Like Moses and Deborah before him, Samuel, until this point, had exercised political leadership by virtue of his prophetic office. With the initiation of kingship, the role of the prophet would now become an advisory one. Rather than leading the people as the recipient of divine messages, the prophet would offer guidance to the king, who would retain the freedom to accept or reject it. This passage also emphasizes the intercessory role of the prophet (for more information see comments on Deut 18:14-22).

Bible Background Commentary

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It is strange that no one noted the grammar here. Their request for Samuel to pray to his God (your) and not pray to our God. Did the people feel that God had rejected them? Perhaps they were just being emphatic so that Samuel would encourage them.

*Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. He picked up this inference in their request and assured them*

that they should continue (i.e. not turn aside) with God. Samuel gets more specific.

*You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. "For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.*

*and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.*

2 Timothy 4:4 (NASB)

Have you ever considered the fact that when you turn your body, you stop facing one thing and are now facing something else. You must face something. Samuel is here saying that, while they are currently facing God and obeying Him (as much as possible for us humans), there is a risk that they would turn from Him to something else. The text says "futile things." You are all familiar with this term

*The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.*

Genesis 1:2 (NASB)

You can not get more "futile" than that! That is what your life is if it is not centered on God. Look at the U.S. today! Most Americans are spending a lot of money (a lot of it borrowed) for "pleasures" that satisfy for the moment and are gone.

*And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Luke 12:29-31 (NKJV)

Note what Samuel does NOT say. "For God will not abandon His people because they are so good." No, God has a reputation. The nations around Israel knew of the God they served and God would be sure that these nations knew for certain that the Israelites were His chosen people - a people for Himself.

*"Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.*

Before continuing, there is a grave error in the KJV that ought to be corrected.

*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:*

1 Samuel 12:23 (KJV)

This term ought not to exist. This is not what Samuel said. He vowed that would not sin against God. The term "God forbid" appears 24 times in the KJV and should be translated with a term like "Certainly not"

In any case, Samuel promised to pray to God for them and, in turn, teach them the "good and the right" way. There is a significant different in the concept of "good" and "right." "Good" (טוב) is described below.

abstract goodness such as desirability, pleasantness, and beauty—

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

It is a relative term. One thing may not be as "good" as another. On the other hand "right" is a more technical term.

*There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*

Proverbs 14:12 (NASB)

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The Septuagint often uses the Greek word we find in the following.

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*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)

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Paul was a tent maker by trade and, when he cut out the expensive material to sew together to make a tent, he had to be sure to cut it at “right angles” so it would fit together. Thus, the term has to do with absolute “rightness.”

*“Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. What did Samuel mean by “fear?” Should we go around being afraid of God?” According to the following, there can be five types of fear involved here.*

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1) the emotion of fear, 2) the intellectual anticipation of evil without emphasis upon the emotional reaction, 3) reverence or awe, 4) righteous behaviour or piety, and 5) formal religious worship.—

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

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I believe that #3 is the concept here. They had to hold God in reverence.

*“But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away.”* The choice was theirs. What did they choose? This is what we are looking for in this study.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

*Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty two years over Israel. Now Saul chose for himself 3,000 men of Israel, of which 2,000 were with Saul in Michmash and in the hill country of Bethel, while 1,000 were with Jonathan at Gibeah of Benjamin. But he sent away the rest of the people, each to his tent. Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." All Israel heard the news that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become odious to the Philistines. The people were then summoned to Saul at Gilgal. Now the Philistines assembled to fight with Israel, 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen, and people like the sand which is on the seashore in abundance; and they came up and camped in Michmash, east of Beth-aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits. Also some of the Hebrews crossed the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead. But as for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.*

1 Samuel 13:1-7 (NASB)

*Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty two years over Israel. On the next page is a table showing how long each judged and when he (or she - Deborah) ruled. Note that many were for 20 or 40 years. This can be explained as below.*

*When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.*

Judges 2:10 (NKJV)

Forty years is often referred to as a

"generation."

*When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.*

Judges 2:10 (NKJV)

Thus the many occurrences of 40 (and 20). The period of the Judges has ended. According to the chart to Tyndale, it ended in 1043BC. I am sure that, if you look around, you may find a different chronology. For now, the transition from being led by a "judge" to being directed by a king 1043BC.

*Now Saul chose for himself 3,000 men of Israel, of which 2,000 were with Saul in Michmash and in the hill country of Bethel, while 1,000 were with Jonathan at Gibeah of Benjamin.*

We are here introduced to someone named Jonathan whom we have not seen before. Looking ahead,

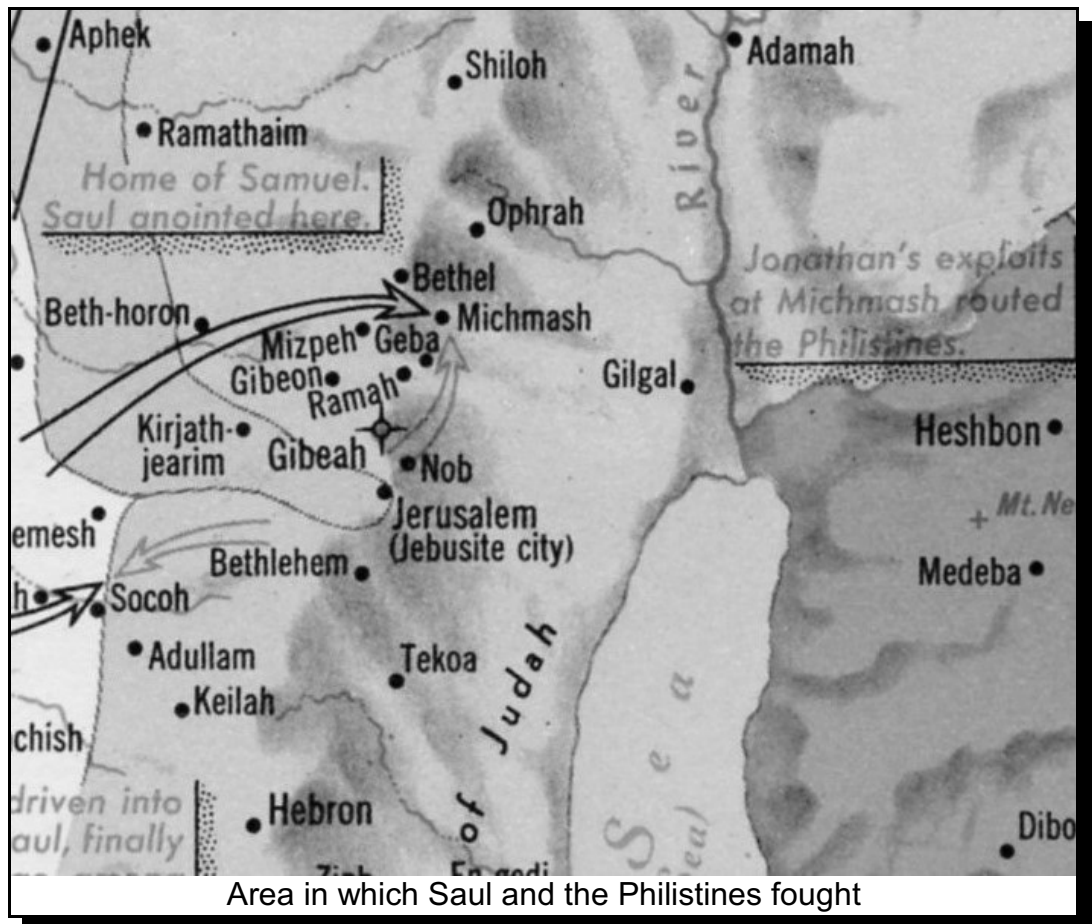
*The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Jishui and Malchishua. And the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal.*

1 Samuel 14:49 (NKJV)

we find that he was one of Saul's sons. I have a bit of difficulty reconciling the facts given. If Saul was thirty years old when he became king, how old was Jonathan? The text indicates that Saul led this assault on the Philistines soon after he became king but this would have made Jonathan quite young. We are not told how old Saul was when Jonathan was born.

Leaving this as a question to ask God when we get to glory, let us go on and look into Saul's first battle.

Judges/Oppression	Years	Dates (BC)
Mesopotamian oppression by Cushan-rishathaim)	8	1382-1374
Othniel(3:11)	40	1374-1334
Moabite oppression by Eglon (3:14)	18	1334-1316
Ehud (3:30), including Shamgar	80	1316-1236
Canaanite oppression by Jabin (4:3)	20	1236-1216
Deborah and Barak (5:31)	40	1216-1176
Midianite oppression (6:6)	7	1176-1169
Gideon, judge (8:28)	40	1169-1129
Ahimelech's misrule (9:22 ff.)	3	1129-1126
Tola's deliverance (10:1-2)	23	1126-1103
Philistine oppression (10:7; 13:1), including Ammonites, etc., in the east	40	1103-1063
Samuel's judgeship (1 Sm 7:2), including his sons at the end (8:1)	20	1063-1043





From the map on the previous page, it may be seen that Michmash and Gibeah of Benjamin were about 7 or 8 miles apart.

Saul split up the army into groups in order to take the Philistines (and enemy they would be fighting for a long time!),

*But he sent away the rest of the people, each to his tent.*

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Saul set about the task of defending Israel against foreign enemies. The apparent objective of the troop deployments described here was the removal of a Philistine administrative center at Geba in the Israelite heartland; the presence of this enemy outpost less than three miles from Israel's original capital would have constituted a severe threat to the early Israelite monarchy. Furthermore, since Geba was a city set aside for the Aaronic priesthood (cf. Josh 21:7), the return of this city to Israelite hands would have been a way of strengthening the worship of the Lord in Israel. The necessary first steps in this mission were assembling and deploying an armed force. Accordingly, "Saul chose three thousand men from Israel" (v. 2) for the job, and divided them up into two groups.

New American Commentary

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Saul, apparently, did not believe any more of an army was needed so he sent the rest home. Then the battle began. *Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it.*

Pay close attention here. Jonathan's group routed the garrison<sup>13</sup> in Geba and Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout the land, Saul got the credit even though it was Jonathon who fought the battle. It would be better to use the proper term here, Saul blew the šophar: A masculine noun referring to a trumpet, a ram's horn. It refers to a trumpet or horn made out of

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<sup>13</sup>garrison >n. a body of troops stationed in a fortress or town to defend it.

a curved ram's horn<sup>14</sup>. How could such a horn be heard "throughout the land?" Simple, the horn was sounded in one place and heard in another, someone in that place blew a similar horn and thus it propagated throughout the country. (And we think "Homeland Security" has all the answers!)

*"Let the Hebrews hear." All Israel heard the news that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become odious to the Philistines. As already noted, Saul received the credit. I am not sure it was to his credit because the battle had served to make Israel "odious"<sup>15</sup> to the Philistines.*

*The people were then summoned to Saul at Gilgal. Now the Philistines assembled to fight with Israel, 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen, and people like the sand which is on the seashore in abundance; and they came up and camped in Michmash, east of Beth-aven.*

They had stirred up a real hornet's nest. Now they had 36,000 Philistines on chariots and horses ready to fight Israel, as well as countless people on foot! One commentator wrote,

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Saul had this trumpeted in the whole land, not only as a joyful message for the Hebrews, but also as an indirect summons to the whole nation to rise and make war upon the Philistines.—

Keil and Delitzsch

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There is one commentator who Saul through Saul from the beginning.

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The true character of Saul is beginning to emerge. When we get a good view of him, we are going to see that he is a phony. We read in

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<sup>14</sup>Complete Word Study Dictionary

<sup>15</sup>odious >adj. extremely unpleasant; repulsive.

these verses that Jonathan "smote the garrison of the Philistines." Who got credit for the victory? It was Saul. Jonathan appears to be a capable military leader. Later on we will find that he gains another great victory by using very interesting strategy. But in this particular battle Jonathan did the fighting, and Saul blew the trumpet. Saul took the credit for winning. Saul believed in the motto: "He who tooteth not his own horn, said horn will go untooted." Saul blew his own horn. He did not give his son credit for winning the battle. He called all of Israel together and gave a phony report. The army knew Saul's report was not true and so did the followers of Jonathan. Folk are beginning to suspect that there is a weakness in Saul's army and that it is his Achilles' heel. Is he humble? I said at the beginning that Saul had a case of false humility, and this fact is coming to light now.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

*When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits. Also some of the Hebrews crossed the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead. There is a slight conflict in this statement and the next.*

*But as for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.* This can be clarified as follows.

(the people of war who had been called together, v. 4) trembled behind him, i.e., were gathered together in his train, or assembled round him as leader, trembling or in despair.—

Keil and Delitzsch

The common people fled and left the warriors with Saul.

*Now he waited seven days, according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, "Bring to me*

*the burnt offering and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering. As soon as he finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him and to greet him. But Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "Because I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the appointed days, and that the Philistines were assembling at Michmash, therefore I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not asked the favor of the LORD.' So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering." Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. "But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."*

1 Samuel 13:8-14 (NASB)

What has just happened led to Saul's downfall as king in Israel.

*Now he waited seven days, according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, "Bring to me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering.*

Saul had, indeed, told Saul to wait seven days (1 Samuel 10:8) but Samuel had not instructed Saul to go to war with the Philistines.

Now Saul was getting deeper in trouble. Some of his army were going AWOL and leaving him with a decreasing army.

What to do? "Well, Samuel is not here to offer up a sacrifice to the Lord so I'll do it myself." Was there something wrong with that? Definitely! Saul was a Benjamite, not a Levite. Only the Levites were authorized to make such offerings.

*As soon as he finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him and to greet him. But Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said*

1. *"Because I saw that the people were scattering from me*
2. *that you did not come within the appointed days*
3. *the Philistines were assembling at Michmash*

*therefore I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not asked the favor of the LORD.' So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering. The Hebrew here for "forced," has two related meanings.*

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1. force, compel oneself 1Sa 13:12. 2. restrain oneself, refrain Gn 43:31—

Brown-Driver-Briggs

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JFB note here,

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This occasion was his first trial. Samuel waited till the last day of the seven, in order to put the constitutional character of the king to the test; and, as Saul, in his impatient and passionate haste knowingly transgressed (1Sa 13:12) by invading the priest's office and thus showing his unfitness for his high office (as he showed nothing of the faith of Gideon and other Hebrew generals), he incurred a threat of the rejection which his subsequent waywardness confirmed—

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

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*Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. "But now your kingdom shall not endure. Saul had been tested and he failed the very first part of the test. He had not yet lead one battle and already Samuel informs him that his kindgom would not endure.*

*The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." It will not be for several chapters who this next king will be (David) but the end of Saul's reign has now been predicted. He will be replaced by another.*

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*Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men. Now Saul and his son Jonathan and the people who were present with them were staying in Geba of Benjamin while the Philistines camped at Michmash. And the raiders came from the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual, and another company turned toward Beth-horon, and another company turned toward the border which overlooks the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.*

1 Samuel 13:15-18 (NASB)

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Refer to the map on page #62 for details. The Philistines divided themselves up,

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ravaging through the three valleys which radiate from the uplands of Michmash to Ophrah on the north, through the pass of Beth-horon on the west, and down the ravines of Zeboim ("the hyænas"), towards the Ghor or Jordan valley on the east. —

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

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They were getting ready for "the kill." Going back to Saul, the text tells us that

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*Now no blacksmith could be found in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears." So all Israel went down to the Philistines, each to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, and his hoe. The charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to fix the hoes. So it came about on the day of battle that*

*neither sword nor spear was found in the hands of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan, but they were found with Saul and his son Jonathan. And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.*

1 Samuel 13:19-23 (NASB)

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Now no blacksmith could be found in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears." This was not an unusual thing to do. You disarm the enemy so they can not fight you. If there is no blacksmith in Israel, how would they obtain any weapons? The answer to this question is rather strange.

They paid the the Philistine black smiths to sharpen their;

- *his plowshare,*
- *his mattock<sup>16</sup>,*
- *his axe,*
- *his hoe.*

If you look at these, none of them are weapons, they are agricultural tools. The last three of these might be used in a crude way in warfare. However, in the next chapter we will see a different tactic.

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<sup>16</sup>mattock >n. an agricultural tool similar to a pickaxe, but with one arm of the head curved like an adz and the other like a chisel edge

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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*Now the day came that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "Come and let us cross over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side." But he did not tell his father. Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron. And the people who were with him were about six hundred men, and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ihabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the LORD at Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. Between the passes by which Jonathan sought to cross over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp crag on the one side and a sharp crag on the other side, and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The one crag rose on the north opposite Michmash, and the other on the south opposite Geba.*

1 Samuel 14:1-5 (NASB)

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*Now the day came that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "Come and let us cross over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side."*

The chronology here is a bit confusing. Consider the following:

*Now the day came . . .* (NASB)

*Now it happened one day that . . .* NKJV

*That same day . . .* (HCSB)

The first seems to indicate that a particular day came while the second would indicate just some day that came by chance. The Third is more specific in saying that it was the same day. The only solution is to examine the Hebrew text. The HCSB interpretation appears to come from a defective text which omits the verb "to be." The other two are simply different interpretations. In any case, this day came soon after the preceding events.

Jonathan proposes that two people, him and

his "armor bearer" go attack the garrison. This would seem to be foolhardy to do. But consider the following.

*he did not tell his father. Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron. And the people who were with him were about six hundred men, and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ihabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the LORD at Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. The rest of the people, including Saul and Eli were in another position "under a pomegranate tree.*

One commentary makes the following suggestion.

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The author carefully included details regarding the magnitude of the Philistine threat and the minimal level of Israel's military readiness in 13:5–23 in order to provide an effective backdrop for the theologically rich narrative account of chap. 14. Clearly, from a human standpoint Israel's situation was hopeless: the Israelite band was dispirited; it was cut off from its northern comrades; and it was vastly outnumbered by a nearby enemy that possessed thousands of chariots, horses, and soldiers with superior armaments. Yet as the present narrative demonstrates, "The Lord rescued Israel that day" (14:23; cf. Exod 14:30) as the direct result of a single individual's bold faith.

New American Commentary

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*"When in doubt do nothing!"* I don't believe I have ever heard that expression before. On the other hand, sometimes we are told to "wait upon the Lord."

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Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

Isaiah 40:31 (NASB)

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Evidently, the Lord put it on Jonathan's heart to do something. Note that his "armor bearer" was to go with him. Technically, the text does not say "armor bearer" but simply, "the young man who carried his equipment." As the following narrative shows, he engaged in the fighting just as did Jonathan.

*And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. Was Jonathan such a "nobody" that no one knew he was not with them? You would think that, at least, his father would know. But he did not tell his father.*

Jonathan was the kind of man you should keep track of. As one write expressed it,

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In these circumstances it is once more the noble figure of Jonathan which comes to the foreground. Whatever fitness he might have shown for "the kingdom," had he been called to it, a more unselfish, warm-hearted, genuine, or noble character is not presented to us in Scripture than that of Jonathan. Weary of the long and apparently hopeless inactivity, trustful in Jehovah, and fired by the thought that with Him there was "no hindrance to save, by much or by little," he planned single-handed an expedition against the Philistine outpost at Michmash. As he put it, it was emphatically a deed of faith, in which he would not take counsel either with his father or with any of the people, only with God, of Whom he would seek a sign of approbation before actually entering on the undertaking. The sole companion whom he took was, as in the case of Gideon (Judges 7:9, 10), his armor-bearer, who seems to have been not only entirely devoted to his master, but like-minded. —

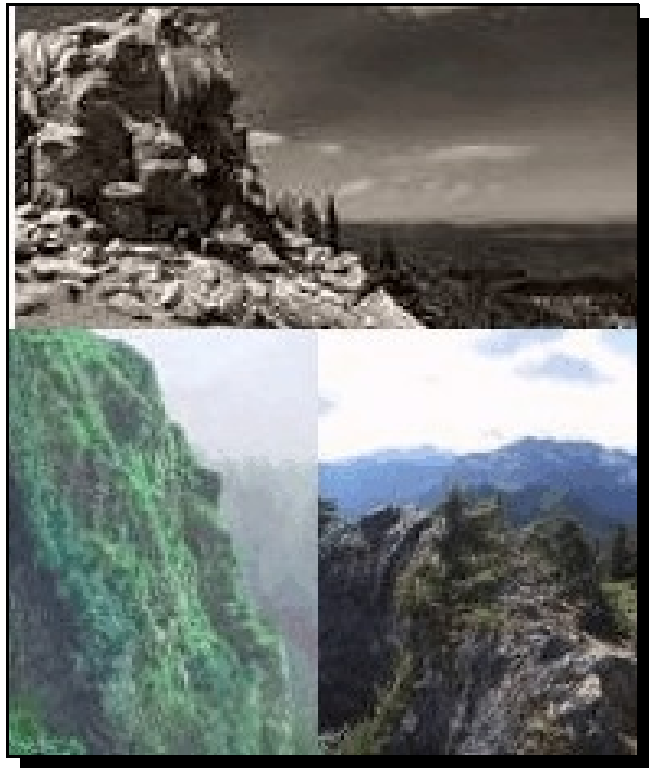
Bible History

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The text now gives us a look at the geography of the situation. *Between the passes by which Jonathan sought to cross over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp crag on the one side and a sharp crag on the other side, and the name of the one was Bozez, and*

*the name of the other Seneh. The one crag rose on the north opposite Michmash, and the other on the south opposite Geba.*

Some typical crags are below.



A photograph of the region is shown below.




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*Then Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "Come and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; perhaps the LORD will work for us, for the LORD is not restrained to save by many or by few." His armor bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart; turn yourself, and here I am*

*with you according to your desire." Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men and reveal ourselves to them. "If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you'; then we will stand in our place and not go up to them. "But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the LORD has given them into our hands; and this shall be the sign to us." When both of them revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines, the Philistines said, "Behold, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves." So the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, "Come up to us and we will tell you something." And Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hands of Israel." Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer behind him; and they fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer put some to death after him. That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about twenty men within about half a furrow in an acre of land. And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. Even the garrison and the raiders trembled, and the earth quaked so that it became a great trembling.*

1 Samuel 14:6-15 (NASB)

*Then Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "Come and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; perhaps the LORD will work for us, for the LORD is not restrained to save by many or by few."*

Jonathan refers to the "uncircumcised." He does not specify who. Interesting is the fact that the Philistines are referred to many times in the Scriptures as "Philistines" or as "uncircumcised." The only place where both terms are when David attacked Goliath.

*"Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God."*

1 Samuel 17:36 (NASB)

The term "uncircumcised" seems to apply only to the Philistines. He says, "Perhaps<sup>17</sup>" the Lord would deliver them. This is not to be taken in our understanding of the word (see footnote) by a certain degree of surety. *perhaps the LORD will work for us, for the LORD is not restrained to save by many or by few.*" In other word, "The battle is the Lords!" If he wishes it to be won by a few or by many, it is the Lord's choice.

I wonder if Jonathan, like many Benjamites, was left handed.

*And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss.*

Judges 20:15-16 (KJV)

When you couple this with the fact that when David approached Goliath, he said "Will 'till I get a little bo(u)lder!" The sling seems to be the weapon of choice.

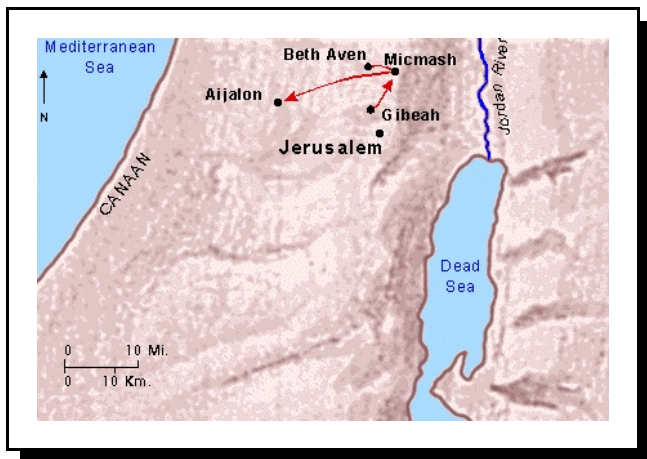
In view of the previous passages, it is not known in Jonathan even had a sword and, if he did, how does one man had a sword fight with 10-20 Philistines? With a sling, he could kill them from a distance!

*His armor bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart; turn yourself, and here I am with you according to your desire." One does not need to understand Hebrew idiom to understand the loyalty of this man.*

*Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross*

<sup>17</sup>perhaps >adv. 1 expressing uncertainty or possibility

over to the men and reveal ourselves to them. "If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you'; then we will stand in our place and not go up to them. "But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the LORD has given them into our hands; and this shall be the sign to us."



The sign was well chosen. If the Philistines said, "Wait till we come," they would show some courage; but if they said, "Come up to us," it would be a sign that they were cowardly, and had not courage enough to leave their position and attack the Hebrews. 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 and Delitzsch

When both of them revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines, the Philistines said, "Behold, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves." So the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, "Come up to us and we will tell you something." The concept that the Israelites were "coming out of their holes" was one of derision. When they saw only two of them, the instantly decided they were no threat. In fact, maybe they were defectors. So

they invited them to come into their camp. It is not known for sure what they "would tell them," probably they would tell them, "we are going to kill you" and then stab them to death.

And Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hands of Israel." Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer behind him; and they fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer put some to death after him. That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about twenty men within about half a furrow in an acre of land.

How did Jonathan and his assistant both "climb with their hands and feet" and, at the same time kill 20 Philistines.

In an interesting passage in Exodus before Mount Sinai, we have,

And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

Exodus 19:12-13 (KJV)

If anyone tried to ascend the mountain, they were to be executed - but not by the usual means. They were to be killed by the throwing of stones or by bow and arrow. This was because the execution could not ascend the mountain after them so it had to be at a distance.

All of this would lead me to believe that the twenty men were killed by Jonathan and his assistant using slings to hurl stones at them. The text does not indicate the manner of death. There would certainly be plenty of stones as they climbed the rocky slope.



The area in which the men were killed was about 200 feet by 200 feet. (if it was square). This is not a very large area, small enough to sling stones!

“Within half a furrow” indicates it was slightly smaller.

*And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. Even the garrison and the raiders trembled, and the earth quaked so that it became a great trembling.*

It was not just the 20 dead Philistines that worried them, it was the quaking of the earth as well. Commentators are not positive whether there was an actual earthquake or if it was just perceived as one. As far as the Philistines were concerned, it made little difference.

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*Now Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude melted away; and they went here and there. Saul said to the people who were with him, "Number now and see who has gone from us." And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there. Then Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For the ark of God was at that time with the sons of Israel. While Saul talked to the priest, the commotion in the camp of the Philistines continued and increased; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and came to the battle; and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion. Now the Hebrews who were with the Philistines previously, who went up with them all around in the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. When all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines had fled, even they also pursued them closely in the battle. So the LORD delivered Israel that day, and the battle spread beyond Beth-aven.*

1 Samuel 14:16-23 (NASB)

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*Now Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude melted away; and they went here and there. Saul said to the people who were with him, "Number now and see who has gone from us." And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there. Thus they were able to determine who it was that raided the outpost.*

*Then Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For the ark of God was at that time with the sons of Israel. This statement seem quite unlikely. They should have already learned their lesson in bring the Ark to battle. A number of commentators note that the Septuagint has “ephod” rather than ark. This makes sense because of what was in it.*

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The Urim and Thummim were kept in a pouch in the priest's ephod (see above, verse 3). Information from the Urim and Thummim presumably would be gained by posing a yes-no question and then shaking out one of the stones. It is thought that the same stone would have to be shaken out three times in succession to confirm the answer. When Saul instructs Ahijah to withdraw his hand, he has made the decision to discontinue the oracular process and proceed without divine guidance.

Bible Background Commentary

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*While Saul talked to the priest, the commotion in the camp of the Philistines continued and increased; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." The noise from the Philistine camp indicated that they were fleeing so Saul decided to do his own thing. This was wrong even though, humanly speaking, it seems right.*

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*There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*

Proverbs 14:12 (NKJV)

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Sensing that he was about to lose a golden opportunity to rout the enemy, Saul did the unthinkable—he ordered Ahijah to suspend his priestly activities before they were completed. This incredible interruption of the divine pattern—an action without precedent in the Bible—was intended to enable Israel to win an even greater victory over the Philistines. But for readers who were informed by the Torah, it meant that Saul was unfit to fulfill the task of leading Israel against their enemies (cf. 8:20). It also added one more image in the narrative montage that depicts Saul as spiritually benighted and insensitive to the Lord's ways. Furthermore, in light of Israel's diminished victory against the Philistines, it reinforced a fundamental teaching of the Torah; any breach of the Lord's instruction diminishes the good that could have resulted

New American Commentary

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*Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and came to the battle; and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion.* This text is a bit confusing in of itself! It does not say (but implies) that the Philistines were fighting each other. It has been noticed that this was due, in part, because there were some Hebrew slaves with the Philistines as well as a number of Hebrew defectors. When this battle began, they fought against the Philistines, making it appear the Philistines were fighting each other.

This situation spread. *Now the Hebrews who were with the Philistines previously, who went up with them all around in the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. When all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines had fled, even they also pursued them closely in the battle.*

*So the LORD delivered Israel that day, and the battle spread beyond Beth-aven.*

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*Now the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day, for Saul had put the people under oath, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. All the people of the land entered the forest, and there was honey on the ground. When the people entered the forest, behold, there was a flow of honey; but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan had not heard when his father put the people under oath; therefore, he put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly put the people under oath, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food today." And the people were weary. Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. "How much more, if only the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now the slaughter among the Philistines has not been great."*

1 Samuel 14:24-30 (NASB)

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*Now the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day, for Saul had put the people under oath, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food.* As I remember, when our troops have gone into battle, they have always had "k-rations" or some similar nourishment. You can't fight on an empty stomach. In this case, Saul pronounced a curse on anyone who ate until the battle was over.

*So none of the people tasted food. All the people of the land entered the forest, and there was honey on the ground. When the people entered the forest, behold, there was a flow of*

*honey<sup>18</sup>; but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.* All might have gone ok except that, in the forest, there was honey to be had for the taking. Did anyone take any of it? The text just noted that no man did.

*But Jonathan had not heard when his father put the people under oath; therefore, he put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.*

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It is interesting to note that Jonathan did not know about his father's strange order that no man was to eat until the battle was won. Actually Jonathan had already won the battle. Now we are beginning to see the real nature of Saul. Jonathan gained the victory, and Saul takes credit for it. He is not willing to give the credit to his son. His "modesty" is gone, and his jealousy is revealed.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

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The brightening of Jonathan's eyes is not to be taken as some strange manifestation - only that he looked refreshed.

*Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly put the people under oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man who eats food today.'" And the people were weary. They were "weary" from lack of food. Jonathan had been fed but was now under Saul's curse! Jonathan, it seems, was the only one that day with good sense. Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. "How much more, if only the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now the*

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<sup>18</sup>Bees in the East are not, as in England, kept in hives; they are all in a wild state. The forests literally flow with honey; large combs may be seen hanging on the trees as you pass along, full of honey"—Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

*slaughter among the Philistines has not been great."* If the others had eaten, they would have fought harder!

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*They struck among the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very weary. The people rushed greedily upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood. Then they told Saul, saying, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have acted treacherously; roll a great stone to me today." Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Each one of you bring me his ox or his sheep, and slaughter it here and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.'" So all the people that night brought each one his ox with him and slaughtered it there. And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.*

1 Samuel 14:31-35 (NASB)

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*They struck among the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very weary. The people rushed greedily upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood.*

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Saul's foolish vow not only weakened the soldiers physically and hindered their ability to pursue the enemy, but it also created in the men an abnormal craving for food. When the sun set and ushered in a new day, the vow was no longer in force, and the men acted like animals as they fell on the spoils, killing the sheep and oxen and eating the meat with the blood. When Jews slaughtered their animals, they were required to drain out the blood before preparing the meat, for blood was never to be used as food (Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10-14; 22:28; Deut. 12:23-24; see Gen. 9:4). A truly spiritual vow brings out the best in people, but Saul's carnal vow brought out the worst.

Bible Exposition Commentary

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Then they told Saul, saying, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have acted treacherously; roll a great stone to me today." Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Each one of you bring me his ox or his sheep, and slaughter it here and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.'" These words from Saul make little sense - the people had already committed a grievous sin but Saul says "sinning." Perhaps they were still eating when Saul gave the command to bring a "great stone" (one which could be used as an altar)

So all the people that night brought each one his ox with him and slaughtered it there. And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

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Though no judgmental statements accompany the note that this was Saul's first altar, the tone of the note may be subtly condemnatory. Perhaps the writer is indicating that Saul was responsible for the construction of a high place at which sacrificial worship occurred, a practice that was forbidden for Israel once they entered the Promised Land

New American Commentary

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I believe that Saul was like a lot of people today. You give them a little power or authority and they take more than was given them. this was the case with Saul over and over again.

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Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and take spoil among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." So the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here." Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You give them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him on that day. Saul said, "Draw near here, all you chiefs of the people, and investigate and see how this sin has happened today. "For as the LORD lives, who delivers Israel, though it is in Jonathan my son, he shall

surely die." But not one of all the people answered him. Then he said to all Israel, "You shall be on one side and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you." Therefore, Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Give a perfect lot." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. Saul said, "Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.

1 Samuel 14:36-42 (NASB)

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Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and take spoil among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." It would seem unwise to me to do battle in the middle of the night, but Saul was "on a roll."

So the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here." Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You give them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him on that day. Apparently the priest told Saul that he must seek God's direction. It is too bad that there are not enough priests today to remind many people to seek God's will before embarking on something as this.

Some commentators suggest that the Urim and the Thummin was used to determine God's will in this. It was basically a "casting of lots" where two stones were thrown out of a bag (one white, one black). If the white one came out all three times, the answer was "yes." But we are not told how the decision was made.

Saul was smart enough to realize that he had gotten a "No" answer because there was sin in the camp and thus he proceeded to determine what it was.

Saul said, "Draw near here, all you chiefs of the people, and investigate and see how this sin has happened today. "For as the LORD lives, who delivers Israel, though it is in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." The

usual casting of lots was used to determine who sinned. The people already knew but they were not about to tell Saul that it was Jonathan.

With the repeated casting of lots they would narrow the choice to one tribe, then to one family, and, finally to the person. Was this a proper way to determine something? If God is in it.

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In the NT the soldiers cast lots over Jesus' garments (Mt 27:35), and the disciples cast lots when they selected Matthias to the apostleship in place of Judas (Acts 1:26). After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church, the practice of casting lots ceased

— Tyndale Bible Dictionary

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Saul did not realize what he was saying when he said that the perpetrator would die even if it was his son Jonathan. But that was the result.

*But not one of all the people answered him. Then he said to all Israel, "You shall be on one side and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."* No one was willing to step forward and tell Saul that it was Jonathan who ate the honey. They could have but they did not believe Jonathan should die because of it.

*Therefore, Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Give a perfect lot." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. Saul said, "Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.* We have already noted that casting of lots was correct in God's eyes, and so the fact that, eventually, the lot fell on Jonathan was no surprise.

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*Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." So Jonathan told him and said, "I indeed tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am, I must die!" Saul said, "May God do this to me and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan."*

*But the people said to Saul, "Must Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan and he did not die. Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.*

1 Samuel 14:43-46 (NASB)

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*Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." So Jonathan told him and said, "I indeed tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am, I must die!"* We can certainly see a contrast between Saul and Jonathan. In spite of how ridiculous it would be to slay a person for eating a bit of honey, Jonathan stepped forward and agreed he must die. What a tragedy that would have been

*Saul said, "May God do this to me and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan."* How do you judge Saul here. The lot fell on Jonathan and Saul could not change that.

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This passage showcases a spectrum of frailties and follies that beset monarchies. Using Saul, Israel's first monarch, as an example, the narrative demonstrates that kings could lead Israel into battle, but they could also diminish a nation's capacity to achieve victory. Kings could build altars for their subjects to sacrifice to God, but they could not guarantee an encounter with the divine. They could utter powerful words—curses and oaths—but lacked the power to bring about their fulfillment.

New American Commentary

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The rest of the people finally speak up. *But the people said to Saul, "Must Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day."* Thus Jonathan was spared by the people. Saul did not have the power to contradict the people's decree.

*Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place. The matter was settled. Both the Philistines and Jonathan had been spared by God that day through the casting of lots and the will of the people.*

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*Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment. He acted valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them. Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan and Ishvi and Malchi-shua; and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn Merab and the name of the younger Michal. The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the captain of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel. Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff.*

1 Samuel 14:47-52 (NASB)

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*Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment. From this point on it appeared that God was blessing Saul in his kingship. He routed all these people.*

*He acted valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them. Finally the Amalekites were defeated.*

After all this “todo” about Jonathan, we are finally told who he was.

*Now the sons of Saul were*

- *Jonathan*
- *Ishvi*
- *Malchi-shua;*

*the names of his two daughters were these:*

- *the name of the firstborn Merab*
- *the name of the younger Michal.*

*The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the captain of his army was Abner the son of Ner.*

The captain's name as not “Li’Abner” (if you don’t get that it is because you are not old enough to have read the comic strip!

This chapter closes with some additional genealogical details. *Saul's uncle. Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel. Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff. Saul was always on the lookout for “a few good men!”*

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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*Then Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD. "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. ~'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'" Then Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah. Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley. Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.*

1 Samuel 15:1-9 (NASB)

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*Then Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, **listen to the words of the LORD**. Saul was the impatient type and always wanted to forge ahead - ahead of God's schedule. Samuel instructed him, specifically, to listen to what the Lord has to say.*

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Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee . . . : now therefore hearken thou unto . . . the Lord -- Several years had been passed in successful military operations against troublesome neighbors. During these

Saul had been left to act in a great measure at his own discretion as an independent prince. Now a second test is proposed of his possessing the character of a theocratic monarch in Israel; and in announcing the duty required of him, Samuel brought before him his official station as the Lord's vicegerent, and the peculiar obligation under which he was laid to act in that capacity. He had formerly done wrong, for which a severe rebuke and threatening were administered to him (1Sa 13:13, 14). Now an opportunity was afforded him of retrieving that error by an exact obedience to the divine command. —

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown

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Up to this point, Saul has been acting upon his presumed kingship over Israel. Now Samuel is going to anoint his as king. He would now, officially, be the king over Israel and all Israel was to follow him.

*Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. Saul's first assignment was the Amalekites. You may remember that in Exodus 17, Joshua fought these people and, as long as Moses hands were raised u=p. Joshua finally won the battle. He won the battle but not the war!*

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*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner; and he said, "The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."*

Exodus 17:14-16 (NASB)

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*'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and **woman, child and infant**, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'*

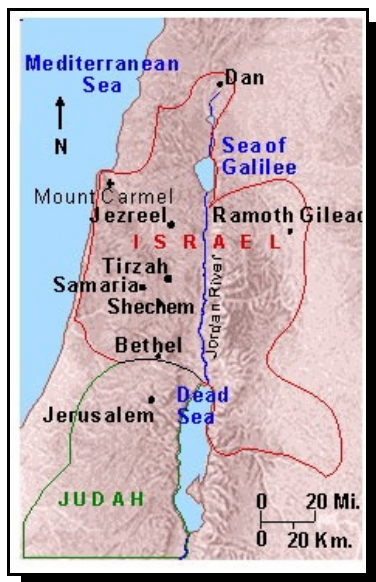
This kind of warfare, called *herem*, was practiced only against peoples who had come under the Lord's severest judgment (e.g., Jericho). It required the destruction of all people and possessions captured in battle. The task was a solemn and holy one since those Israelites who carried it out functioned as the Lord's agents of judgment.

New American Commentary

I have been through WW2 and other "wars" (whether they are declared as such as not). Never have we killed all of the people, children included. (Many woman and children died at Hiroshima. That was an exception)

*Then Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah. Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley.*

"Two hundred thousand foot, and ten thousand of the men of Judah:" this implies that the two hundred thousand were from the other tribes. These numbers are not too large; for a powerful Bedouin nation, such as the Amalekites were, could not possibly be successfully attacked with a small army, but only by raising the whole of the military force of Israel. Keil and Delitzsch



Leaving out the Levites, 200,000 divided by 10 comes out to 20,000 per tribe (on average) and thus lines up alright with 10,000 for Judah. Judah is often treated separately from the other tribes and, eventually the nation was split into two, Judah and Israel.

*Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt."*

Dr. McGee wrote,

We find here that Saul gathered the people together and numbered them. Then he came to a city of Amalek and warned the Kenites to leave the Amalekites before they were destroyed. The Kenites, you recall, were descendants of Moses' father-in-law. We saw references to them in Judges 1:16 and Judges 4:11-17. This was an act of mercy that no pagan nation would have practiced in that day  
Through the Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

While we might admire Saul for his mercy on the Kenites. I guess everyone does something good once in a while.

*Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. With God's help, Saul won the victory.*

*But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. God did not give Saul a choice! They should have destroyed all. As it was, Israel had to fight the Amalekites over and over again.*

*Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night. Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a*



monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal." Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD." But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed." Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait, and let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak!" Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel, and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.' "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. "But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king."

1 Samuel 15:10-23 (NASB)

Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night. Did not Saul win the war? No, he won the battle but he was to eliminate the Amalekites

and completely obliterate them.

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Some people find it difficult to believe that the Lord would command an entire nation to be destroyed just because of what their ancestors had done centuries before. Some of these critics may depend more on sentiment than on spiritual truth, not realizing how long-suffering the Lord had been with these nations and how unspeakably wicked they were (see 1 Sam. 15:18, 33; Gen. 15:16). God's covenant with the Jewish nation includes the promise, "I will curse him who curses you" (12:3), and God always keeps His Word. Nations like the Amalekites who wanted to exterminate the Jews weren't just waging war on Israel; they were opposing Almighty God and His great plan of redemption for the whole world

Bible Exposition Commentary

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Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal." Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD." But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

This section would be a bit humorous if it were not so serious. Samuel "rose early in the morning." There it is again - he had important work to do! Samuel learned two things. First Saul set up a memorial to God (whoops, it says "Himself!"). Samuel meets Saul at Gilgal and, immediately Saul starts praising himself. "I have carried out the command of the Lord!" But Samuel asks an embarrassing question. Why does he hear sheep and oxen in the distance?

Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed." Oh Oh! That was a "no no!"

God had provided a conscience for Saul. Something like Jiminy Cricket who sat on Pinocchio's shoulder. Samuel was to be Saul's God consciousness.

*And he said to him, "Speak!" Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel, and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.' "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" He was to fight against them until they are **exterminated**.*

Samuel reminds Saul of what the Lord had done for him. While he was yet a "nobody" God made him king over Israel. What an honor! You would think that Saul would be very careful to do what the Lord commanded him.

*"Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"* Even if no one else knew or cared about the commands to Saul, he surely should have obeyed God to the fullest. We need to give our best to the Lord!

*Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. Yes, he had done **part of** what the Lord had commanded. God does not want our partial obedience, he wants our all!*

*"But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." Saul then told two lies about what went on. First, he blamed the taking of the animals on the people and, secondly, he claimed they were going to offer them as a sacrifice - which was not true.*

Samuel now gets to "the bottom line." *Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Let's break this apart.*

- *"Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD?"*
- *To **obey** is better than sacrifice*
- *To **heed** than the fat of rams.*
- ***Rebellion** is as the sin of divination*
- ***Insubordination** is as iniquity and idolatry.*

Samuel puts it four ways, four definitions for "obey." You can tell that Samuel is being very emphatic here.

*Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king." There is a saying that if God is not Lord **of** all, He is not Lord **at** all. God has finished with Saul. Saul may have been a big man physically, but he was not strong in character.*

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*Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. "Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD." But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." As Samuel turned to go, 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 your neighbor, who is better than you. "Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind." Then he said, "I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." So Samuel went back following*

*Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD. Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal. Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.*

1 Samuel 15:24-35 (NASB)

Saul still has not received the message. *Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, **because I feared the people and listened to their voice.*** There! You see, it was really the people's fault. But wait, the people said they wanted a king to guide them and Saul is no guiding them, he is following them!

Saul still will not admit his full guilt before the Lord! There are people like that today, some even in high places.

*"Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD. Saul must have been hard of hearing! He has already been condemned. Samuel had said, very clearly, *He has also rejected you from being king.*" Its over! The case is closed! There comes a time when forgiveness is gone. If you wait until five minutes after the rapture of the church, you can not say, "Wait, O Lord, I really do want to have you as my Savior." It is too late!*

*But Samuel said to Saul, **"I will not return with you;** for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."* Samuel said it one more time - it is over! You are no longer king!

*As Samuel turned to go, 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 your neighbor, who is better than you. Now Saul is getting desperate and physical. He grabbed Saul as if to try to control him. Samuel used the tearing of his robe as a picture of what God was doing with Saul's reign as king. Saul does not say, here, who the "neighbor" is.*

Several expositors have made statements like the following.

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In the most eloquent and memorable recorded quotation coming from Samuel's lips, God's judgment was pronounced against the king. The prophet's words are expressed poetically in a series of four pairs of lines, with the climactic words of judgment being found in the final pair. Samuel began with a two-line rhetorical question that was asked in such a way as to expect a negative answer. He followed with the brief (three words in Hebrew) yet profound maxim that summarizes a central tenet of the Torah: "obedience surpasses sacrifice"

New American Commentary

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*"Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."* God knows from the beginning to the end. The whole of life from Adam to the Antichrist are before him. He will not change what He has ordained.

He will not change His mind about whether or not you will be saved - but we shall not get into a theological discussion of Election here.

*Then he said, "I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." Saul says, "alright, I goofed - but please don't embarrass me before the people. Samuel seemed to oblige him. So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.*

What happened next must have been a quite

a shock to Saul.

*Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."* The manner that Agag came to Samuel is a subject of much dispute as may be seen from various translations.

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And Agag came unto him **delicately**. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.  
1 Samuel 15:32 (KJV)

So Agag came to him **cautiously**. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."  
1 Samuel 15:32 (NKJV)

Agag came to him **confidently**, thinking, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."  
1 Samuel 15:32 (NIV)

Agag arrived **full of hope**, for he thought, "Surely the worst is over, and I have been spared!"  
1 Samuel 15:32 (NLT)

Agag came, **dragging his feet**, muttering that he'd be better off dead.  
1 Samuel 15:32 (MSG)

And Agag came to him **shaking with fear**. And Agag said, Truly the pain of death is past.  
1 Samuel 15:32 (BBE)

Agag came to him in chains and said, "Without doubt, mine will be a bitter death."  
1 Samuel 15:32 (CJB)

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This should indicate the range of meanings the translators have applied to this word. The passage below uses this same word.

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Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also **delight** your soul.  
Proverbs 29:17 (NASB)

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I would suppose that Agag came not knowing what to expect.

*But Samuel said, "As your sword has made*

*women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.*

This seems a bit strange. I would think maybe he would of beheaded him or run a sword through his heart, but to "hack him to pieces" seems a bit brutal. One expositor wrote,

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Samuel hewed Agag -- 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. Samuel did it "before the Lord" in Gilgal, appointing that same mode of punishment (hitherto unknown in Israel) to be used towards him, which he had formerly used towards others.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown

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This section ends with a parting of the ways. *Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.*

Two words here deserve some attention. Samuel was not angry with Saul, he "grieved" over him. The Hebrew here is a word that generally refers to mourning for the dead. Saul was not dead as a human but he was dead as far as being king was concerned.

The Lord "regretted" that he had made Saul king. A simple question is in order here. Why would God regret anything. He knew from the beginning what the outcome would be so, why make Saul king in the first place.

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When the Bible says that God repented, it means that His actions look as though He changed His mind. He has not. God said all along that if Saul did not make good, He would remove him. Saul sinned, and so God removed him from his position as king. God still hates sin and will judge it. Saul was the choice of the

people, and he failed. Yet Samuel mourned for him. I think Samuel loved Saul a great deal more than he loved David. He hated to see this man fail and turn aside. That is why his words to Saul were so strong and harsh; they came from a person who loved him. The words of Samuel were also coming from the heart of God.

My friend, God's love will not deter Him from judging sinners. He can love them and still execute judgment. Our God is holy and righteous and just, as well as loving.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

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Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons." But Samuel said, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' "You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you." So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, "Do you come in peace?" He said, "In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."

1 Samuel 16:1-11 (NASB)

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Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him

from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; Funny think, I have thousands of miles on my cars and have never oiled the horn! This was all explained on page #2. In everyday language, the Lord is telling Samuel to stop grieving and get on with the program. Solomon wrote, many years later,

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There is a right time for everything: A time to be born; A time to die; A time to plant; A time to harvest; A time to kill; A time to heal; A time to destroy; A time to rebuild; A time to cry; A time to laugh; **A time to grieve**; A time to dance; A time for scattering stones; A time for gathering stones; A time to hug; A time not to hug; A time to find; A time to lose; A time for keeping; A time for throwing away; A time to tear; A time to repair; A time to be quiet; **A time to speak up**; A time for loving; A time for hating; A time for war; A time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (TLB)

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I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons." Samuel is in a quandary, but God is not. God already has a new king selected. It will be up to Samuel to find out who it is. He has one clue - the new kings will be one of the sons of Jesse. But Jesse had **eight** sons so it was going to take some selection process.

But Samuel said, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' "You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you." There is a question to be asked here. Is Samuel supposed to pretend to do one thing when he is really going to do another? No, he was truly supposed to make a sacrifice, which he did. But he had another mission as well.

So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came

to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, "Do you come in peace?" He said, "In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. The Elders of the city came to him in fear. Why? I think it is the same when you or I go to the doctor, the IRS, or other authority. We do not know whether the news will be good or bad. Samuel quelled their fear and invited them to the sacrifice he was about to make. He also made sure that Jesse and his sons came.

When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." Here we have a scripture that is often quoted. It is too bad that, often, we do not heed this advice. Eliab was Jesse's oldest son. Surely he was the one! But God said, "No!"

Well, let's try again. Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. All seven sons were examined and none was right. What now?

Samuel was surprised that none of them were the right man for the job. There is no mention of how Samuel determined whether or not a man was the right one. So he questions Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." While the older sons were engaged in a "Mr. Israel" contest, David was made to stay in the field and tend the sheep. But, you see, God needed a shepherd, not a mule driver! He

needed someone who knew how to lead. David was a good shepherd.

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So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah. Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him. Saul's servants then said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you. "Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play the harp with his hand, and you will be well." So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me now a man who can play well and bring him to me." Then one of the young men said, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, and a handsome man; and the LORD is with him." So Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David who is with the flock." Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread and a jug of wine and a young goat, and sent them to Saul by David his son. Then David came to Saul and attended him; and Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer. Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David now stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight." So it came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.

1 Samuel 16:12-23 (NASB)

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So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." I don't think it necessary to elaborate of the translation here. David was a

good looking boy.

*Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. David was not yet the acting king, but, nonetheless the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon all of us when we are "babes in Christ."*

*And Samuel arose and went to Ramah. Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him. Today, when you receive the Spirit, it is permanent. But in the Old Testament it need no be permanent. The Spirit was taken from Saul and given to David.*

*Saul's servants then said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you. "Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play the harp with his hand, and you will be well."*

Texts like this bother me. God is good. There is no evil in Him. So how can he send an evil spirit. I believe the answer can be found in Job.

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Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Job 1:8-12 (NKJV)

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Satan still comes before God and makes accusation against God's people. Generally, God will not listen. In Job's case, God gave Satan limited power of Job and his family and possessions. Did God do a bad thing to job?

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*Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters.*

Job 42:12-13 (NKJV)

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God gave Job back twice what he had before (including his children since, ultimately, he did not lose his first children.) God is not an evil spirit nor does he have evil spirits "on His payroll!" But he has control over them and here he would cause one to enter Saul.

Man can not live in a vacuum. Either he is filled with the Spirit of God or he is open to evil spirits of all sorts.

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David was a poet and musician, skilled at playing the harp and composing songs. By the end of his life, he was known as "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. 23:1). It's unusual to find such artistic talent in a man who was also a rugged soldier and fearless general. He wrote psalms, he organized the music ministry for the temple (1 Chron. 25), and provided instruments for the musicians (23:5). From the spoils of his many battles, he provided the materials for the temple, and he longed to have the privilege of building a house for the Lord. No matter how you examine his life and abilities, you find David to be a unique individual—and he was that way because God made him that way!

Bible Exposition Commentary

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One of Saul aides had a good suggestion - So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me now a man who can play well and bring him to me."



*Then one of the young men said, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, and a handsome man; and the LORD is with him. They did not name this person here but, apparently it was told to Saul as we read,*

*So Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David who is with the flock." Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread and a jug of wine and a young goat, and sent them to Saul by David his son. Then David came to Saul and attended him; and Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer.*

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This guidance on the part of God was a school of preparation to David for his future calling. In the first place, he was thereby lifted out of his quiet and homely calling in the country into the higher sphere of court-life; and thus an opportunity was afforded him not only for intercourse with men of high rank, and to become acquainted with the affairs of the kingdom, but also to display those superior gifts of his intellect and heart with which God had endowed him, and thereby to gain the love and confidence of the people. But at the same time he was also brought into a severe school of affliction, in which his inner man was to be trained by conflicts from without and within, so that he might become a man after God's heart, who should be well fitted to found the true monarchy in Israel

Keil and Delitzsch

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Saul got more than a musician, he got a man of many talents and so promoted him. As noted above, this was God's providence in providing the training he would need to be the king of Israel. The NASB specifically ascribes five of the Psalms which David wrote concerning Saul. (Note that these reference are in the HEADINGS, not in the Bible text itself.

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Ps 18:1 Ps 52:1 Ps 54:1 Ps 57:1, Ps 59:1

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*Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David now stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight." So it came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.*

The harp on the right is of the type David would have played except it probably had fewer strings and was not as lavishly made.

Well, it worked. David would play and Saul would be calmed down. I know a number of people who could use a harpist at home.



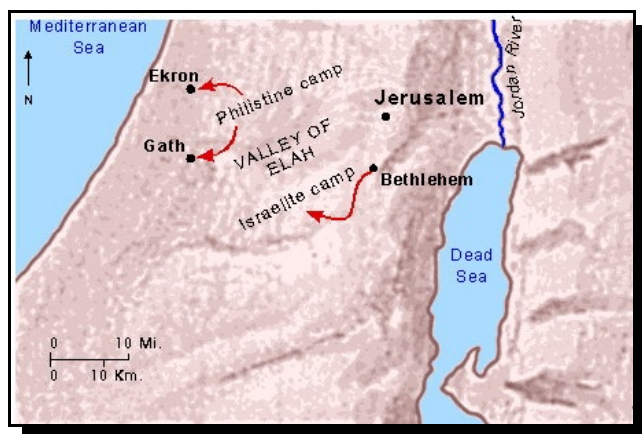
## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array to encounter the Philistines. The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them. Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze. He also had bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron; his shield-carrier also walked before him. He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. "If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us." Again the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together." When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced in years among men. The three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and the second to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at

Bethlehem. The Philistine came forward morning and evening for forty days and took his stand.

1 Samuel 17:1-16 (NASB)

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array to encounter the Philistines. The



Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them. Saul had rid Israel of the Amalekites but they were not the only ones to be rid of. Next came the Philistines. It seems that they were at an impasse - the Philistines on one mountain and Saul and his army on the other. Saul might have prevailed, but he had, conceptually, be removed from power.

Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze. He also had bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the

*head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron; his shield-carrier also walked before him. He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul?" This giant of a man was over nine feet tall. He had armor weighing 150 pounds. How large a weaver's beam might have been is not known - only that it would make a very large spear. He certainly was one to be dreaded. The head of the spear, alone, weight 15 pounds. It is no wonder that no one volunteered to fight him!*

*Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. "If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us. This seems to me like a great way to make war. Instead of many men being killed, only one of two would be killed. The rest would then surrender. I have always maintained that we ought to fight our enemies by computer. We pit our best computer against the enemy's. The computer that wins the war game wins the battle for the country.*

*Again the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together." When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. Who could possibly fight such a giant. Remember that Saul was a head taller than the rest of Israel so he was a pretty big fellow himself - but not that big!*

*At this point David's family comes into view. Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced in years among men. The three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and the second to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. Jesse's three oldest sons were with Saul at the battle front. Being*

the eldest, they were drafted. I remember during WW2 that, to the extent possible, only one person from a family was to be drafted. Some would volunteer. I remember seeing small flags in people's windows with several stars on them - indicating the number from the household that were fight for us. I also remember the gold stars - for those who would not return!

*David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem. The Philistine came forward morning and evening for forty days and took his stand. As already noticed, the three oldest sons were with Saul. No mention of the other three is made. I would assume they were home tending their sheep or whatever their responsibilities were. David was "just a kid" however and could be used as a messenger boy to bring food to the older brothers. I guess they did not have "K Rations" in those days.*

Note that Goliath repeated his challenge for 40 days. This is significant. There are twenty-two references to a period of forty days in the Scriptures:

Ge 7:4, 12, and 17, 8:6, 50:3

Ex 24:18 and 34:28

Nu 13:25 and 14:34

Dt 9:9, 11, 19, and 25

Dt 10:10

1Sa 17:16

1Ki 19:8

Eze 4:6

Jnh 3:4

Mt 4:2

Mk 1:13

Lk 4:2

Ac 1:3

Forty days is the time of testing, just as Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan for 40 days. What would happen when the forty days ended?

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Then Jesse said to David his son, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves and run to the camp to your brothers. "Bring also these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of their thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers, and bring back news of them. "For Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines." So David arose early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper and took the supplies and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the circle of the camp while the army was going out in battle array shouting the war cry. Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle array, army against army. Then David left his baggage in the care of the baggage keeper, and ran to the battle line and entered in order to greet his brothers. As he was talking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard them. When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid. The men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel." Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?" The people answered him in accord with this word, saying, "Thus it will be done for the man who kills him."

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1 Samuel 17:17-27 (NASB)

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Then Jesse said to David his son, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves and run to the camp to your brothers. "Bring also these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of their thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers, and bring back news of them. As noted before,

David was a messenger boy. Each time he went to his brothers, he was able to see what was going on, for Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

So David arose early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper and took the supplies and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the circle of the camp while the army was going out in battle array shouting the war cry. Here we go again, David "rose early." He not only brought food but he was also able to bring news from the battle field back to Jesse.

Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle array, army against army. Then David left his baggage in the care of the baggage keeper, and ran to the battle line and entered in order to greet his brothers. They say that curiosity killed the cat. Curiosity might have gotten David killed as he ran to the front lines. The text says he wanted to greet his brothers. I suspect two other motives. First, to make sure they were still alive and, second, to get a look at what was going on.

As he was talking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard them. When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid

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David was alarmed that no one would accept the challenge. His brothers tried to send him home, but David would not go. When Saul heard that David would go against Goliath, he tried to put his armor on him. David, however, was just a boy. He said, "I can't fight with these because I haven't tested them. I will just have to fight with the equipment I'm used to." What a lesson there is for us in this. Let's not try to be something we are not, or try to do something we are really not called to do. If God has called you to use a slingshot, friend, don't try to use a sword.

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 Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.
 

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*Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel."* Saul put out a great reward for the man who killed Goliath - or was it a bribe?

I don't believe Saul really expected anyone to come forward. He was in for a surprise.

*Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?" The people answered him in accord with this word, saying, "Thus it will be done for the man who kills him."*

This got David's curiosity up. He wanted to know if anything would be done for the man who killed Goliath. As before, whenever a Philistine is mentioned, he is referred to as an "uncircumcised Philistine." He received an answer to his question but raised the ire of his brothers.

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Whenever you step out by faith to fight the enemy, there's always somebody around to discourage you, and often it begins in your own home. David's eldest brother, Eliab, became angry when he heard that David was inquiring about Saul's offer and he ridiculed him (vv. 28-30). "We're soldiers and all you are is a shepherd boy! You came to see the battle! Go home and take care of your little flock and leave the fighting to us!" Of course, the fact that there had been no battle didn't embarrass Eliab, and he also forgot that David had originally come in order to deliver food for him, Abinadab, and Shammah. These three men had seen David anointed by Samuel but they didn't understand what it meant.

Bible Exposition Commentary.

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*Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle." But David said, "What have I done now? Was it not just a question?" Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing; and the people answered the same thing as before. When the words which David spoke were heard, they told them to Saul, and he sent for him. David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." Then Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth." But David said to Saul, "Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. "Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God." And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you." Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor. David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. So David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." And David took them off. He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.*

1 Samuel 17:28-40 (NASB)

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Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle." Eliab's "anger burned. It seems like a real "put down" when Eliab refers to "those few sheep" that David cared for. However many there were, they were all that Jesse and his family owned. Eliab probably was a little concerned that a few of the sheep might actually get lost. He accused David of being a seeker of excitement. He wanted to get into the thick of it.

But David said, "What have I done now? Was it not just a question?" Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing; and the people answered the same thing as before. He received confirmation of what Saul would do for the victorious one.

Now David does a rather strange thing. *When the words which David spoke were heard, they told them to Saul, and he sent for him. David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."* David, a young harpist and shepherd volunteers to fight this Goliath who is over 9 feet tall. One might consider that David was so small compared to Goliath that he probably would not even be able to reach Goliath's head or vital organs. But David had something we all need more of - faith. Faith that if we follow God, He will take care of us.

Saul, very wisely, said, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth." The two men were very unequal. It was statistically impossible for David to win.

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And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich

man to enter the kingdom of God." They who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."

Luke 18:24-27 (NASB)

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But David said to Saul, "Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him.

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Saul's royal rejection of David's offer should have concluded the meeting. However, David's idealism was exceeded only by his determination and his faith in the Lord. Consequently, he continued his efforts to change the king's heart. This time David dropped his sermonizing, choosing instead to emphasize his credentials and experience: literally, "[A] shepherd was your servant" (v. 34) who had already been victorious in two previous mortal combats, one with a lion and one with a bear. In each case David "went after" the marauding beast and "struck it." Then, when the enraged animal "turned on" David, he "seized it by its hair, struck it, and killed it."

New American Commentary

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It is unclear to me what the comparison between a lion and Goliath is. Goliath is larger. Goliath has a great spear, a sword, and armor. But, the real import of this statement is that David had never shied away from a battle. I would not attempt to take on a lion with nothing more than a shepherd's crook. But you and I are not David!

"Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God." God will deliver David as He has in the past. He has God on his side. The Philistine has "taunted" the "Living God."

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*As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries **revile me**, While they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"*

Psalms 42:10 (NASB)

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*And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you." Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor. Saul was pleased to accept David's offer. Since all David was wearing was a shepherd's outfit, Saul offered all his equipment. It has already been observed that one must fight with tools that they are familiar with. I can just see David with the garments of a seven foot tall man - they must have dug on the ground.*

David had other fighting equipment. We all do!

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*Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, **HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH**, and **HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**, and having shod **YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE**; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take **THE HELMET OF SALVATION**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

Ephesians 6:13-17 (NASB)

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David came out of the "dressing room" with Saul's outfit on and said he had *girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. So David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them."* The U.S. has an army, navy, air force, and marines (and, in time of war, the coast guard). Each group fights in different ways. A submariner may know how to shoot torpedoes or a missile but not have the least idea of how to drop a bomb from a plane. David had to fight with what felt right to him.

*And David took them off. He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.*

Here David is making a big mistake! He should have selected the roughest, most jagged and sharp rocks he could find. How is he going to kill Goliath with several smooth stones? Look at the sports you know that use an object the teams fight over. Usually it is some sort of ball. A pitcher would have a very hard time putting the ball where he wanted it if it were some irregular shape. David needed rocks that would fly straight - straight to their target.

How to make a sling.

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Find a piece of string. This could be thin nylon rope or jute of some kind. You will need about two and a half to three feet depending on the length of your arm. Cut this in half but leave one end a couple of inches longer than the other. The Ultimate Arm Sling, Cotton spandex arm slings are of great comfort and a perfect fit.

Find your pouch. The pouch is the main part of the sling. It holds the ammo. The best material I have found is leather, but canvas or heavy cloth would work. Cut the pouch into a 3"x5" rectangle. Cut two slits in the middle of the 3 inch side, just wide enough to accommodate your strings. Tie the strings to the pouch. Make a loop in the longer string. Put the loop on your middle finger and hold the other end between your thumb and forefinger. Put a rock in the pouch. For an overhand throw, face 60 degrees to the right of your target, swing as if throwing a line drive baseball but let the shorter strand slide out of your hand to release the rock. And remember to twist and then face your target.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Sling>

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These are not confused with sling shots that

most of us played with as kids. These are serious weapons.

So David is ready.

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*Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field." Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. "This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands." Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground. Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. The men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the slain Philistines lay along the way to*

*Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron. The sons of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines and plundered their camps. Then David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent. Now when Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?" And Abner said, "By your life, O king, I do not know." The king said, "You inquire whose son the youth is." So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine's head in his hand. Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."*

1 Samuel 17:41-58 (NASB)

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*Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance (This is the same description given on page #94.)*

“Disdained” is *bazah*: A verb meaning to hold in contempt or to despise<sup>19</sup> Samson didn’t want to waste time with this young man.

Samson spoke like a big man - he was one. *Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field."* He was going to tear David limb-from-limb. He probably intended to grab him by his bare hands and rip him apart. At this point, David said, “Excuse me for a moment while I get a little **boulder**. (Sorry about the pun!)

*Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you*

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<sup>19</sup>Complete Word Study Dictionary



have taunted. David said the right words - *in the name of the LORD of hosts*. Later we shall see David saying, *for the battle is the LORD'S*.

*"This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.* How can one speak this way? How could David state so positively that the Lord would deliver Goliath into his hands? How could he be so positive that the Philistines would learn there was really a God in Israel - a God not to be trifled with. The answer is there WAS a God in Israel - one like neither the Philistines nor the other nations knew. A God who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent! A God whom David knew!

*all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands."* The Lord does not need the devices of man, swords, spears, even nuclear weapons! The Lord is not to be reckoned with. In this case, the Lord is going to use a small thing to defeat the Philistines.

*Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.* David need not stand his ground! He did not move forward to meet Goliath! He "ran quickly!" David had the confidence that only the Lord can give.

*David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground.* One might think a rock thrown from a sling would hurt someone but not kill him. The following translation more clearly shows the meaning of עָבַר בַּאֲבָרָה (tāb-a).

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*David reached into his pocket for a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine hard in the*

*forehead, **embedding the stone deeply**. The Philistine crashed, facedown in the dirt.*

1 Samuel 17:49 (MSG)

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It apparently pierced his skull and sank into his brain. One might say that Samson was more brawn than brain!

Samson is dead! All that is left are the "mopping up" operations. *Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it.* Goliath lost his head by means of his own sword! This must have been a tremendous action to see, both from the Israelite camp and the Philistine camp.

David remembered this event, as you would imagine. He wrote,

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*As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the LORD is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God, The God who girds me with strength And makes my way blameless? He makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me upon my high places. He trains my hands for battle, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, And Your right hand upholds me; And Your gentleness makes me great.*

Psalms 18:30-35 (NASB)

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Why did David take FIVE stones. I doubt that he would have had time to use five. Dr. McGee had another thought.

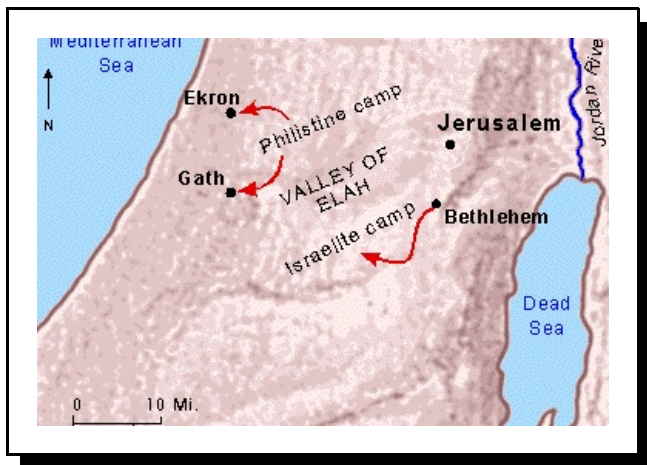
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Some people believe that David chose five smooth stones so that if he missed his first shot, he could use one or all of the others. David did not intend to miss, friend. Then why did he select five stones? The answer is found

in 2Samuel 21:22: "These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants." Goliath had four sons, and David was sure they would come out when he killed their father. This is why David picked up five stones. That was the number he needed.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

*When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. The men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the slain Philistines lay along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron.* To give some idea of the area of this battle, there is a map below. The route of the Philistines started just west of Jerusalem and continued all the way to the coasts.



*The sons of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines and plundered their camps. Then David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent. The head belonged to Israel. The weapons were the spoils of war and belonged to David.*

*Now when Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?" And Abner said, "By your life, O king, I do not know." The king said, "You inquire whose son the youth is." So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the*

*Philistine's head in his hand. Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?"*

As Saul saw David going out to meet this Philistine, he, naturally, wondered who he was. His general, Abner, didn't know so the both had to wait until after the battle to find out. I suppose it may seem strange to us in Saul's asking who David's father was but they didn't have driver's licences in those days by which David might have identified himself.

*And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."* You may think something is wrong here. David played the harp for Saul to drive away the evil spirits. You must remember what has been said several times already - Hebrew history is not in strict chronological order.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

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*Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt. So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war. And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. It happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments. The women sang as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on.*

1 Samuel 18:1-9 (NASB)

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*Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. In these days when homosexuality seem to becoming the norm rather than the exception, this passage needs a bit of enlargement. Dr. McGee does this.*

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David was speaking to Saul. Saul had called David after the battle because he wanted to give him recognition for his deed. (I think Saul felt that he gave him too much recognition in light of what happened later.) As Jonathan, Saul's son, stood there listening as David and his father talked, "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David." The relationship of

these two men was quite wonderful. We often speak about the love of a man for a woman -- and that is wonderful -- but nothing is as fine and noble as the love of two men for each other. They see in each other a mirror of themselves and are drawn together. Two men can be real friends. They can enjoy athletics and recreation together. They can work together and have a social life together. Jonathan was an outstanding man, as we have seen, and he loved David for his courage and his confidence in God.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

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*Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt. So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war. A quite a change was in store for David. His sling and bag was exchanged for a sword and bow. He no longer went home to Jesse, he was to be Saul's "right-hand-man." Nothing is said about Abner in this passage.*

*And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. It happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments. The women sang as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." Oh Oh! Everything was fine - the people were pleased with David at Saul's side. They were happy with the victory and sang and danced around Saul and David. The "fly in the ointment" is that they sang about David slaying ten times as many as Saul did. You can imagine Saul was not a bit happy with this!*

One may ask, "When did David slay 10,000 people? Consider the following.

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*A thousand may fall at your side  
And ten thousand at your right hand,  
But it shall not approach you.*  
Psalms 91:7 (NASB)

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The numbers were not meant literally. It was only a comparison, but, never-the-less, Saul did not like it!

*Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on.* It does not appear that Saul did anything specific that day, but he kept it in the forefront of his mind for the future. There are considerable differences in the translation here although all convey, to some degree, the same thing. The Hebrew has, literally, he "eyed with his eyes." Some take this as a sign of "jealousy", others, "mistrust", and still others, "dislike."

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*Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing the harp with his hand, as usual; and a spear was in Saul's hand. Saul hurled the spear for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David escaped from his presence twice. Now Saul was afraid of David, for the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him as his commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him. When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he dreaded him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, and he went out and came in before them. Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife, only be a valiant man for me and fight the LORD'S battles." For Saul*

*thought, "My hand shall not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him." But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family in Israel, that I should be the king's son-in-law?" So it came about at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife.*

1 Samuel 18:10-19 (NASB)

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*Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing the harp with his hand, as usual; and a spear was in Saul's hand. Saul hurled the spear for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall."*

There are several questions to be asked here. Why was Saul holding a spear at the time? The fact is, many kings held a sceptre or staff when on the throne. In Esther (Hadassah)'s day we read,

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*Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai; All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.*

Esther 4:10-11 (KJV)

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So, this was not unusual. What has perplexed many is the following. *But David escaped from his presence **twice**.* Some possible explanations are:

- The king did not let go of the spear but just jabbed out with it twice. It is questionable if he was that close.
- Samuel was not fast enough in getting out of Saul's presence.
- Samuel "turned the other cheek?"

Another explanation which does not seem very reasonable is below

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Not once, but twice Saul hurled the spear at David with the intention of pinning him to the wall (v. 11). David's willingness to remain in the room long enough for Saul to retrieve the spear after the failed first attempt and then take a second shot at him portrays the incredible depth of David's loyalty to the king and his commitment to helping Saul overcome his torments.

New American Commentary

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The most plausible, as far as I am concerned is below.

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But envy easily leads to anger, and anger is often the first step toward murder (Matt. 5:21-26). This explains why Saul threw his spear at David while David was trying to soothe the king and help him overcome his depression. The Lord enabled David to escape, and when he returned to the king a second time, Saul only tried again to kill him. These two events probably occurred after the Goliath victory but before David was made an officer in the army, and yet David remained faithful to his king.

Bible Exposition Commentary

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*Therefore Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him as his commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.*

David, apparently learned a BAD lesson from this. Send a man out on the front lines and you may not have to worry about him anymore. When David wanted Bathsheba, he did a similar thing.

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*And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. And it came to pass, when Joab*

*observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.*

2 Samuel 11:14-17 (KJV)

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Saul hoped that David would be slain. The idea did not work. *David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him. When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he dreaded him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, and he went out and came in before them. David was continually successful for the Lord was with him.*

Well, let's try something else!

*Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife, only be a valiant man for me and fight the LORD'S battles." For Saul thought, "My hand shall not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him." But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family in Israel, that I should be the king's son-in-law?"*

Now Saul is offering a prize(?) - a wife for David. He offered his daughter Merab. I have sought, unsuccessfully, to find the meaning of the name. I wonder what she looked like. But Samuel would have to win some battles in order to win Merab. Besides, David thought, he could not marry into royalty. In any case, the idea was short lived.

*So it came about at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife.*

Merab was married to another man and so was out of the picture. But she was not Saul's only daughter.

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*Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David.*

When they told Saul, the thing was agreeable to him. Saul thought, "I will give her to him that she may become a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David, "For a second time you may be my son-in-law today." Then Saul commanded his servants, "Speak to David secretly, saying, 'Behold, the king delights in you, and all his servants love you; now therefore, become the king's son-in-law.'" So Saul's servants spoke these words to David. But David said, "Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and lightly esteemed?" The servants of Saul reported to him according to these words which David spoke. Saul then said, "Thus you shall say to David, 'The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king's son-in-law. Before the days had expired David rose up and went, he and his men, and struck down two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. So Saul gave him Michal his daughter for a wife. When Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David's enemy continually.

1 Samuel 18:20-29 (NASB)

Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. When they told Saul, the thing was agreeable to him. Saul thought, "I will give her to him that she may become a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So on to plan B. His daughter Michael.

In II Samuel we will find out about this daughter Saul is offering.

But when David returned to bless his household, Michal the daughter of Saul came

out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today! He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants' maids as one of the foolish ones shamelessly uncovers himself!" So David said to Michal, "**It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the LORD. I will be more lightly esteemed than this and will be humble in my own eyes, but with the maids of whom you have spoken, with them I will be distinguished.**" Michal the daughter of **Saul had no child to the day of her death.**

2 Samuel 6:20-23 (NASB)

She was not the type of woman a man would want. It is no wonder she was childless! But this is getting ahead of the study.

Therefore Saul said to David, "For a second time you may be my son-in-law today." Then Saul commanded his servants, "Speak to David secretly, saying, 'Behold, the king delights in you, and all his servants love you; now therefore, become the king's son-in-law.'"

Here Saul uses flattery to convince David that he should marry Michael. Perhaps Saul's servants loved David, but not Saul!

Saul's servants spoke these words to David. But David said, "Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and lightly esteemed?" David was Israel's greatest king. When the genealogy of Christ is given, David has the prominent place. But, at this point in time, David's family was insignificant. But, even so, David is being excessively modest.

The servants of Saul reported to him according to these words which David spoke. Saul then said, "Thus you shall say to David, 'The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'"

To read this in perspective,

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It was not unusual in the ancient Near East for casualty counts to be kept by cutting off some body part: usually hands (see comment on Judg 8:6) or heads (2 Kings 10:6-8 and the practice of making piles of heads by Assyrian king Sargon II).

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Bible Background Commentary.

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If this happened in America when the Indians reigned, Saul would have asked for scalps. The foreskins not only would indicate the deaths of the Philistines, it would also be a good indication that they were, in fact, Philistines. Most of the nations around Israel practiced circumcision.

It would seem to me that if David could slay Goliath, he could kill one hundred Philistines as well. But, it would still be a very difficult thing to do and David would probably be killed in the process - which Saul hoped for. I have already noted that David learned for this as he sent Bathsheba's husband to the front lines for the same purpose.

*When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king's son-in-law. Before the days had expired David rose up and went, he and his men, and struck down two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law.*

Commentators disagree on the number. Some say that 200 is a misprint and that only 100 were brought. Others say that he showed is zeal by bringing twice the amount. No one seems to note that, perhaps, David killed only 100 of the Philistines and the others killed the rest. In any case, he had met Saul's request.

Saul was a pitiful case of a man. He shows this when we read, *So Saul gave him Michal his daughter for a wife. When Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that*

*Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David's enemy continually. He found himself even worse off now. His plan had failed - David had succeeded. There was nothing Saul could do about David. Saul was David's enemy continually.*

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*Then the commanders of the Philistines went out to battle, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed.*

1 Samuel 18:30 (NASB)

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This chapter closes with a comment on how David stood against the Philistines and how Israel honored him.

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## CHAPTER NINETEEN

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*Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David. So Jonathan told David saying, "Saul my father is seeking to put you to death. Now therefore, please be on guard in the morning, and stay in a secret place and hide yourself. "I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you; if I find out anything, then I will tell you."*

1 Samuel 19:1-3 (NASB)

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At this point, Jonathan, Saul's son comes into view. We have already noted that David and Jonathan had become good friends. Poor Saul - David is married to his daughter and has his son as a best friend!

Saul, apparently, did not know of the relationship between Jonathan and David as he instructs him to kill David. He goes to David and sets up a plan. *Now therefore, please be on guard in the morning, and stay in a secret place and hide yourself. "I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you; if I find out anything, then I will tell you."* Jonathan would bring his father out into a field where David would be hiding and question Saul about David. Then they would know where to go from there.

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*Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds have been very beneficial to you. "For he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death without a cause?" Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul vowed, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told*

*him all these words. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as formerly.*

1 Samuel 19:4-7 (NASB)

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*Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David, Jonathan when over a list of reasons why Saul should appreciate David.*

- *since he has not sinned against you*
- *since his deeds have been very beneficial to you.*
- *he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine,*
- *the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel;*

*you saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death without a cause? Saul was in a bad situation - he wanted David dead but there was every reason why he should respect David.*

*Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul vowed, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these words. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as formerly. Jonathan must have been a very good statesman as he convinced Saul to change his for (for the time being) with respect to killing David.*

---

*When there was war again, David went out and fought with the Philistines and defeated them with great slaughter, so that they fled before him. Now there was an evil spirit from the LORD on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was playing the harp with his hand. Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, so that he stuck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.*



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 1 Samuel 19:8-10 (NASB)
 

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As usual, there was another war with the Philistines. Time and time again they fought. 1Sa 13:1, 1Sa 14:52, 1Sa 17:19, 1Sa 18:5. 1Sa 19:5, 1Sa 23:5, 1Sa 28:1, 1Sa 28:15, 2Sa 5:17, 2Sa 8:10, and 2Sa 21:12.

Again, under David's leadership (and, ultimately, God's), they beat the Philistines. The text indicates that they *defeated them with great slaughter*. This war led to what comes next.

*Now there was an evil spirit from the LORD on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was playing the harp with his hand. Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, so that he stuck the spear into the wall.* You will recall this had happened before (See page #98).

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But these fresh laurels of David reawakened 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.

Adam Clark

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*Then Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, in order to put him to death in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be put to death." So Michal let David down through a window, and he went out and fled and escaped. Michal took the household idol and laid it on the bed, and put*

*a quilt of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with clothes. When Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." Then Saul sent messengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me on his bed, that I may put him to death." When the messengers entered, behold, the household idol was on the bed with the quilt of goats' hair at its head. So Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like this and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?" And Michal said to Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I put you to death?'"*

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 1 Samuel 19:11-17 (NASB)
 

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*Then Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, in order to put him to death in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be put to death." So Michal let David down through a window, and he went out and fled and escaped.*

---

*Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall, so that she was living on the wall. She said to them, "Go to the hill country, so that the pursuers will not happen upon you, and hide yourselves there for three days until the pursuers return. Then afterward you may go on your way."*

Joshua 2:15-16 (NASB)

*The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.*

2 Corinthians 11:31-33 (NASB)

---

I suppose that is a good reason for having windows in one's home! Rahab did! I don't know who let Paul down (out of a window).

Up to here, Michael was being a good wife to

David. I don't know if she was being a good wife or just sneaky when *Michal took the household idol and laid it on the bed, and put a quilt of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with clothes.* What did she take?

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the teraphim. The Hebrew word appears to mean any kind of image, in any kind of form, as a representative of some reality. Here it must have been something in the human form; because it was intended to represent a man lying in bed indisposed

Adam Clark

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*When Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." Then Saul sent messengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me on his bed, that I may put him to death." Saul had no mercy. Even though David was (supposedly) ill, Saul was going to kill him anyway.*

*When the messengers entered, behold, the household idol was on the bed with the quilt of goats' hair at its head. So Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like this and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?" And Michal said to Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I put you to death?'"*

Whether or not David actually threatened Michael if she did not help, we don;t know but most think it was only an excuse for Saul. What should one do when they are in David's position. PRAY!?

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*Deliver me from my enemies, O my God;  
Set me securely on high away from those  
who rise up against me.*

*Deliver me from those who do iniquity  
And save me from men of bloodshed.  
For behold, they have set an ambush for my  
life;*

*Fierce men launch an attack against me,  
Not for my transgression nor for my sin, O  
LORD,*

*For no guilt of mine, they run and set  
themselves against me.*

*Arouse Yourself to help me, and see!  
You, O LORD God of hosts, the God of  
Israel,*

*Awake to punish all the nations; Do not be  
gracious to any who are treacherous in  
iniquity. Selah.*

*They return at evening, they howl like a dog,  
And go around the city.*

*Behold, they belch forth with their mouth;  
Swords are in their lips,*

*For, they say, "Who hears?"*

*But You, O LORD, laugh at them;*

*You scoff at all the nations.*

*Because of his strength I will watch for You,  
For God is my stronghold.*

*My God in His lovingkindness will meet me;  
God will let me look triumphantly upon my  
foes.*

*Do not slay them, or my people will forget;  
Scatter them by Your power, and bring them  
down,*

*O Lord, our shield.*

*On account of the sin of their mouth and the  
words of their lips,*

*Let them even be caught in their pride,  
And on account of curses and lies which they  
utter.*

*Destroy them in wrath, destroy them that they  
may be no more;*

*That men may know that God rules in Jacob  
To the ends of the earth. Selah.*

*They return at evening, they howl like a dog,  
And go around the city.*

*They wander about for food*

*And growl if they are not satisfied.*

*But as for me, I shall sing of Your strength;*

*Yes, I shall joyfully sing of Your  
lovingkindness in the morning,*

*For You have been my stronghold*

*And a refuge in the day of my distress.*

*O my strength, I will sing praises to You;*

*For God is my stronghold, the God who  
shows me lovingkindness.*

Psalms 59:1-17 (NASB)

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Why I cited the above prayer (Psalm) is because it is thought that David composed this as he was escaping from Saul. That is what the heading in many Bibles says.

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*Now David fled and escaped and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth. It was told Saul, saying, "Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah." Then Saul sent messengers to take David, but when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing and presiding over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul; and they also prophesied. When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. So Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. Then he himself went to Ramah and came as far as the large well that is in Secu; and he asked and said, "Where are Samuel and David?" And someone said, "Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah." He proceeded there to Naioth in Ramah; and the Spirit of God came upon him also, so that he went along prophesying continually until he came to Naioth in Ramah. He also stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"*

1 Samuel 19:18-24 (NASB)

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*Now David fled and escaped and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him.* David is now on the run. His course is shown in the map in the next column. Upon hearing what had happened, Samuel and David thus stayed at Naioth. The map does not have any reference to Naioth. We can learn the following.

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Place-name meaning "dwelling." The name refers either to a building or district in the city of Ramah that housed the prophetic school that Samuel led (1 Sam. 19:18-24). David sought refuge from Saul at Naioth. Three groups of royal messengers and finally Saul himself fell victim to prophetic frenzy when they attempted to capture David there.

Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary.

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It did not take Saul long to learn where David was hiding. We can not read between the lines, but nothing is said in the text to indicate that Saul was informed that Samuel was there as well.

At this point, Dr. McGee does not seem his usual self when he wrote,

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Because Samuel had anointed David as king, his life, too, is in danger. Saul is now openly attempting to slay David. From now on David will live like a hunted animal. What will the future hold for David at this particular time? He will be on the run until the death of Saul.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

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As for Naioth,

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Naioth. The term Naioth is associated with Ramah and is used only here in this context. It is probably not a proper noun but a generic word for camps. In the Mari texts the Akkadian word related to this Hebrew term is used to describe the encampments of mobile shepherding communities on the outskirts of town. It is possible that Israelite prophetic groups may have occupied shepherd's residences or simply formed a similar type of camp outside Ramah.

Bible Background Commentary

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This may come as a surprise. We speak of the "Prophets" such as Samuel, and others. But there were, apparently schools for those who wished to be prophets. Here Samuel was teaching them and, apparently, for the time being at least, God was giving them utterances.

Whoops! *Then Saul sent messengers to take David, but when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing and presiding over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul; and they also prophesied.* Instead of bring David back, these men begin prophesying as well. They were no longer of use to Saul. What to do

now? Easy, send another group! *He sent other messengers, and they also prophesied.* I think we can begin to see a trend here. And, sure enough, *Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied.* Like in Baseball, three strikes and you are out. Well Saul didn't think so. If these men could not do his bidding, he would have to take the matter into his own hands and go himself.

*Then he himself went to Ramah and came as far as the large well that is in Secu; and he asked and said, "Where are Samuel and David?" And someone said, "Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah."* Do not ask me where Secu was for I do not know. One dictionary gives a brief description.

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Town or topographical landmark where Saul stopped to ask the whereabouts of Samuel and David, located between Gibeah and Ramah. It was especially noted for its large well—a natural place to go for information

Tyndale Bible Dictionary.

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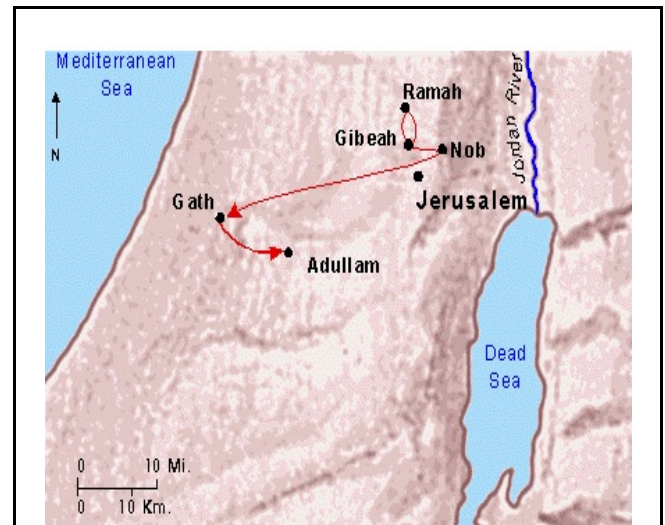
Surprise! Not only did the three groups of men begin to *prophecy. The Spirit of God came upon him also, so that he went along prophesying continually until he came to Naioth in Ramah.* Then he really did a peculiar thing.

*He also stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night.* Well, there is being "naked" and being "naked!" A police officer might feel "naked" if he does not have his gun with him. In this case, we have,

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Threw off his royal robes or military dress, retaining only his tunic; and continued so all that day and all that night, uniting with the sons of the prophets in prayers, singing praises, and other religious exercises, which were unusual to kings and warriors; and this gave rise to the saying, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* By bringing both him and his men thus under a Divine influence, God prevented them from injuring the person of David.

*Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"* It would be impossible for this situation to go unnoticed. People realized that King Saul was there among the prophets and so one would logically as if he were a prophet too.

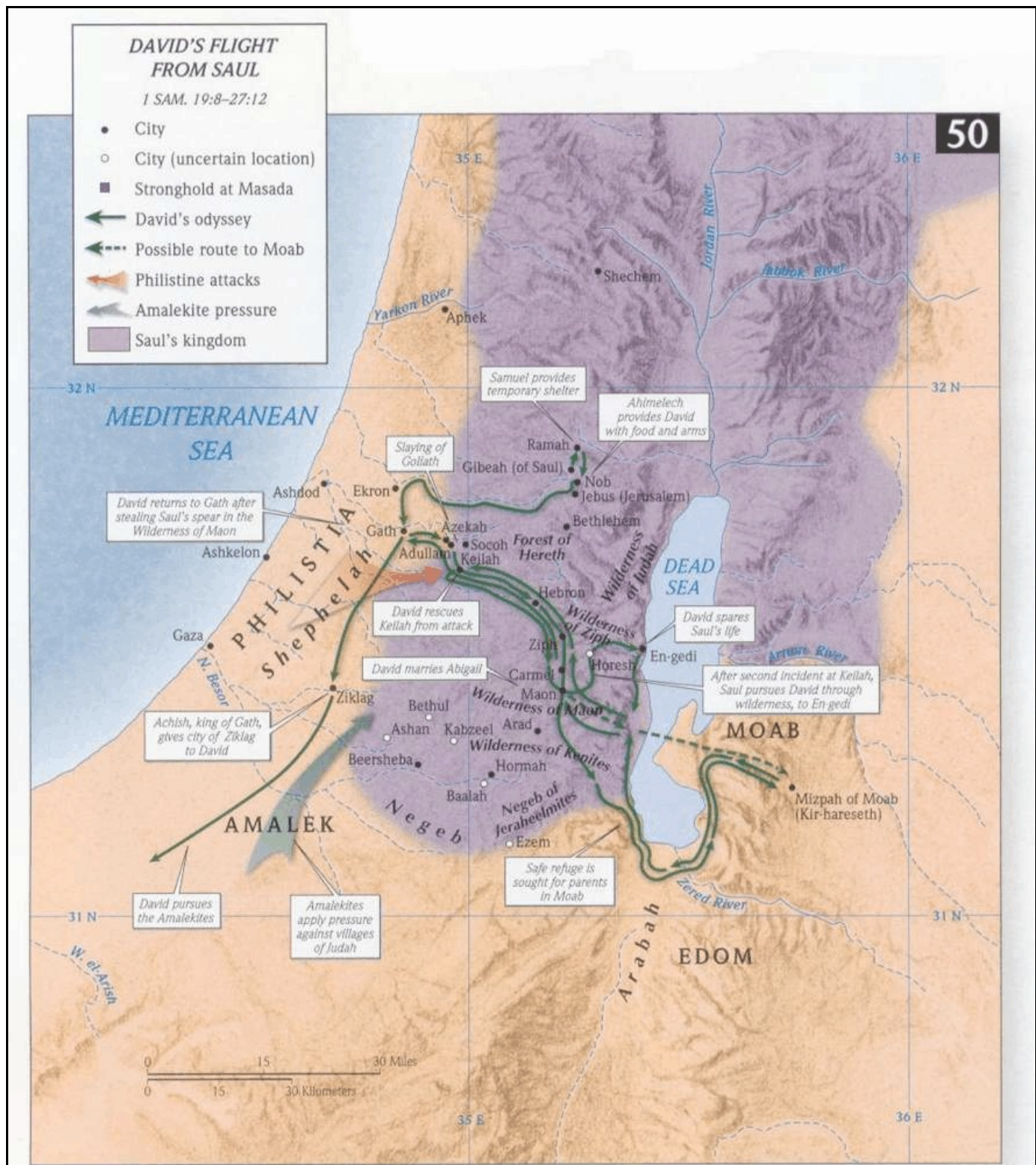


David learned of Saul's plans to kill him and fled to Samuel at Ramah. Returning to Gibeah to say goodbye to Jonathan, he then escaped to Nob, where he received food and a sword from the priest. He then fled to Gath in Philistine territory. When the Philistines became suspicious, he escaped to the cave of Adullam, where many men joined him

Life Application Study Bible.

# CHAPTER TWENTY

## DAVID FLEES FROM SAUL



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Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?" So Jonathan said to him, "By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!" Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death." So Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do it for you." And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow is the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening. If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked permission of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' If he says thus: 'It is well,' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, then be sure that evil is determined by him. Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?" But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?" Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me, or what if your father answers you roughly?" And Jonathan said to David, "Come, and let us go out into the field." So both of them went out into the field.

1 Samuel 20:1-11 (NKJV)

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In this chapter and through chapter 27, David flees before Saul. The map on the preceding page should be of help in location places.

Then David fled from Naioth<sup>20</sup> in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

A similar situation was setup in the previous chapter. It resulted in telling David that Saul was not out to get him (yet.). Jonathan establishes a plan to tell David where he stands.

So Jonathan said to him, "By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!" Another translation puts this more in the language of today.

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"Nothing," said Jonathan. "You've done nothing wrong. And you're not going to die. Really, you're not! My father tells me everything. He does nothing, whether big or little, without confiding in me. So why would he do this behind my back? It can't be."

1 Samuel 20:2 (MSG)

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Another means of communication is setup here.

Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death."

David was living on the edge of death and had to be extremely careful. Could he even trust his good friend Jonathan?

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A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

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<sup>20</sup>The northernmost part of the green line on the map.

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 Proverbs 18:24 (NASB)
 

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Jonathan and David were brothers in their spirits.

David begin an outline of a plan. So Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do it for you." And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow is the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening. If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked permission of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' If he says thus: 'It is well,' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, then be sure that evil is determined by him

You and I go by a different calendar than did David. We have a solar year of 365 1/4 days, divided into 12 months. The Hebrew calendar was a solar one, based on the moon's cycle of 29 1/2 days. Thus two Hebrew months would add up to 354 days, 11 1/4 days short of our calendar. Note to worry, when their calendar got too far behind they simply added an additional month to that year.

Anyway, their feasts were based on this Lunar years. Since the following day would be a "new moon" it would also be a new month and time for a sacrificial meal. David, obviously, could not go. So, he has Jonathan make an excuse for him. This was a lie? Is it ok to lie? No, not in general, but in a case like this, there was no choice.

Now the test. If Saul said,

- *'It is well,' your servant will be safe.*
- *If he is very angry, then be sure that evil is determined by him.*

Simple enough

*Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me*

*yourself, for why should you bring me to your father? David said, if you don't want to, or won't, do this for me - just kill me now and save the trouble.*

*But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?" All of this conversation would have been unnecessary if Jonathan knew, for a fact, that Saul was out to kill David. Why not just say so and say "Goodbye" to David?*

*Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me, or what if your father answers you roughly?" And Jonathan said to David, "Come, and let us go out into the field." So both of them went out into the field. David still has doubts about his situation so Jonathan takes things in hand and calls David out into the field with him. What field? It makes little difference and we are not told. It must have been a nearby field.*

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*Then Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if there is good feeling toward David, shall I not then send to you and make it known to you? "If it please my father to do you harm, may the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also, if I do not make it known to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And may the LORD be with you as He has been with my father. "If I am still alive, will you not show me the lovingkindness of the LORD, that I may not die? "You shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD require it at the hands of David's enemies." Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.*

1 Samuel 20:12-17 (NASB)

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*Then Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the*

*God of Israel, be witness!* Jonathan is attempting to reassure David that he is out to help David and for David to trust him. God would be his witness!

*When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if there is good feeling toward David, shall I not then send to you and make it known to you?* Once Jonathan has made positively sure (it might take several days) that Saul is not set against David, Jonathan would send for David and all would be well.

*"If it please my father to do you harm, may the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also, if I do not make it known to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And may the LORD be with you as He has been with my father.* In a rather lengthy discussion, one author has suggested,

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A remarkable transformation occurs in the narrative beginning at v. 11 and extending through v. 23 as David, the most dynamic character in 1, 2 Samuel, becomes a silent and passive presence on the story line. A total of 162 Hebrew words occur in four different quotations in this section, but all of them are spoken by Jonathan. The two longest quotations attributed to Jonathan in the Old Testament (seventy-six and seventy-seven Hebrew words) also are present here. Furthermore, these quotes contain nine mentions of Yahweh's name, an unusually high number for a stretch of text extending only thirteen verses.

These facts suggest that the author intended this stretch of text to be more than just the simple completion of a plan to convey Saul's thoughts about David. In fact, this section may be viewed as the thematic centerpiece of the story of Jonathan. Several content-based reasons can be given to support this contention.

First, this section shows that Jonathan, the individual next in the dynastic succession to be king after Saul, was also the one who took responsibility for David's escape from Saul. Of

his own accord Jonathan swore two oaths before the Lord (vv. 12–13) that he would obtain the information David needed, pass it along in a timely manner, and if necessary, "send" David "away safely" (v. 13). Since it was Jonathan who came up with the plan and swore the oaths, this scene negates any claim that David duped or coerced others into participating in this flight from the king.

Second, this section depicts the establishment of a covenant between the house of David and the house of Jonathan that would later lead David to defy conventional wisdom regarding the elimination of potential rivals to the throne. Under the terms of the agreement, when David became king he was to show the son of Saul "unfailing kindness like that of the Lord" (v. 14), seeing to it that Jonathan would "not be killed" in a purge. Furthermore, David must "never terminate the commitment to be loyal" (v. 15; NIV, "not cut off your kindness") to Jonathan's descendants—their lives, too, must be spared. David later honored the terms of this agreement; instead of killing off all members of the Saulide dynasty, David gave Jonathan's son Mephibosheth great wealth and a place at the royal table (cf. 2 Sam 9:7, 10). He even spared Mephibosheth's life when there was reasonable suspicion that he participated in a revolt against David (cf. 2 Sam 19:25–29).

New American Commentary

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*"If I am still alive, will you not show me the lovingkindness of the LORD, that I may not die? "You shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth."* Jonathan is going to do something very important for David and wishes some promise that David would repay the deed. Even when David was "trouble-free" he would remember Jonathan and keep his promises.

*So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD require it at the hands of David's enemies." Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.*



This is a most remarkable passage. It shows how two men can have the deepest respect for one another and trust each other to do what is right in their relationship. We shall see the extent that David kept his word when we reach 2 Samuel 9.

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*Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed because your seat will be empty. "When you have stayed for three days, you shall go down quickly and come to the place where you hid yourself on that eventful day, and you shall remain by the stone Ezel. "I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target. "And behold, I will send the lad, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I specifically say to the lad, 'Behold, the arrows are on this side of you, get them,' then come; for there is safety for you and no harm, as the LORD lives. "But if I say to the youth, 'Behold, the arrows are beyond you,' go, for the LORD has sent you away. "As for the agreement of which you and I have spoken, behold, the LORD is between you and me forever."*

1 Samuel 20:18-23 (NASB)

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Jonathan set up a rather elaborate plan so as to his the fact that he was sending some sort of signal to David. Thus, the following is the account of what came about as a result of this plan.

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*Then 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." And it happened the next day, the second day of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?" So Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked permission of me to go to*

*Bethlehem. And he said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table." 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? 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." And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?" Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully.*

1 Samuel 20:24-34 (NKJV)

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*Then 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." The task before Jonathan was not going to be easy. Yes, Saul noticed David's absence at the meal but decided in his own mind why David was absent and did not make any comment about it.*

*And it happened the next day, the second day of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?" The first day was of no great significance. But, if David were unclean, he could take care of that in a day and so could be at the meal the next day.*

*So Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked permission of me to go to Bethlehem. And he said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table."*

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At this point Jonathan dropped his lie into the conversation and nothing went right after that. Jonathan didn't say that David's father Jesse had summoned him home but that one of his brothers had commanded him to attend the family feast. Perhaps Jonathan hoped his father would assume that the invitation came from one of David's three brothers serving in Saul's army (17:13), which might make the matter easier for Saul to accept. Jonathan also used a verb that means "to get away, to make a quick visit" so that Saul wouldn't suspect David of going home for a long visit and rallying his own troops so he could seize the throne.

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Bible Exposition Commentary

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*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? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Saul was not happy with Jonathan's explanation - to say the least. Today he would have called him the son of something else other than "perverse." I shall not repeat it except by initials - SOB! You all know the words.*

He adds to this that Jonathan had brought shame on "his mother's nakedness." One commentator tried to say what it really meant without actually saying it.

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Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman -- This is a striking Oriental form of abuse. 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. The principle on which it is founded seems to be, that to a genuine filial instinct it is a more inexpiable offense to hear the name or character of a parent traduced, than any personal reproach. This was, undoubtedly, one cause of "the fierce anger" in which the high-minded prince left the table without tasting a morsel

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Jamieson - Faucett and Brown

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*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." And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?" Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David. Saul is getting really hot under the collar now! YOU will never be king as long as David lives.*

As an interesting note on the Hebrew language, it is very much missing in adverbs. "He will surely die!" in the Hebrew would be "dying he shall die." Here is another interesting way of expressing the phrase "he shall surely die." It is "for he is a son of death!"

*Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?" Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David. I think that Saul must have carried his spear with him at all times - even at the dinner table! I suspect Saul did not intend to kill Jonathan but merely to show his intent to kill David.*

Several commentators have noted that the **spear** missed Jonathan but he still got the **point**

*So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because*

*his father had treated him shamefully.* It is not clear to be whether Jonathan thought David had been “treated shamefully” or if Jonathan himself felt that way. Probably both are true.

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*Now it came about in the morning that Jonathan went out into the field for the appointment with David, and a little lad was with him. He said to his lad, "Run, find now the arrows which I am about to shoot." As the lad was running, he shot an arrow past him. When the lad reached the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" And Jonathan called after the lad, "Hurry, be quick, do not stay!" And Jonathan's lad picked up the arrow and came to his master. But the lad was not aware of anything; only Jonathan and David knew about the matter. Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad and said to him, "Go, bring them to the city." When the lad was gone, David rose from the south side and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times. And they kissed each other and wept together, but David wept the more. Jonathan said to David, "Go in safety, inasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD will be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'" Then he rose and departed, while Jonathan went into the city.*

1 Samuel 20:35-42 (NASB)

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*Now it came about in the morning that Jonathan went out into the field for the appointment with David, and a little lad was with him. He said to his lad, "Run, find now the arrows which I am about to shoot." As the lad was running, he shot an arrow past him. When the lad reached the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" And Jonathan called after the lad, "Hurry, be quick, do not stay!" And Jonathan's lad picked up the arrow and came to his master. To anyone else, this was a simple statement. He told the lad to go get the arrows. Perhaps*

Jonathan was in a hurry to go somewhere so he asked the lad to “Hurry, be quick, and do not stay.” But, of course, the words were really words to David.

Jonathan had shot the arrow past the stone Ezel, a sign to David that all was NOT well.

*Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad and said to him, "Go, bring them to the city." When the lad was gone, David rose from the south side and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times. And they kissed each other and wept together, but David wept the more.* In the dictionary sense, the “lad” was Jonathan’s armor-barrier. David, himself, been Saul’s armor barrier up until now. The errand was primarily an excuse so that David and Jonathan could be alone. There they kissed each other and cried. In this country and today’s world, this seems rather strange for two grown men to do. Perhaps we are too reserved and afraid of expressing our real emotions much of the time.

*Jonathan said to David, "Go in safety, inasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD will be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'"*

David made a covenant with Jonathan that day. We need to be careful when we make promises to people that we keep them. David did. Dr. McGee noted,

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Later on, both Saul and Jonathan are slain by the Philistines, and David comes to the throne. The safe thing for him to have done would have been to exterminate every member of the house of Saul. That means that if Jonathan had a son he should have been killed. The fact of the matter is that Jonathan did have a son. We are going to meet him a little later on in the story. His name was Mephibosheth, and he was crippled. When Saul and Jonathan were slain, a servant took the boy and hid him. But David is going to make good his covenant. David found the boy, took him to the palace,

put him at his table, fed him, and cared for him. Why? He is making good his covenant with Jonathan because his friend showed him grace.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

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*Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest; and Ahimelech came trembling to meet David and said to him, "Why are you alone and no one with you?" David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has commissioned me with a matter and has said to me, 'Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you; and I have directed the young men to a certain place.' "Now therefore, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found." The priest answered David and said, "There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women." David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels be holy?" So the priest gave him consecrated bread; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread in its place when it was taken away.*

1 Samuel 21:1-6 (NASB)

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*Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest; and Ahimelech came trembling to meet David and said to him, "Why are you alone and no one with you?" Commentators have stated that David had helpers with him but he was alone as far as other warriors and such.*

David tells Ahimelech a real "whopper." -*"The king has commissioned me with a matter and has said to me, 'Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you; and I have directed the young men to a certain place. If the king "Saul" had really commissioned David in this matter, Ahimelech would not have had to keep it a secret.*

Can we condone such actions? We can rationalize them. We can say that the "king" referred to here was the Lord Himself. He may have been! In any case, the Lord was directing David and so that settles it.

*"Now therefore, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found." David and those with him were hungry and needed food. Bread was the most common and so Ahimelech must have had some.*

*The priest answered David and said, "There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread; Once a week, loaves of bread were to be baked and place on the table in the tabernacle as food (in principal) for God. After a week, the bread would be replaced with fresh bread and the priests were then allowed to eat the "ordinary" bread, the bread that was removed to make room for the new bread.*

But, Ahimelech said there was no such bread there. So, what to do? Ahimelech says something that, I think, needs explanation. *but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women.*" It sounds like it is ok if the men had not had any affair with a woman for the previous week. What would that have to do with it?

Jesus answered the question for us.

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*At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath." But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? "Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?"*

*"But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. "But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the innocent. "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."*

Matthew 12:1-8 (NASB)

Jesus answered and implied, "Yes, the law says only the priests may have the bread. But, there are times when there is a greater need than following the precepts which God gave Israel. What about the week period of abstention from intercourse?

*This is the law for the one with a discharge, and for the man who has a seminal emission so that he is unclean by it, and for the woman who is ill because of menstrual impurity, and for the one who has a discharge, whether a male or a female, or a man who lies with an unclean woman.*

Leviticus 15:32-33 (NASB)

But, now consider this!

*And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain. The Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" And He \*said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry; how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?" Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."*

Mark 2:23-28 (NASB)

There are times when one need takes precedent over another. The men had to eat and had nothing with them.

*David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels be holy?" Not only had they kept the law of week's uncleanness, they were now in a special situation brought about by God himself.*

*So the priest gave him consecrated bread; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread in its place when it was taken away. Thus David and those with him had some nourishment for their bodies. But, they needed more than food if David was going to escape Saul and become king. So,*

*David said to Ahimelech, "Now is there not a spear or a sword on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's matter was urgent." Then the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you would take it for yourself, take it. For there is no other except it here." And David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."*

1 Samuel 21:8-9 (NASB)

*David said to Ahimelech, "Now is there not a spear or a sword on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's matter was urgent." It would be a strange place to find a sword - in the tabernacle. But, surprise of surprises,*

*Then the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you would take it for yourself, take it. For there is no other except it here."*

Apparently it was kept for historical purposes. Dr. McGee makes a strange comment here.

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It is interesting that David could use the slingshot when he was a youngster, but he has been in the king's palace a long time. Perhaps he has lost his cunning with the slingshot. Now he needs a sword and he uses Goliath's sword because it is available.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

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David had killed Goliath with a sling but that was only because God was with him in it. David could not count on his sling for a battles, especially with multiple people and at close range. What is curious to me is how David could manage with such a sword as this. He rejected Saul's weapons because he was unfamiliar with them. Now his has gained familiarity.

Another commentator writes,

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Besides food, David needed a weapon; thus, he inquired about obtaining "a spear or a sword" (v. 8; Hb. v. 9). It is reasonable to assume that David asked about these items because he had deposited Goliath's weapons there earlier as a gift of dedication (cf. Lev 27:14ff.). Such gifts could be returned to the one who had given them, though a redemption payment would normally have been required. Ahimelech, who had carefully preserved David's dedicated item "wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod" (v. 9; Hb. v. 10), granted David permission to reclaim it, which he did without hesitation.

New American Commentary

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David was happy with it as he said, "*There is none like it; give it to me.*"

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Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath. But the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?"

David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath. So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard. Then Achish said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? "Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence? Shall this one come into my house?"

1 Samuel 21:10-15 (NASB)

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

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*So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's household heard of it, they went down there to him. Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him. And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me." Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold. The prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.*

1 Samuel 22:1-5 (NASB)

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*So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's household heard of it, they went down there to him.* Apparently David must have sent for them for, if the knowledge of his whereabouts were known in general, Saul would have been there.

In addition, everyone who

- *was in distress,*
- *who was in debt,*
- *who was discontented*

*gathered to him; and he became captain over them.* This seems curious to me. Not that these "misfits" would come to David, but that he became their captain!

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*For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that*

*are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.*

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NASB)

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I suppose, considering the above, we are no different.

David certainly could not remain there long. With that many people, *about four hundred men*, around, word would surely get back to Saul.

*David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me."*

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Fleeing to Moab is what another Bethlehem family had done several generations before David. Elimelech, you recall, had taken his family to Moab during a period of famine in Israel. Because of this, Ruth the Moabitess is in the Bible story. The father of David would be the grandson of Ruth the Moabitess, which is undoubtedly the reason the king of Moab grants the couple asylum in Moab. The very fact that David leaves the land of Israel and goes to Moab means he is really a frightened man.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

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I usually agree with Dr. McGee, but I do not believe that taking his parents for protection in Moab is the same as fleeing there himself. Paul would not have thought so -

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*But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

1 Timothy 5:8 (KJV)

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*Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.* Note the word "left." He did not stay in Moab after he delivered his parents.



*The prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.*

Meanwhile,

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*Then Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered. Now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree on the height with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing around him. Saul said to his servants who stood around him, "Hear now, O Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse also give to all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? "For all of you have conspired against me so that there is no one who discloses to me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you who is sorry for me or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me to lie in ambush, as it is this day." Then Doeg the Edomite, who was standing by the servants of Saul, said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. "He inquired of the LORD for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."*

1 Samuel 22:6-10 (NASB)

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*Then Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered. Now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree on the height with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing around him. I think that spear must have been glued to Saul's hand - that is where it always seems to be!*

*Saul said to his servants who stood around him, "Hear now, O Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse also give to all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? "For all of you have conspired against me so that there is no one who discloses to me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you who is sorry for me or*

*discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me to lie in ambush, as it is this day."*

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It sounds like Saul is developing some paranoid tendencies. He has developed a persecution complex. Maybe he is entitled to this complex, because he has discovered that his own son has not been loyal to him. He is wondering why these men in his cabinet have not revealed this fact to him -- as apparently they had not.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

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First of all, Saul, in effect, asked those gathered around him whether or not he was their king. Had he not done things for them, given them positions in his army, and on and on. But what have they done? When they hear that Jonathan made a covenant with David, they said nothing to Saul about it (assuming they did hear about this).

*Saul needed help wherever he could find it. Then Doeg the Edomite, who was standing by the servants of Saul, said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. "He inquired of the LORD for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."*

Well, at least one of the men gave Saul some information.

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*Then the king sent someone to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's household, the priests who were in Nob; and all of them came to the king. Saul said, "Listen now, son of Ahitub." And he answered, "Here I am, my lord." Saul then said to him, "Why have you and the son of Jesse conspired against me, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, so that he would rise up against me by lying in ambush as it is this day?"*

1 Samuel 22:11-13 (NASB)

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Then the king sent someone to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's household, the priests who were in Nob; No, this is not Nob Hill in San Francisco!

all of them came to the king. Saul said, "Listen now, son of Ahitub." And he answered, "Here I am, my lord." Saul then said to him, "Why have you and the son of Jesse conspired against me, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, so that he would rise up against me by lying in ambush as it is this day?" Saul had learned about David getting the bread and Goliath's sword at Nob, and thus helping David in his battle against Saul. Ahimelech had a good answer for Saul. God, apparently was with Ahimelech.

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Then Ahimelech answered the king and said, "And who among all your servants is as faithful as David, even the king's son-in-law, who is captain over your guard, and is honored in your house? "Did I just begin to inquire of God for him today? Far be it from me! Do not let the king impute anything to his servant or to any of the household of my father, for your servant knows nothing at all of this whole affair." But the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's household!" And the king said to the guards who were attending him, "Turn around and put the priests of the LORD to death, because their hand also is with David and because they knew that he was fleeing and did not reveal it to me." But the servants of the king were not willing to put forth their hands to attack the priests of the LORD. Then the king said to Doeg, "You turn around and attack the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned around and attacked the priests, and he killed that day eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. And he struck Nob the city of the priests with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and infants; also oxen, donkeys, and sheep he struck with the edge of the sword.

1 Samuel 22:14-19 (NASB)

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His reply to Saul was, "And who among all your servants is as faithful as David, even the king's

son-in-law, who is captain over your guard, and is honored in your house? His answer, basically, says the he thought David was with Saul and not fleeing from him.

"Did I just begin to inquire of God for him today? Far be it from me! Do not let the king impute anything to his servant or to any of the household of my father, for your servant knows nothing at all of this whole affair." He takes the "Fifth Amendment" and indicates he knows nothing of the whole affair. Was it alright for priest to lie like that? It turns out the question, in this case, is answered for us.

But the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's household!" And the king said to the guards who were attending him, "Turn around and put the priests of the LORD to death, because their hand also is with David and because they knew that he was fleeing and did not reveal it to me." Under Saul's concept of government, prevarication such as this deserved capital punishment. His only problem is stated next.

But the servants of the king were not willing to put forth their hands to attack the priests of the LORD. They would not do such a thing! At least, they had respect for the priests and refused Saul's order.

Then the king said to Doeg, "You turn around and attack the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned around and attacked the priests, and he killed that day eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. And he struck Nob the city of the priests with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and infants; also oxen, donkeys, and sheep he struck with the edge of the sword.

It was this point in time that David composed two of his many Psalms. In the KJV, there are headings for each Psalm. Not part of the inspired word, but useful anyway. Below is a list of the Psalms specifically attributed to David in the KJV.

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Ps 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 61, 62, 63, 64, 69, 70, 101, 103, 109, 110, 138, 139, 140, 141  
 "Psalms of David"

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Of these, the following indicate the purpose of the Psalm in reference to David's fight with Saul.

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Ps 3:1 A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.

Ps 34:1 A Psalm of David when he changed his behavior before Abimelech (Achish)

Ps 35:1 A Psalm of David David prays for his own safety and his enemies' confusion

Ps 52:1 A Psalm of David when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul and said unto him, David is come into the house of Abimelech

Ps 54:1 A Psalm of David when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

Ps 140:1 A Psalm of David David prays to be delivered from Saul and Doeg.

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The first Psalm related specifically to this incident is below<sup>21</sup>

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**David condemning the spitefulness of Doeg, prophesies his destruction  
 To the chief Musician, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.**

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*Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to*

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<sup>21</sup>Many of the other Psalms may be in response to these subjects but are not so marked and are more general in content,

*speaking righteousness. Selah.*

*Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.*

*The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.*

*But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever. I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.*

Psalms 52 (KJV)

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What does "Selah" mean here? The reason why it is transliterated and not translated is that no one really knows what it means.

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Perhaps one other reason for their disobedience to a direct order from the king was their rejection of the premise on which the death sentence was based. According to Saul, the priestly family of Ahitub had to die "because they too have sided with David" in a plot against the king. Saul's attendants loved and respected David (16:18; 18:5, 22, 30), and they knew him to be devoted to the king's welfare. There was no conspiracy against the king, so the priests had no reason to die.

New American Commentary

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Going back to Doeg, *Then the king said to Doeg, "You turn around and attack the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned around and attacked the priests, and he killed that day eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. And he struck Nob the city of the priests with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and infants; also oxen, donkeys, and sheep he struck with the edge of the sword*

This Saul, who was supposed to be a great king turned out to be a horrible person, killing priests, women, infants, none of which had anything to do with knowing the whereabouts of David. If he were not king, he would have surely been stoned to death for such a crime.

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*But one son of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. Then David said to Abiathar, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have brought about the death of every person in your father's household. "Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life, for you are safe with me."*

1 Samuel 22:20-23 (NASB)

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*But one son of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. At least he escaped with his life. But now he has his picture on the "wanted" list as is David's.*

*Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. He delivered the very bad news of the killing spree to David. David replied, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have brought about the death of every person in your father's household." I am sure this must have weighed heavily on David. He says that Doeg the Edomite would tell all - which he did. Now, I suppose, Abiathar is on Saul's "most wanted list."*

It was on this occasion that David wrote Psalm 140.

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**David prays to be delivered from Saul and Doeg  
To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David,**

*Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man; preserve me from the violent man; Which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war. They have*

*sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah. Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings. The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah. I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD. O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle. Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. Selah. As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again. Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him. I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*

Psalms 140 (KJV)

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Then they told David, saying, "Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are plundering the threshing floors." So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines and deliver Keilah." But David's men said to him, "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the ranks of the Philistines?" Then David inquired of the LORD once more. And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand." So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines; and he led away their livestock and struck them with a great slaughter. Thus David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah.

1 Samuel 23:1-5 (NASB)

Then they told David, saying, "Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are plundering the threshing floors." Well, David had better take his men and rescue these people. But wait! David himself is in dire trouble. Does he help those at Keilan or does he watch out for himself? There is only one way to determine the answer.

So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" When you are in a tough situation, (1) do you bother to go to the Lord for an answer, and (2) if you do, does He answer you. If either answer is "no" your walk with the Lord is not what it should be

"Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. "He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. "With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation."

Psalms 91:14-16 (NASB)

And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines and deliver Keilah." But David's men said to him, "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the ranks of the Philistines?" David received his answer, but, now his men are afraid to follow him. What to do now?

Then David inquired of the LORD once more. And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand. Well, David had to pray again for the sake of his men. If David keeps praying like this all the time, the Lord is going to weary of answering him. Paul answered this concern with three words.

pray without ceasing;

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NASB)

You simply can not tire God out with your prayers. He is always there to answer. This answer was the same as the first - GO!

So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines; and he led away their livestock and struck them with a great slaughter. Thus David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah. I am sure this is no surprise to you - the Lord delivered on His promise - or - is it a surprise. Does the Lord not always answer your prayers? If so, you need to examine your walk with Him.

Now it came about, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand. When it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah, Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he shut himself in by entering a city with double gates and bars." So Saul summoned all the people for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. Now David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him; so he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Your

*servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account. "Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant." And the LORD said, "He will come down." Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the LORD said, "They will surrender you." Then David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the pursuit. David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.*

1 Samuel 23:6-14 (NASB)

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~~Now it came about~~, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand. When it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah, Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he shut himself in by entering a city with double gates and bars." Not much is know about this city other than what we are told here. According to the text, it was a bad place for David to be since it had high walls around it and a gate to keep people out (or in). This was Saul's opportunity.

So Saul summoned all the people for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. Saul wasted no time in taking advantage of this situation. David knew it would happen - that is why he prayed in the first place! But, now,

*he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account. "Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant. This is one very urgent plea for help. Now, David is*

not only afraid of Saul, he is also afraid that the people of the city will turn against him too! The prayers here are intriguing.

Question:

*Will Saul come down just as Your servant has heard?*

Answer: *He will come down.*

Question: *"Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?"*

Answer: *They will surrender you.*

These rather terse answers were all David needed. He and his men left the city and fled into the wilderness.

*David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.*

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*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. And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. 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. 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. 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 subtilly. 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. 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. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth. And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.*

1 Samuel 23:14-29 (KJV)

*And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood. And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. 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.*

Before we proceed, you may wish to refer to the map on page #107.

One of the locations in which David and his men stayed was "Horesh in the Desert of Ziph" (v. 15), an otherwise unknown location. While there, David "learned that Saul had come out to

take his life." Jonathan was as well informed about David's location as his father (cf. 20:2). Unencumbered by the limitations of traveling with a large armed force, Jonathan was able to get "to David at Horesh" (v. 16) before his father could. His purpose was as noble as his commitment to David; he "strengthened his hand in God" (NIV, "helped him find strength in God").

New American Commentary

Jonathan gets to David before Saul can find him and makes another covenant with David.

*Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. 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.* The issue was settled. David WOULD be king and Jonathan WOULD be David's "right hand man."

*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.*

Who were the Ziphites? My Bible dictionary says they were inhabitants of Ziph - a lot of help! Anyway, David could not possibly hid from everyone and this group of people would prophet considerably by letting Saul know where David was. It was at this time that David wrote another Psalm.

When the Ziphites came and said to Saul, "Is not David hiding among us?"

*Save me, O God, by Your name, And vindicate me by Your power. Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth. For*

*strangers have risen against me And violent men have sought my life; They have not set God before them. Selah. Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is the sustainer of my soul. He will recompense the evil to my foes; Destroy them in Your faithfulness. Willingly I will sacrifice to You; I will give thanks to Your name, O LORD, for it is good. For He has delivered me from all trouble, And my eye has looked with satisfaction upon my enemies.*

*Psalms 54:1-7 (NASB)*

Saul, of course, could not turn down such an offer. One expositor has noted that the terrain around Ziph was such that you could stand on a mountain top and see the activity all around you. You could easily spot David.

*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 subtilly. 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. After “blessing” the Ziphites, Saul instructs them to go home and seek out exactly where David is hiding. He asks for a person or persons who has actually seen him to report on his whereabouts, He further instructs them that David is not easy to catch - he “dealeth very subtilly.” The Hebrew here is below.*

*ḥābā’, in twenty-five of its thirty occurrences refers to people hiding in fear of death. Thus the five kings of the southern confederacy hid themselves in a cave out of fear of Joshua (Joshua 19:27) and Adam and Eve hid themselves out of consciousness of their alienation from the Lord God (Genesis 3:8).*

*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.*

Having been a shepherd, I would assume that David would know of many places in the

countryside where one could hide.

*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. 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*

I see one sentence here that summarizes this who section. “*And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain.*” it was a continual game of cat and mouse. David, sensing the situation, made all haste to get away. It was then when the Lord brought him obvious deliverance.

*But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth. And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.*

All of a sudden, Saul had a larger problem on his hands - he had to go fight the Philistines again. This allowed David to escape again and go to Engedi.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Now when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. He came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave. The men of David said to him, "Behold, this is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly. It came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe. So he said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed." David persuaded his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose, left the cave, and went on his way.

1 Samuel 24:1-7 (NASB)

Saul has solved his other problem so he is back, trying to find David. Now when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. This general area is shown in the next column.

Whilst Saul had gone against the Philistines, David left this dangerous place, and went to the mountain heights of Engedi, i.e., the present Ain-jidy (goat-fountain), in the middle of the western coasts of the Dead Sea (see at Josh 15:62), which he could reach from Maon in six or seven hours. The soil of the neighbourhood consists entirely of limestone;



but the rocks contain a considerable admixture of chalk and flint. Round about there rise bare conical mountains, and even ridges of from two to four hundred feet in height, which mostly run down to the sea. The steep mountains are intersected by wadys running down in deep ravines to the sea. "On all sides the country is full of caverns, which might then serve as lurking-places for David and his men, as they do for outlaws at the present day"

Keil and Delitzsch

He came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. The KJV says Saul went into the cave to "cover his feet." This is a rather quaint way of expressing it!

Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave. The men of David said to him, "Behold, this is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" "

Apparently, Saul decided to take a nap after relieving himself. David and his men being further back in the cave witnessed all this and reached the conclusion that this situation was far too good to be anything but the hand of God giving Saul into David's hands.

Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly. It came about afterward

*that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe. So he said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed."*

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*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares 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.*

*Isaiah 55:8-9 (NASB)*

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Even though David had it in his power to slay Saul right then and there, he did not. Apparently something (God?) Caused David to do no more than cut off a piece of Saul's robe as evidence he was there. As we shall see, that turned out much better than if David had followed "man's ways" and killed Saul right there. David's men had other ideas but, *David persuaded his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose, left the cave, and went on his way.*

Even though a bitter enemy, Saul was, in fact, the Lord's anointed King - but not for long!

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*Now afterward David arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself. David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men, saying, 'Behold, David seeks to harm you'? "Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you; and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD'S anointed.' "Now, my father, see! Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it. "May the LORD judge between*

*you and me, and may the LORD avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you. "As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness'; but my hand shall not be against you. "After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea? "The LORD therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand."*

*1 Samuel 24:8-15 (NASB)*

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*Now afterward David arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself. This must have been quite a surprise for Saul. David was actually bowing down to him for once. David was a great man!*

*David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men, saying, 'Behold, David seeks to harm you'? "Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you; and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD'S anointed.' David, lying at Saul's feet, related what went on inside the cave and that, although he had a great opportunity, he did not take Saul's life. How would Saul relate to this?*

David goes on. *"Now, my father, see! Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it. With respect to the words, "know and perceive," other translations have "know and see," which is a more logical interpretation. You can know something with out seeing it and sometimes you can see something and yet not believe it. Saul did both.*

*"May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you. "As the proverb*

*of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness'; but my hand shall not be against you. David's response seems rather strange to me. David, in effect, says "Let the Lord get rid of you instead of me doing it." He could have run his sword through Saul but he wants the Lord to do it for him (figuratively speaking).*

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David had demonstrated to Saul that he was not seeking his life. Saul had been told, and wrongly so, that David was out to get him. Nothing could have been further from the truth. I think David was very much misunderstood, maligned, and misrepresented by both friend and enemy. David's act of mercy in sparing Saul's life should have made it abundantly clear that he was not seeking the king's life.

As David continues to reason with him, Saul actually weeps.

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.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

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*After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea? "The LORD therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand." I am sorry, you dog lovers, but the Hebrews loathed dogs, especially dead ones, just as they hated fleas. Why was Saul so intent on "swatting" David and getting rid of him?*

---

*When David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" Then Saul lifted up his voice and wept. He said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have dealt well with me, while I have dealt wickedly with you. "You have declared today that you have done good to me, that the LORD delivered me into your hand and yet you did not kill me. "For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safely?*

*May the LORD therefore reward you with good in return for what you have done to me this day. "Now, behold, I know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand. "So now swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me and that you will not destroy my name from my father's household." David swore to Saul. And Saul went to his home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.*

1 Samuel 24:16-22 (NASB)

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David's words caught Saul at a more rational time. *When David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" Then Saul lifted up his voice and wept. He said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have dealt well with me, while I have dealt wickedly with you. Saul realized this was a one-sided battle. He was trying to kill David but David was not seeking his life. Saul wept. We tend to think that men who cry are sissies or something.*

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*Jesus wept.*

John 11:35 (NKJV)

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*"You have declared today that you have done good to me, that the LORD delivered me into your hand and yet you did not kill me. "For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safely? Obviously, not! But David did. David was God's man and David most assuredly looked to God for guidance. David also witnessed the many times God had helped him.*

*May the LORD therefore reward you with good in return for what you have done to me this day. "Now, behold, I know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand. Sometimes Saul was a mad man and needed David's harp playing. This day he was a very sane man, knowing what God had planned. He did not say "you will be king," but "you will **surely** be king."*

As noted before, the Hebrew language is lacking in adverbs. Saul actually said, "King, you will be king."

*"So now swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me and that you will not destroy my name from my father's household." David swore to Saul. And Saul went to his home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold. Thus, having made an agreement, Saul went home - **but not David!***

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Because David knew God's calling and believed God's promise, he was able to be so bold before Saul and his army. It was indeed a holy boldness that came from a heart that was right with God. The day would come when David and his cause would be vindicated and the Lord would judge those who had opposed him. Saul went back home to Gibeah, but in spite of his tears and emotional speech, he took up his pursuit of David again (1 Sam. 26:2,21).

Bible Exposition Commentary

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

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*Then Samuel died; and all Israel gathered together and mourned for him, and buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran.*

1 Samuel 25:1 (NASB)

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX



CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN



CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT





CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE



## CHAPTER THIRTY

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Then it happened when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negev and on Ziklag, and had overthrown Ziklag and burned it with fire; and they took captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great, without killing anyone, and carried them off and went their way. When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him lifted their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep. Now David's two wives had been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

1 Samuel 30:1-6 (NASB)

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**The LORD Praised for Giving Deliverance.**  
**For the choir director. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD, "who spoke to the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said,**

*"I love You, O LORD, my strength." The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my*

*enemies.*

Psalms 18:1-3 (NASB)

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Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?" And He said to him, "Pursue, for you will surely overtake them, and you will surely rescue all." So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those left behind remained. But David pursued, he and four hundred men, for two hundred who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor remained behind.

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1 Samuel 30:7-10 (NASB)

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Now they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David, and gave him bread and he ate, and they provided him water to drink. They gave him a piece of fig cake and two clusters of raisins, and he ate; then his spirit revived. For he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights. David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man of Egypt, a servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind when I fell sick three days ago. "We made a raid on the Negev of the Cherethites, and on that which belongs to Judah, and on the Negev of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire." Then David said to him, "Will you bring me down to this band?" And he said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me or deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring you down to this band." When he had brought him down, behold, they were spread over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing because of all the great spoil that they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. David slaughtered them from the twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. So David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and rescued his two wives. But nothing of theirs was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that they had taken for themselves; David brought it all back. So David had captured all the sheep and the cattle which the people drove ahead of the other livestock, and they said, "This is David's spoil." When David came to the two hundred men who were too exhausted to follow David, who had also been left at the brook Besor, and they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him, then David approached the people and greeted them.

1 Samuel 30:11-21 (NASB)

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David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Behold, a gift for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD: to those who were in Bethel, and to those who were in Ramoth of the Negev, and to those who were in Jattir, and to those who were in Aroer, and to those who were in Siphmoth, and to those who were in Eshtemoa, and to those who were in Racal, and to those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to those who were in the cities of the Kenites, and to those who were in Hormah, and to those who were in Bor-ashan, and to those who were in Athach, and to those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to go."

1 Samuel 30:21-31 (NASB)

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When David came to the two hundred men who were too exhausted to follow David, who had also been left at the brook Besor, and they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him, then David approached the people and greeted them. Then all the wicked and worthless men among those who went with David said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away and depart." Then David said, "You must not do so, my brothers, with what the LORD has given us, who has kept us and delivered into our hand the band that came against us. "And who will listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down to the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage; they shall share alike." So it has been from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day. Now when

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**CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE**

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- ATLASES**  
 Baker's Bible Atlas..... Page 3  
 Life Application Study Bible  
 ..... Page 106
- COMMENTARIES**  
 Adam Clark. .... Page 18, Page 38,  
 Page 51, Page 104  
 Bible Background Commentary  
 . . . Page 5, Page 27, Page 43,  
 Page 56, Page 58, Page 71,  
 Page 101  
 Bible Exposition Commentary  
 . . Page 15, Page 45, Page 48,  
 Page 73, Page 79, Page 86,  
 Page 99, Page 112  
 Bible History..... Page 68  
 Jamieson-Fausset-Brown. . . Page 6,  
 Page 22, Page 28, Page 30,  
 Page 38, Page 48, Page 53,  
 Page 65, Page 77, Page 82,  
 Page 112, Page 138  
 Keil and Delitzsch. . . Page 2, Page 6,  
 Page 18, Page 24, Page 26,  
 Page 33, Page 34, Page 41,  
 Page 42, Page 44, Page 45,  
 Page 53, Page 63, Page 64,  
 Page 70, Page 78  
 Mattoon's Treasures from 1 Samuel  
 ..... Page 23, Page 25  
 New American Commentary. Page 7,  
 Page 63, Page 67, Page 72,  
 Page 74, Page 75, Page 81,  
 Page 92, Page 99, Page 110,  
 Page 121, Page 125  
 R B. Thiem, Jr..... Page 13  
 Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee  
 . . . Page 4, Page 15, Page 20,  
 Page 39, Page 47, Page 55,  
 Page 64, Page 73, Page 78,  
 Page 83, Page 96, Page 97,  
 Page 105, Page 114, Page 117,  
 Page 119
- DICTIONARIES**  
 Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary  
 . . . Page 4, Page 12, Page 47,  
 Page 105  
 New Unger's Bible Dictionary  
 ..... Page 28  
 The AMG Concise Bible Dictionary  
 ..... Page 6  
 Tyndale Bible Dictionary. . . Page 49,  
 Page 75, Page 106  
 Tyndale Bible Dictionary . . . Page 46
- INTERNET**  
<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Sling>  
 ..... Page 93
- NEW TESTAMENT**  
 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 . . . . . Page 118  
 1 Thessalonians 5:17 . . . . . Page 123  
 1 Timothy 5:8 . . . . . Page 118  
 2 Corinthians 11:31-33 . . . . . Page 103  
 2 Corinthians 5:17 . . . . . Page 45  
 2 Peter 1:19-21 . . . . . Page 17  
 2 Timothy 2:15 . . . . . Page 60  
 2 Timothy 4:4 . . . . . Page 59  
 Acts 16:16-18 . . . . . Page 27  
 Ephesians 4:26-27 . . . . . Page 52  
 Ephesians 6:13-17 . . . . . Page 93  
 Hebrews 6:9-10 . . . . . Page 4  
 John 8:5-7 . . . . . Page 56  
 Luke 12:29-31 . . . . . Page 59  
 Luke 18:24-27 . . . . . Page 92  
 Mark 2:23-28 . . . . . Page 116  
 Matthew 12:1-8 . . . . . Page 116  
 Romans 8:28-30 . . . . . Page 26
- OLD TESTAMENT**  
 1 Chronicles 8:29-31 . . . . . Page 47  
 1 Kings 1:45 . . . . . Page 21  
 1 Kings 2:23 . . . . . Page 18  
 1 Samuel 1:10 (HCSB) . . . . . Page 5  
 1 Samuel 1:5-6 (HCSB) . . . . . Page 4  
 1 Samuel 10:9 (HCSB) . . . . . Page 47  
 1 Samuel 11:5 . . . . . Page 57  
 1 Samuel 12:23 (KJV) . . . . . Page 59  
 1 Samuel 14:49 . . . . . Page 61  
 1 Samuel 16:11-13 . . . . . Page 57  
 1 Samuel 16:23 . . . . . Page 46  
 1 Samuel 17:36 . . . . . Page 69  
 1 Samuel 17:49 (MSG) . . . . . Page 95  
 1 Samuel 18:8 . . . . . Page 41  
 1 Samuel 2:30 (HCSB) . . . . . Page 14  
 1 Samuel 2:31 (NKJV) . . . . . Page 15  
 1 Samuel 20:2 (MSG) . . . . . Page 108  
 1 Samuel 3:19 (HCSB) . . . . . Page 19  
 1 Samuel 3:2 (HCSB) . . . . . Page 16

1 Samuel 7:10 (HCSB) . . . . .	Page 33	Psalms 52 . . . . .	Page 121
2 Kings 21:12 . . . . .	Page 17	Psalms 54:1-7 . . . . .	Page 126
2 Samuel 11:14-17 . . . . .	Page 99	Psalms 91:14-16 . . . . .	Page 123
2 Samuel 19:13 . . . . .	Page 18	“Psalms of David” . . . . .	Page 121
2 Samuel 3:35 . . . . .	Page 18	Psalms 18:30-35	
2 Samuel 6:20-23 . . . . .	Page 100	Psalms 18:30-35 . . . . .	Page 95
2 Samuel 6:6-7 . . . . .	Page 28	Psalms 91:7	
Deuteronomy 18:14 . . . . .	Page 27	Psalms 91:7 . . . . .	Page 98
Deuteronomy 18:21-22 . . . . .	Page 19	WORD STUDIES	
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 . . . . .	Page 84	Brown-Driver-Briggs . . . . .	Page 3, Page 32, Page 65
Esther 4:10-11 . . . . .	Page 98	Complete Word Study Dictionary	
Exodus 15:21 . . . . .	Page 9	. . . . .	Page 2, Page 9, Page 63
Exodus 17:14-16 . . . . .	Page 77	Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew	
Exodus 19:12-13 . . . . .	Page 70	Dictionary . . . . .	Page 14
Genesis 1:2 . . . . .	Page 59	Theological Wordbook of the Old	
Genesis 18:16-22 . . . . .	Page 14	Testament . . . . .	Page 7, Page 59, Page 60, Page 126
Genesis 2:21-24 . . . . .	Page 12	Wuest's Word Studies . . . . .	Page 58
Genesis 35:16-18 . . . . .	Page 38		
Genesis 35:20 . . . . .	Page 44		
Isaiah 40:31 . . . . .	Page 67		
Isaiah 47:9 . . . . .	Page 47		
Isaiah 55:8 . . . . .	Page 21		
Jeremiah 19:3 . . . . .	Page 17		
Job 1:8-12 . . . . .	Page 86		
Job 42:12-13 . . . . .	Page 86		
Joshua 1:8-9 . . . . .	Page 46		
Joshua 2:15-16 . . . . .	Page 103		
Joshua 7:6 . . . . .	Page 22		
Judges 11:29 . . . . .	Page 52		
Judges 13:3-7 . . . . .	Page 5		
Judges 13:6 . . . . .	Page 14		
Judges 14:19 . . . . .	Page 52		
Judges 15:11-17 . . . . .	Page 2		
Judges 2:10 . . . . .	Page 61		
Judges 20:15-16 . . . . .	Page 38, Page 69		
Judges 21:19 . . . . .	Page 3		
Judges 21:25 . . . . .	Page 2		
Judges 3:10 . . . . .	Page 52		
Judges 3:15 . . . . .	Page 38		
Judges 6:34 . . . . .	Page 52		
Leviticus 2:1-10 . . . . .	Page 10		
Leviticus 7:32-33 . . . . .	Page 42		
Leviticus 8:30-36 . . . . .	Page 11		
Proverbs 14:12 . . . . .	Page 59, Page 71		
Proverbs 18:24 . . . . .	Page 109		
Psalms 140 . . . . .	Page 122		
Psalms 4:3-4 . . . . .	Page 52		
Psalms 42:10 . . . . .	Page 93		
Psalms 5:8-12 . . . . .	Page 53		
Psalms 51:10-12 . . . . .	Page 46		

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This unabridged lexicon contains the Strong’s numbering system, which will greatly increase the usefulness of this work by all serious students of the Bible, especially those who know little or no Hebrew.

### COMPLETE WORD STUDY DICTIONARY

The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament is the final volume in AMG’s Word Study Series. These Bible study tools are designed to make the original languages of the Bible accessible to every student of the Word of God. This lexicon is a companion volume to The Complete Word Study Old Testament, which identifies the words of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament by the placement of Strong’s numbers and grammatical codes over the English text. Together these two volumes represent the Old Testament portion of this series.

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Concordance Information is provided, detailing every occurrence of that word in the Old Testament by book, chapter, and verse. (Right-click on Strong’s number and search in KJV or NASB)

Special Notations in the concordance information identify major reading differences between the KJV, NASB, and NIV translations of the Bible.

Proper Noun Entries are subdivided in order to identify different places and/or individuals that have the same name.

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## BIBLIOLOGY

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