

# 1 SAMUEL

## Title:

Originally 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel were one book. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the translators divided this one book into two.

## Author and date:

The human author is unknown. See the note in the introduction to Judges on the authorship of the books of the Bible. The author must have written after the death of Solomon, because 1 Sam 27:6 speaks of the “kings of Judah”, indicating some time after Judah and Israel had become separate kingdoms. This did not happen until the time of Rehoboam, Solomon’s son (1 Kings 12 chapter).

## Themes:

The birth, life, and work of Samuel, the last and greatest of the judges (7:15-17); Israel’s rejection of God as King, and the appointment of human kings to rule Israel; the early life of David up to the death of king Saul. As with all parts of the Bible, there are many important spiritual lessons in this book for believers now (2 Tim 3:16-17).

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**1** Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim in the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah. *He* was the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. <sup>2</sup>And 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.

<sup>3</sup>And yearly this man went up out of his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there. <sup>4</sup>And when the time came that Elkanah made an offering, he gave portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and her daughters, <sup>5</sup>but he gave a double portion to Hannah, for he loved Hannah. But the LORD had shut up her womb. <sup>6</sup>And also her rival provoked her severely to irritate her, because the LORD had shut up her womb. <sup>7</sup>And *it happened* year by year when she went up to the house of the LORD, that she provoked her. Therefore she wept, and did not eat.

<sup>8</sup>Then her husband Elkanah said to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? And why aren't you eating? And why is your heart grieved? *Am* I not better to you than ten

sons?"

<sup>9</sup>So Hannah got up after they had eaten in Shiloh and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. <sup>10</sup>And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept much. <sup>11</sup>And 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 give to your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will come on his head".

<sup>12</sup>And as she continued praying before the LORD, it so happened that Eli noticed her mouth. <sup>13</sup>Now Hannah had spoken in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk. <sup>14</sup>And Eli said to her, "How long are you going to be drunk? Put your wine away from you".

<sup>15</sup>And Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have not drunk either wine or strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. <sup>16</sup>Do not regard your maidservant as a wicked woman, for I have been speaking out of the abundance of my

**1:1** "*Ramathaim*"— called Ramah in v 19. Elkanah was descended from Levi. See 1 Chron 6:16,26-28.

**1:2** "*Two wives*"— see note at Gen 30:1.

**1:3** Ex 34:23; Deut 12:5-7; Josh 18:1. The tabernacle and the ark of the covenant were at Shiloh (4:3).

"*LORD of hosts*"— in Hebrew "Jehovah Tsabaoth". This is the first mention in Scripture of this great title. It is used in the Bible 281 times, very frequently by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. It indicates God in His almighty power, who marshals all the resources of creation to accomplish His own glorious purposes. In the Old Testament "hosts" may refer both to earthly armies (Ex 12:41 – where the people of Israel coming out of Egypt are called "the LORD's armies" or "hosts"), and to heavenly bodies (2 Kings 17:16; Isa 34:4; 45:12), and to angels (Ps 103:21; 148:2). God, Jehovah of hosts, is the absolute ruler of all. He has created the universe for His glory, and to fulfill His plans He exercises control over every kind of "host", whether earthly or heavenly (compare Dan 4:34-35).

"*Priests*"— note at Ex 28:1.

**1:4** Deut 12:17-18.

**1:5** Gen 11:30; 29:31. God is sovereign in these matters and has His own good purposes in what

He does.

**1:6-7** Verse 2; Gen 2:23-24.

**1:9** "*Temple*"— here this word indicates the tabernacle. The temple had not yet been built, but the tabernacle could be called a temple, because it was a holy sanctuary where God was worshipped.

**1:10-20** Hannah's sorrow drove her to prayer (sorrow can result in much good if it causes a person to do that). And here she prayed to the one true God who knows our sorrows, has compassion on us, and can hear our prayers (Ex 2:23-25; Ps 6:6-9; 38:9; 102:19-20). Her example shows how to pray effectively – she was in a right relationship with God; she had a deep burden (vs 10,13,15); her petition was specific (v 11); she wanted to use what God gave her for His glory, not for her own selfish satisfaction (v 11); she had faith (vs 17-19); and she acknowledged God's answer when it came (v 20).

**1:11** "*I will give him to the LORD*"— our children will be in the best hands when given to God.

"*No razor*"— Num 6:1-5; Jud 13:5.

**1:13-14** Acts 2:4,13. How easily the best actions may be misunderstood by others. Note on Josh 22:10-34.

**1:15** Ps 42:3-4; 62:8; Lam 2:11,19.

complaint and grief”.

<sup>17</sup>Then Eli answered and said, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you your petition that you have asked of him”.

<sup>18</sup>And she said, “Let your maidservant find favour in your sight”. So the woman went her way, and ate, and her appearance was no longer *sad*.

<sup>19</sup>And they rose up early in the morning and worshipped before the LORD, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. <sup>20</sup>Therefore it came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she bore a son. And she called his name Samuel, *saying*, “Because I asked the LORD for him”.

<sup>21</sup>And the man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and his vow. <sup>22</sup>But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “I will not go up until the child is weaned, and then I will take him, so that he may appear before the LORD and stay there permanently”.

<sup>23</sup>And her husband Elkanah said to her, “Do what seems good to you. Wait until you have weaned him. Only may the LORD confirm his word”. So the woman stayed at home, and nursed her son until she weaned him.

<sup>24</sup>And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls and one ephah of flour and a bottle of wine, and

brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh; and the child was young. <sup>25</sup>And they killed a bull, and brought the child to Eli.

<sup>26</sup>And she said, “Oh my lord, as your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood near you here, praying to the LORD. <sup>27</sup>I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me my request which I asked from him. <sup>28</sup>Therefore I have also given him to the LORD. As long as he lives he will be given to the LORD”. And he worshipped the LORD there.

**2** And Hannah prayed, and said, “My heart rejoices in the LORD. My horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is opened wide against my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.

<sup>2</sup> *There is no one holy like the LORD, for there is no one besides you, nor is there any rock like our God.*

<sup>3</sup> “Do not any longer speak so exceedingly proudly, or let arrogance come out of your mouth. For the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by his actions are weighed.

<sup>4</sup> “The bows of the mighty men are broken, and those who stumbled are clothed with strength.

<sup>5</sup> *Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, and those who were hungry cease to be so* While the barren has given birth to seven, she who has many children has become feeble.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD kills, and makes alive. He

1:17 Jud 18:6; 1 Sam 25:35; 2 Kings 5:19; Mark 5:34.

1:18 Answered prayer will brighten up the face (Ps 34:4-5).

1:19 “Knew”— note at Gen 4:1.

“Remembered”— Gen 30:22.

1:20 Samuel probably means “Heard of God”.

1:21 “Vow”— Lev 7:16; 22:21; Num 15:3,8; 30:2; Deut 12:11; Ps 65:1; 76:11; Eccl 5:4-5.

1:22 Verses 11,29; 2:11.

1:24-25 Num 15:8-10. On the meanings of the various sacrifices see notes on the first chapter of Leviticus.

1:24 “With three bulls”— this could also be translated “A three-year-old bull”.

“Ephah”— probably about one half bushel.

1:27-28 She was obviously a godly woman, and she was faithful to her promises to God, unlike many who make vows and do not perform them. Unlike so many, Hannah was concerned with what her son could do for God, not what he might eventually do for her. This gift of Hannah to God had a profound effect for good on the life of the

whole nation. When believers give gifts to God He accepts and uses them.

2:1-10 Compare Hannah’s song of praise with that of Mary in Luke 1:46-55. This song shows a good grasp of important theological truth and no little poetical ability.

2:1 “Rejoices”— in the Lord, not merely in her son. Ps 9:2; 32:11; 33:1; 105:3.

“Horn”— in the Bible this often symbolizes power, authority, strength, honor. Here it means strength.

2:2 “Holy”— note at Lev 20:7.

“Rock”— note at Deut 32:4.

2:3 “Arrogance”— a thing God hates (Prov 3:34; 6:16-17; Jam 4:6).

“God of knowledge”— 16:7; Ps 139:1-4; Prov 16:2; 24:12; Jer 17:10; Heb 4:13.

2:4 Ps 18:39; 46:9; 76:3; Eph 6:10-13; Heb 11:32-34.

2:5 God by his grace can completely reverse conditions among men. God’s power and sovereignty over the earth are declared in the verses which follow.

2:6 Deut 32:39; Isa 26:19; John 5:28-29; Rev 1:18.

brings down to the grave, and raises up.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD makes poor, and makes rich; he brings low, and lifts up.

<sup>8</sup>He raises the poor up from the dust, and lifts the beggar up from the ash heap to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he has set the world on them. <sup>9</sup>He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked will be silent in darkness; for no man will prevail by strength.

<sup>10</sup>The enemies of the LORD will be broken to pieces. He will thunder on them from the heavens. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth, and he will give strength to his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed".

<sup>11</sup>And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child ministered to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest.

<sup>12</sup>Now the sons of Eli were wicked scoundrels. They did not know the LORD. <sup>13</sup>And the priests' custom with the people was *this*: when anyone offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his

hand, <sup>14</sup>and he would stick *it* into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest took for himself. This is how they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. <sup>15</sup>Also before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat to roast for the priest; for he will not have boiled meat from you, but raw".

<sup>16</sup>And *if* anyone said to him, "Let them first burn the fat, and *then* take as much as your soul desires", then he would answer him, "No, but you must give *it to me* now. If not, I will take *it* by force".

<sup>17</sup>Therefore the sin of the young men was very great in the eyes of the LORD; for men despised the offering of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>But Samuel ministered before the LORD, a child wearing a linen ephod. <sup>19</sup>Moreover his mother would make him a little robe, and bring *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. <sup>20</sup>And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife and said, "The LORD give you offspring by this woman for the gift which is given to the LORD". And they went to

"Grave"— in Hebrew "Sheol". See note on Gen 37:35.

2:7-8 Deut 8:17-18; Job 5:11; Ps 113:7-8; Jam 1:9-10; 2:5; 4:10.

2:8 "Pillars of the earth"— this does not mean there is some sort of foundation on which the planet rests. It is poetic language which declares God as the Creator, and suggests a good purpose in creation.

2:9 "Keep"— Ps 37:23-24; 91:11-12; 94:18; 121:3; John 10:28; 1 Pet 1:5.

"Darkness"— Matt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Jude 13.

"Strength"— 17:47; Ps 33:16-17; Zech 4:6.

2:10 "Thunder"— 7:10; 12:17; 2 Sam 22:14; Ps 18:13; Isa 66:6.

"Judge"— Ps 96:13; 98:9; Acts 17:31.

"Anointed", "King"— Hannah speaks as a prophetess. When she spoke there was as yet no king in Israel, and up to that time only priests had been anointed. The Hebrew noun "anointed" ("masheeakh") comes into English as Messiah. This is the first use of this noun in the Bible.

2:11 "Ministered"— 2:18; 3:1.

2:12 "Did not know"— they knew about the LORD, but they had no spiritual experience of Him.

"LORD"— if they had known Him they would not have turned out to be wicked. This terrible condemnation of Eli's sons should be a lesson to every believer. They were brought up at the center of the worship of God, but they had no regard for the Lord. Believers must be careful to teach their children respect for God (Eph 6:4).

2:13-14 See Lev 7:31-36; 10:14-15; Deut 18:1-5.

2:15 "Fat"— the fat was to be burned as an offering to God before the priests received their portion (Lev 3:16; 4:10,26,31,35; 7:28,30,31; 17:6). Alas, like these wicked sons of Eli, many who profess to be servants of God are known more for their greed than for their piety.

2:17 If they had no respect for the Lord they certainly would have no respect for His offerings or for His people. Lack of the fear of God (Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14) accounts for many of the sad and sinful things that go on today in some Christian circles.

2:18 "Ministered"— Samuel was a mere boy, so his work must have been of a simple nature. Nevertheless, it was a ministry before the Lord. The simplest task can be a ministry to the Lord if done in an attitude of devotion to Him (2 Kings 3:11; Ps 84:10; Matt 10:42). Before Samuel did great things in Israel he learned as a child to do small things faithfully. See Luke 16:10. "Ephod"— note at Ex 28:31-35.

2:19 The robe Samuel's mother lovingly brought him each year was not the ephod (v 18), but a garment for every day use.

2:20-21 1:11,27,28. Acts of faith and devotion such as Hannah's will always be rewarded — if not in this world, then certainly in the next. God loves to be gracious to His people. Hannah gave one son to God and received five children in return. Compare Luke 6:38.

their own home. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD looked after Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

<sup>22</sup>Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. <sup>23</sup>And he said to them, “Why do you such things? For I hear of your evil actions from all this people. <sup>24</sup>No, my sons, for *it is* not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD’s people to transgress. <sup>25</sup>If one man sins against another, the judge will judge him, but if a man sins against the LORD, who will plead for him?” However they did not listen to the voice of their father, because the LORD had determined to kill them.

<sup>26</sup>And the child Samuel grew and was in favour with both the LORD and also with men.

<sup>27</sup>And a man of God came to Eli and

said to him, “Thus says the LORD, Did I *not* plainly reveal *myself* to the household of your father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh’s house? <sup>28</sup>And did I *not* choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* my priest, to make offerings on my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? And did I *not* give to the house of your father all the offerings made by fire from the children of Israel? <sup>29</sup>Why do you kick at my sacrifice and at my offering, which I have commanded *in my dwelling*, and honour your sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of my people Israel?

<sup>30</sup>“Therefore the LORD God of Israel says, I indeed said *that* your household and the household of your father, would walk before me forever; but now the LORD says, Be it far from me. For those who honour me I will honour, and those who despise me will be lightly esteemed. <sup>31</sup>See, the days are coming when I will cut off your arm, and the arm of

**2:21** “*Before the LORD*”— what better place on earth to grow up in? Or to live in (Ps 31:20; 140:13)?

**2:22** Verse 12. Because of the evil lives of Eli’s sons Samuel was in some danger of learning a corrupt life style. But God guarded the lad and kept him pure for His service (v 9).

**2:23-25** It seems that Eli was an indulgent parent who had not trained his children properly and had let them do as they pleased (v 29). They had been guilty of persistent wickedness (vs 12-17), but as far as we can tell from the record Eli did not so much as rebuke them until he heard of their sexual immorality. When his rebuke came, it was far too mild. The penalty under the law for such sins as theirs, as Eli should have known, was death, not a mild rebuke. See Ex 21:36. Those parents who will not bring up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, who let them have their own way, will spoil them and bring grief to themselves (1 Kings 1:6; Prov 19:18; 22:6,15; 23:13; 29:15).

**2:25** “*Who will plead*”— compare 1 Tim 2:5; 1 John 2:1.

“*The LORD had determined*”— compare Ex 7:1-5; 11:9; Josh 11:20.

“*Kill*”— Ezek 18:4,30-32. God delights in mercy, but He will certainly punish persistent sin and rebellion.

**2:26** Verse 21; 3:19. Compare Luke 2:20,52. Note the contrast between the family of Eli and the family of Elkanah. God’s blessing was denied the sons of the high priest and granted to the son of the humble Levite. The most important thing for the blessing of one’s children is not wealth or position or power, but humble faithfulness to God.

**2:27** “*Man of God*”— a name often given to prophets in the Bible—9:6,10; Deut 33:1; Josh 14:6;

1 Kings 13:1,6-8; 17:18,24; 2 Kings 4:7.

“*Household of your father*”— Aaron (Ex 4:27-30). **2:28** Ex 28:1-4; 30:7-8; Lev 8:5-9.

**2:29** “*You*”— here in Hebrew is plural and includes both Eli and his sons. The sons scorned God’s offerings by their sinful actions (v 16), Eli did so by letting them behave as they did. Eli did not stand up for God against his sinning sons and thus honored them over God. Also it seems Eli ate of the offerings his sons obtained in their greed. Let us beware of putting blood relationship above righteousness. Let us beware of a weak acceptance of evil in our own families (see 3:13). Such things may lead to disaster for ourselves and for the work of God. Compare Jud 20:14,48.

**2:30** Ex 29:9; Lev 8; 9; Num 16; 17; 25:13. God was not breaking his promise to the house of Aaron. He is saying that because of their sinful behavior the family of Eli would no longer have a part in that ministry. See also Lev 10:1-3. God never breaks His promises (Titus 1:2). But some of His promises are based on conditions, that is, based on the behavior of those to whom the promises are given. Compare Lev 26:3; Deut 28:1-2; Isa 1:19-20.

“*Honour*”— v 29; Ps 91:15; 112:9; Prov 22:4; John 12:26. What are all the honors men may give compared with the honor God gives?

**2:31-35** The sins of Eli and his family must have their consequences. It was too late to change anything. The whole future of this family was to be a sad one because of those sins (Ex 34:7). This was worked out in the death of Eli’s sons (4:11), the destruction of the priests at Nob (22:18-19), and Solomon’s removal of Abiathar from office (1 Kings 2:26-27).

your father's household, so that there will not be an old man in your house. <sup>32</sup>And you will see an enemy *in my dwelling*, among all *the wealth* which God will give Israel; and there will never be an old man in your house. <sup>33</sup>And every man of you *whom* I do not cut off from my altar, *will be* to cause your eyes to perish, and to grieve your heart. And all those raised in your house will die in the flower of their age.

<sup>34</sup>"And this *will be* a sign to you: it will come on your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas. In one day both of them will die. <sup>35</sup>And I will raise up a faithful priest for myself *who* will act in accordance with what *is* in my heart and in my mind, and I will firmly establish a house for him; and he will walk before my anointed one forever. <sup>36</sup>And it will come about *that* everyone who is left in your house will come *and* bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and will say, 'Please assign me to one of the priests' duties so that I can eat a piece of bread.' "

**3** And the child Samuel ministered to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions *were* not frequent.

<sup>2</sup>And it came about at that time, when Eli was lying down in his place (and his eyes had begun to grow dim, *so that* he could not

**2:35** "*Faithful priest*"—2 Sam 8:17; 1 Kings 1:8,26; 2:35; Heb 2:17; 5:5-6; 7:23-28.

"*Anointed one*"—the king of Israel (2:10).

**2:36** God is gracious and long-suffering, but He has His own ways of humbling those who are unfaithful to Him.

**3:1** "*Ministered*"—there is emphasis on this. Here is the third time it is said (2:11,18).

"*Rare*"—the ritual of religion went on but God was not often sending messages to the people. Perhaps this was because there were so few who wanted to hear God or obey Him. Remember that this was at the close of the years described in Judges when everyone did as he pleased (Jud 21:25).

"*Visions*"—note at Gen 15:1.

**3:3** "*Lamp*"—Ex 25:31-37; 27:20-21; Lev 24:2-4.

"*Sanctuary*"—note at 1:9; Ex 25:8. This was the "tent of meeting" (2:22), the tabernacle. Samuel did not sleep in the Most Holy Place. He would not have been permitted even to enter there (Heb 9:7). He was in the tabernacle which contained the ark, but in the outer room which was called the Holy Place.

**3:4** God speaks to men and He always takes the initiative — Gen 3:8-9; 12:1; 28:12-13; Ex 3:4;

see), <sup>3</sup>and before the lamp of God had gone out in the sanctuary of the LORD where the ark of God was, and Samuel was lying down *to sleep*, <sup>4</sup>that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I *am*". <sup>5</sup>And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I *am*, for you called me". And he said, "I did not call. Lie down again". And he went and lay down.

<sup>6</sup>And the LORD called yet again, "Samuel". And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I *am*, for you called me". And he answered, "I did not call, my son. Lie down again".

<sup>7</sup>Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

<sup>8</sup>And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I *am*, for you called me". And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be if he calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

<sup>10</sup>And the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel, Samuel". Then Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening".

<sup>11</sup>And the LORD said to Samuel, "Look, I

Josh 1:1; Jer 1:4-5; Matt 9:9; Acts 9:1-4; Rom 3:11.

**3:5-6** Eli was slow to understand spiritual things.

**3:7** Samuel was not willfully ignorant of the Lord as Eli's sons were (2:12). He knew many things about the Lord, was willing to learn more, but as yet had no direct spiritual experience with God. Many religious people are in the same condition, not realizing that to know God is essential to salvation, indeed, is salvation (John 17:3; Eph 4:18; 2 Thess 1:8; 1 John 5:20).

"*Revealed*"—Num 12:6; Amos 3:7. This means that Samuel had not yet been called to begin his ministry as a prophet.

**3:8** "*Third time*"—when God chooses a person He will keep calling until that person understands.

**3:9** Ps 85:8; Hab 2:1. The Lord is always ready to speak to those who are ready to hear and obey (though He may sometimes test them by silence).

**3:10** "*Samuel*"—compare Isa 45:3. God knows each of our names and everything else about us (Ps 139:1-4).

**3:11-14** God chose to give His message through a mere boy. Those who are old and experienced in God's service should not think themselves superior and look down on the young (Ps 8:2; Matt 21:15-16; Jer 1:6-8; 1 Tim 4:12).

will do a thing in Israel which will cause both ears of everyone who hears it to tingle. <sup>12</sup>In that day I will perform against Eli *everything* that I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin I will also make an end. <sup>13</sup>For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the sin which he knows; because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. <sup>14</sup>And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the sin of Eli's house will never be purged with sacrifice or offering".

<sup>15</sup>And Samuel lay *there* until the morning, then opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. <sup>16</sup>Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son". And he answered, "Here I *am*".

<sup>17</sup>And he said, "What *is* the thing that *the LORD* said to you? Please do not hide *it* from me. May God deal *harshly* with you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that he said to you". <sup>18</sup>And Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It *is* the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him".

<sup>19</sup>And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup>And all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established

to be a prophet of the LORD. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh; for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

**4** And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines and camped beside Ebenezer; and the Philistines camped in Aphek. <sup>2</sup>And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel. And when they joined battle, Israel *was* defeated by the Philistines, and the *Philistines* killed about four thousand of the army in the field. <sup>3</sup>And when the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD caused us to be defeated by the Philistines today? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Shiloh for us, so that, when it comes among us, it may save us from the hands of our enemies".

<sup>4</sup>So the people sent *men* to Shiloh to bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

<sup>5</sup>And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel

**3:12** 2:27-36.

**3:13** 2:12,17,22,29. By not restraining his sons Eli became a partaker of their sins and as guilty as they.

**3:14** Num 15:30; Isa 22:14; Matt 12:32; Gal 6:7-8; Heb 10:26-31. When people go on knowingly, willfully persisting in sin, there comes a time when God determines to judge them and closes the door to forgiveness.

**3:17** We should all want to know everything God has said. Contrast 2 Chron 25:16.

**3:18** "*Everything*"—servants of God should never cut and trim God's message for people, but declare the Word of God as it is. Samuel's fear (v 15) did not prevent him from doing so. Compare Acts 20:20,27.

"*Good to him*"—Eli accepted humbly what God had to say, and bowed meekly before His judgment. His character was a mixture of godliness and weakness.

**3:19** "*With him*"—Gen 21:22; 39:2; Jud 1:5.

"*Fall to the ground*"—none of Samuel's words failed to be fulfilled. This was the mark of every true prophet (Deut 18:21-22).

**3:20** Dan was in the far north of Israel, Beersheba in the far south.

**3:21** Observe that God reveals Himself to individuals through His Word. And those to

whom the Word comes have the responsibility to declare it to others. God's revelation of Himself to Samuel was not for Samuel alone.

**4:1** The first part of this verse relates to 3:21.

"*Philistines*"—note at Gen 10:14. When Israel conquered Canaan they did not drive out the Philistines (Josh 13:1-2). They were a source of trouble to Israel for a great many years.

**4:2** Israel's defeats were always because of Israel's sins (Josh 7:4-5,11; Jud 2:10-15).

**4:3-4** The elders did well to inquire into the reason for the defeat. However, they did not wait for an answer from God, but expected the ark to do for them what only God could do. The ark had been a symbol of the Lord's presence, but this truth had been perverted and the people thought that the mere presence of the ark, presided over by Eli's evil sons Hophni and Phinehas, would bring them victory. It did not, and thinking it would do so was a very vain and foolish thing. If God is not with His people, nothing on earth can bring them victory. That which merely symbolizes God's presence can never accomplish what God's presence accomplishes. Compare David's attitude in 2 Sam 15:25. Note on the ark at Ex 25:10-16. Note on the cherubim at Gen 3:24; Ex 25:18-20.



shouted with a great shout, so that the earth reechoed. <sup>6</sup>And when the Philistines heard the sound of the shout, they said, “What *is the meaning* of the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?” And they learned that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp.

<sup>7</sup>And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, “God has come into the camp”. And they said, “Woe to us! For there has never been such a thing before. <sup>8</sup>Woe to us! Who will deliver us out of the hands of these mighty gods? These *are* the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. <sup>9</sup>Be strong, and act like men, O Philistines, so that you do not become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Act like *men*, and fight”.

<sup>10</sup>And the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and each man fled to his tent. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell. <sup>11</sup>And the ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed.

<sup>12</sup>And a man of Benjamin ran from the camp and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn and with dust on his head. <sup>13</sup>And when he arrived, there Eli sat on a seat by the roadside watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told *what had happened*, the whole city cried out.

<sup>14</sup>And when Eli heard the sound of the crying, he said, “What *is the meaning* of this uproar?” And the man came quickly

and told Eli. <sup>15</sup>Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see. <sup>16</sup>And the man said to Eli, “I *am* the one who came from the *battle* lines. Just today I ran from the lines”. And he said, “What is happening there, my son?”

<sup>17</sup>And the messenger answered and said, “Israel has fled before the Philistines, and also there has 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”.

<sup>18</sup>And it happened, when he made mention of the ark of God, that *Eli* fell from the seat backwards at the side of the gate, and his neck broke and he died, for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

<sup>19</sup>And his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and *about* to give birth. And when she heard the news that the ark of God had been taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed down and gave birth, for her *labour* pains came on her. <sup>20</sup>And about the time of her death the women who stood near her said to her, “Don’t be afraid; for you have given birth to a son”. But she did not answer or pay attention.

<sup>21</sup>And she named the child Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel”, because the ark of God had been taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. <sup>22</sup>And she said, “The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been taken”.

**4:5** “*Shouted*”— did they vainly imagine that their shout would accomplish what God did at Jericho (Josh 6:16,20)? If God is not with His people nothing that seemed to work before will work again.

**4:6-7** This kind of superstition was to be expected among the Philistines who did not know the true God. They did not know that if God was not already with Israel in the battle, the ark could not bring Him there. Let us all know that in these New Testament times no ritual, no ceremony, no relic, no symbol, nor any other such thing that men can perform can bring God to men.

**4:8** The Philistines knew something of God’s mighty acts in Egypt (6:6; Ex 9:16; Josh 2:8-10).

**4:9** “*To you*”— Jud 10:7; 13:1.

**4:10** Verse 2; Deut 28:15,25.

**4:11** “*Ark*”— Ex 25:10-22; Ps 78:56-64.

“*Were killed*”— 2:34. God always fulfills His word.

**4:12** “*Dust*”— Josh 7:6; 2 Sam 1:2; Neh 9:1;

Job 1:20; 2:12.

**4:13-18** It is not said that Eli feared for his sons but only for the ark of God. He had already accepted God’s word about the death of his sons and knew he could not change that (2:34; 3:18). But the capture of the ark was such a shock that it killed him. It is not likely that he agreed with the foolish act recorded in v 4. In v 18 he is included among the judges of Israel.

**4:18** “*Judged*”— or “led”. The Hebrew word has both meanings.

**4:21-22** Ichabod means “no glory” or, possibly, “where is glory?” God’s presence rested above the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place (holy of holies) in the tabernacle – Ex 25:22; Ps 80:1; 99:1. When God permitted the ark to be taken it was a sign that His glory was departing. Compare Ps 78:61. The ark never returned to Shiloh. But God had not left His people and later His glory filled the temple Solomon built (1 Kings 8:10-11).

**5** And the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. <sup>2</sup>When the Philistines brought the ark of God, they took it into the house of Dagon and set it near Dagon. <sup>3</sup>And when the *people* of Ashdod arose early the next day, there was Dagon fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. And they picked Dagon up and set him in his place again. <sup>4</sup>And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both palms of his hands *were severed and lying* on the threshold. Only Dagon's *body* was left to him. <sup>5</sup>Therefore to this day neither the priests of Dagon, nor anyone who comes into Dagon's temple, will step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod.

<sup>6</sup>But the hand of the LORD was heavy on the *people* of Ashdod, and he destroyed them and plagued them with tumours, *both* Ashdod and its territories. <sup>7</sup>And when the men of Ashdod saw that, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel shall not stay with us, for his hand is severe on us and on our god Dagon". <sup>8</sup>So they sent *men* 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 answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried around to Gath". And they carried the ark of the God of Israel around *there*.

<sup>9</sup>And it happened, after they had carried it around *there*, that the hand of the LORD was against the city, *causing* very great

destruction. And he plagued the men of the city, both small and great, and they had tumours in their secret parts. <sup>10</sup>Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came about, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel around to us, to kill us and our people".

<sup>11</sup>So they sent *men* and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people". For there was death *and* destruction throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there. <sup>12</sup>And the men who did not die were plagued with the tumours, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

**6** And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines for seven months. <sup>2</sup>And the Philistines called for the priests and those who practiced divination, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it to its place".

<sup>3</sup>And they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty, but by all means send back a trespass offering to him. Then you will be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you".

<sup>4</sup>Then they said, "What *should* the trespass offering *be* which we send back to him?" They answered, "Five gold tumours and five gold rats, *in accordance with* the number

**5:1** Ashdod was one of the major cities of the Philistines.

**5:2** "*Dagon*"— the chief god of the Philistines (Jud 16:23-25; 1 Chron 10:8-10). The Philistines were ready to give Jehovah God a place beside their own god. Their thought probably was that all gods were worthy of respect. Or that all gods, all religions were good. This is an idea very common today. But the one true God will never agree to it. See Ex 20:1-6; 1 Kings 18:21; Ps 115:1-8; Isa 44:6-7; 46:9; Jer 16:20; 1 Cor 8:4-6; 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**5:3** "*On his face*"— compare Ps 97:7; Isa 46:5-9. The Philistines learned nothing from the collapse of Dagon. When gods prove powerless and worthless why not cast them away? When God would tear down the things we trust in, do we try to put them again in their place?

**5:4** Since the Philistines would not learn the first time, Jehovah gave them a second and a stronger lesson. He was the mighty God, their Dagon was helpless and false. In different ways

the true God has demonstrated this same truth again and again in human history concerning the gods and idols men have chosen.

**5:5** "*To this day*"— even then they did not forsake the worship of this false and powerless god. Such is the hold that idolatry and false religion can have on people.

**5:6** God continued to judge Dagon and his worshippers. Compare Ex 12:12.

**5:8** Instead of admitting that their god was false and that the LORD (Jehovah) was the true and living God, they preferred to get rid of the evidence. How like men in general!

**5:9** All this happened but it seems there was no repentance, no abandoning of idolatry, no seeking of the true God. Compare Rev 9:20. Such is fallen man.

**6:2** "*Divination*"— Deut 18:9-15; Isa 2:6.

**6:3** There was a recognition that they had dishonored the God of Israel and were being punished for it.

of the lords of the Philistines, for the same plague was on you all and on your lords. <sup>5</sup>Therefore you must make models of your tumours, and models of your rats that are ruining the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will relax his hand from you and from your gods and from your land. <sup>6</sup>Why then do you harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had worked wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and did they *not* depart?

<sup>7</sup>“Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milk cows on which a yoke has never come, and tie the cows to the cart, and take their calves home from them. <sup>8</sup>And take the ark of the LORD and lay it on the cart, and put the gold articles, which you are sending back to him as a trespass offering, in a box by its side, and send it away, so that it may go *its own way*. <sup>9</sup>And see, if it goes up by the road of its own territory to Beth-Shemesh, *then* he has done us this great harm. But if not, then we will know that *it is* not his hand *that* struck us, *but that* it happened to us by chance”.

<sup>10</sup>And the men did so. They took two milk cows and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. <sup>11</sup>And they placed the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the box with the gold rats and the models of their tumours. <sup>12</sup>And the cows took the straight way on the road to Beth-Shemesh *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth-Shemesh.

**6:5** The plague which came on the Philistines was probably brought by rats, and it resulted in tumors (5:6).

**6:6** 4:8; Josh 2:10. Good advice, but far better advice would have been to cast all their gods away and serve Jehovah alone.

“*He*” – that is, God.

**6:7-9** Even yet they were not sure that the plague which struck them was from Jehovah. This final test should have convinced them beyond doubt.

**6:9** Beth-Shemesh was a town in Judah near the border of Philistine-held territory.

**6:14** “*Burnt offering*” – notes at Leviticus chapter 1.

**6:15** “*Levites*” – in the days of Joshua, Beth-Shemesh had been assigned to the Levites as a place to live (Josh 21:13-16).

**6:18** Of course, the Joshua here is not the one who had been the leader of Israel.

**6:19** There was joy at the return of the ark (v 13), but, on the part of some, a lack of reverence which

<sup>13</sup>And the *people* of Beth-Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they raised their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. <sup>14</sup>And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there where *there was* a great stone. And they chopped up the wood of the cart, and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. <sup>15</sup>And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the box that was with it, in which were the gold articles, and put *them* on the great stone. And the same day the men of Beth-Shemesh offered burnt offerings and offered sacrifices to the LORD. <sup>16</sup>And when the five lords of the Philistines saw *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day.

<sup>17</sup>And these *are* the gold tumours which the Philistines sent back as a trespass offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Askelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron, <sup>18</sup>and the gold rats *in accordance with* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging* to the five lords, *both* fortified cities and country villages. *These things came* to the great stone of Abel, on which they set down the ark of the LORD. *This stone remains* to this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite. <sup>19</sup>And *the LORD* struck the men of Beth-Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy of the people. And the people lamented, because the LORD had struck down *many* of the people with a great slaughter. <sup>20</sup>And the men of Beth-Shemesh said, “Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? And to whom shall he go up from us?” <sup>21</sup>And

God punished severely. God wants us to rejoice in all He has given us, but we must never lose our reverence for the holy things of God. Here God was teaching His people a lesson concerning His holy nature. See Num 4:5,15,20; 2 Sam 6:7; 1 Chron 13:9-10.

“*Fifty thousand and seventy*” – some manuscripts have “seventy”.

**6:20** “*Holy*” – Ex 15:11; Lev 11:44-45; 20:7 (note); Ps 29:2; Isa 6:3; 2 Cor 7:1; Heb 12:14; Rev 4:8. The men of Beth-Shemesh had learned, at least to some extent, the lesson God taught. But they were afraid to have the ark near them, just as the Philistines had been. But God does not teach us about holiness so that we might put Him at a distance, but that near Him we might learn to be holy ourselves.

**6:21** Kirjath Jearim was a town about 14 kilometers from Beth-Shemesh. It was also called Baalah (Josh 15:9; 2 Sam 6:2).

they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, “The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD. Come down *and* take it up to you”.

**7** And the men of Kirjath-Jearim came, took up the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and set apart Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>And it happened that the ark stayed in Kirjath-Jearim for a long time, for it was twenty years. And all the house of Israel mourned *and sought* the LORD. <sup>3</sup>And Samuel spoke to the whole house of Israel, saying, “If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD and serve him only. Then he will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines”. <sup>4</sup>Then the children of Israel put away the Baals and Ashtaroth, and served only the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>And Samuel said, “Gather all Israel to Mizpeh and I will pray to the LORD for you”. <sup>6</sup>And they gathered together at Mizpeh and drew water and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, “We have sinned against the LORD”. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

<sup>7</sup>And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children

**7:2** The ark was not removed from Kiriath Jearim until after David became king, more than 20 years after this. The 20 years here probably takes the story forward to the time of repentance indicated by v 4.

“*Sought*”— Israel was in a low condition, oppressed by the Philistines, guilty of idolatry, and too weak to stand against either their enemies or their own sins. Seeking the Lord was the very best thing to do and held promise for the future. Compare 2 Chron 7:14; Isa 55:6-7; Jer 29:12-14.

**7:3** They who seek the Lord must be willing to put away those things which displease Him. Otherwise they will get nowhere. Observe that though Israel sought the Lord they still had their idols of other gods. Compare Josh 24:14-15; Jud 2:11-13.

“*Ashtoreth*”— a goddess worshiped widely at that time by the nations around Israel. Note at 1 Kings 11:5.

**7:5** Because they were willing to put away false gods Samuel was able to intercede for them and lead them further into fuller repentance and

of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines. <sup>8</sup>And the children of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hands of the Philistines”. <sup>9</sup>And Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered *it* as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD heard him.

<sup>10</sup>And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But on that day the LORD thundered with a great thunder on the Philistines and routed them; and they were struck down before Israel. <sup>11</sup>And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh and pursued the Philistines and struck them down until *they came* below Beth-Car.

<sup>12</sup>Then Samuel took a stone and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the LORD has helped us”. <sup>13</sup>So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come any more into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. <sup>14</sup>And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel freed their territories from the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

<sup>15</sup>And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. <sup>16</sup>And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpeh,

spiritual life. Samuel was the great intercessor for God’s people in those days (7:8-9; 8:6; 12:17-19,23; 15:11; Ps 99:6; Jer 15:1).

**7:6** “*Poured it out*”— may speak of pouring out of the heart (1:15; Ps 42:4; 62:8; Lam 2:19).

“*Judged*”— or “led” (the Hebrew word means both). Samuel was now recognized as judge or leader over Israel. He was the last and the greatest of those so recognized.

**7:8** 12:19-24.

**7:9** “*Burnt offering*”— notes at Leviticus chapter 1. “*Heard*”— Ps 99:6; Jer 15:1.

**7:10** 2:10; Josh 10:10; 2 Sam 22:14-15; Ps 18:13-14; 29:3-4.

**7:12** “*Stone*”— erecting of stones as memorials (not as objects of worship) was a common practice (Gen 28:18; 35:14; Josh 4:9; 24:26). Ebenezer means “stone of help”.

**7:13** “*Any more*”— they did not at that time try to counterattack. Later they came again (9:16; 10:5).

**7:14** Victory and peace were a result of repentance and faith (vs 4,6).

and judged Israel in all those places. <sup>17</sup>Then he would return to Ramah, for his house was there, and he judged Israel there, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

**8** And it came about, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. <sup>2</sup>Now the name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second, Abiah. They were judges in Beersheba. <sup>3</sup>And his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned

aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted judgment.

<sup>4</sup>Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, <sup>5</sup>and said to him, “Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make a king for us to judge us like all the nations”.

<sup>6</sup>But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, “Give us a king to judge us”. And Samuel prayed to the LORD. <sup>7</sup>And the

**7:17** “*Ramah*”— 1:1,19.

“*Altar*”— the ark was gone from Shiloh, never to return there. The town of Ramah became the center of Samuel’s ministry and, therefore, of the spiritual life of Israel. The Hebrew word Ramah means “a height”.

**8:1** Deut 1:16; 16:18-19. Samuel was now too old for all the travel and work involved in judging Israel. He was a great man and much used by God, but here he made a big mistake. No doubt he sincerely thought that his sons were fit to act as judges, but they were not. Perhaps because of his constant traveling ministry he had failed to bring them up as he should have done. Everyone in God’s ministry should be careful about their children, and they need to pray for discernment, especially in assessing the character of members of their own families.

**8:3-5** It was partly due to the unfaithfulness of Samuel’s sons that the people wanted a king. The people’s unfaithfulness to the Lord is not to be excused on this account. At the same time we need to realize the bad effects people such as Samuel’s sons can have upon others.

**8:3** “*His ways*”— the Old Testament gives many examples of the failure of family succession in the leadership of God’s people – Gideon and Abimelech (Jud 8:28—9:1); Eli and his sons (2:12); Samuel and his sons; David and his sons (2 Sam 15:12; 1 Kings 1:5); Solomon and Rehoboam (1 Kings 11:43).

“*Perverved judgment*”— they were the exact opposite of what judges should be (Ex 23:6-8; Deut 16:19; Ps 15:5; Ps 82). Some people when put in a position of authority, like Samuel’s sons, fail miserably. They give in to the temptations of corruption and greed.

**8:5-22** The request for a king and the establishment of the kingdom teach us many important lessons.

(a) The system of kings was not God’s ideal, and it actually symbolized the people’s rejection of God (v 7).

(b) God gave them what they wanted. He even chose their king for them. God does not force His will on us. He may let us have our way, but it will not bring the blessing He wants us to have. Compare Ps 78:29-31; 106:15.

(c) They had to pay a price for their willfulness.

God warned them where their desire would lead, but they would not listen (vs 9-19).

(d) God did not withdraw His grace from them because of their failure. God’s blessings are given in grace, often when His people badly fail. He continues to deal with His people even when they foolishly choose their own way.

(e) Although the system of kings was not God’s first choice for the people, in His grace He worked out His purposes through individual kings such as David, Hezekiah, Josiah, and others.

(f) Perhaps the most surprising thing of all is that by God’s grace Israel’s kingdom became in some measure a picture of God’s kingdom, and its king a “type” of the Lord Jesus as King (2 Sam 7:12-16; Ps 2:7; 45:1,6; 89:33-37; Isa 9:6-7; Matt 1:1; 2:2; Luke 1:32-33; Rev 3:21; 19:11-16). But perhaps this is not so surprising after all, considering that man’s greatest acts of wickedness brought forth God’s greatest act of love and mercy – the cross of Christ.

**8:5** Israel refused to learn from history. Their insecurity and defeats were due to their own sin and rejection of God’s authority, but they blamed Samuel’s age and the character of his sons. They thought that an established human leadership, like other nations had, would be the cure for all their problems (v 20). But to desire what “all the other nations have” was both a great mistake and a great sin (v 7; Hos 13:10-11). God’s people were to be a separate, unique, holy people, unlike any other on earth (Ex 19:5-6; Deut 7:6). The same is true of believers now (1 Pet 2:9). It is not their business to desire to be like the people around them who do not know God.

**8:6** 12:17.

**8:7** 10:19. Up until then God had been King in Israel (12:12). They had the ideal form of government – not democracy, not aristocracy, not plutocracy, not monarchy, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, but theocracy – the rule of God. If the system failed in any way, this was not because God is not the perfect ruler, but because the people continually rejected His authority and broke His laws, and often descended into anarchy (Jud 21:25). Here Israel rejects God’s rule altogether. Let us as individuals be careful that we do not do the same thing. Compare Luke 19:14; Rom 14:9.

LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, so that I should not reign over them. <sup>8</sup>They are doing to you in accordance with all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt to this day, in which they have forsaken me and served other gods. <sup>9</sup>Now therefore listen to their voice, but yet protest solemnly to them and show them the kind of king who will reign over them”.

<sup>10</sup>And Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked a king from him. <sup>11</sup>And he said, “This will be the kind of king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and *some* will run in front of his chariots. <sup>12</sup>And he will appoint for himself leaders over thousands and leaders over fifties, and *will set them* to plow his ground and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. <sup>13</sup>And he will take your daughters *to be* perfumers and cooks and bakers. <sup>14</sup>And he will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves, and give *them* to his servants. <sup>15</sup>And he will take the tenth of your seed grain and of your vineyards, and give *them* to his officers and to his servants.

<sup>16</sup>And he will take your male and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put *them* to his work. <sup>17</sup>He will take the tenth of your sheep. And you will become his servants. <sup>18</sup>And you shall cry out in that day because of your king whom you choose for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day”.

<sup>19</sup>Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and said, “No, but we

will have a king over us, <sup>20</sup>so that we also may be like all the nations, and so that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles”.

<sup>21</sup>And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. <sup>22</sup>And the LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to their voice and make a king for them”. And Samuel said to the men of Israel, “Each of you go to his city”.

**9** Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a strong and brave man. <sup>2</sup>And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice young man and impressive, and *there was* no more impressive person among the children of Israel than he. From his shoulders up *he was* taller than any of the people.

<sup>3</sup>And the donkeys of Saul’s father Kish were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, “Take now one of the servants with you and get up *and* go look for the donkeys”.

<sup>4</sup>And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find *them*. Then they passed through the land of Shalim, but *they were not there*. And he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find *them*.

<sup>5</sup>When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who *was* with him, “Come on and let’s go back, or my father will stop *being concerned* for the donkeys and start worrying about us”.

<sup>6</sup>And *the servant* said to him, “Look now, *there is* a man of God in this city, and *he is* held in honour. All that he says takes place without fail. Now let’s go there. Perhaps he

**8:9** God does not let His people abandon a good way without warning them.

**8:11** 14:52; 2 Chron 1:14.

**8:12** 22:7.

**8:14** 1 Kings 21:7,15; Micah 2:2.

**8:15** 17:25.

**8:18** He would let them suffer the consequences of their foolish and sinful choice. See Gal 6:7. We cannot demand our own way and then rightly expect God to keep us from the sad results of it.

**8:20** “*Battles*”— but see Josh 5:14; 10:14,42; 23:3! In spiritual matters see Rom 8:31; 1 Cor 15:57; Gal 3:3.

**8:22** Verse 7; Hos 13:11.

**9:1** In this chapter and the next we have the

record of how Samuel found Saul and anointed him to be the first king of Israel.

**9:2** There is no mention here of Saul’s inner character. God chose for the people as their king a man after their own heart, a man who looked the part (10:23-24). Contrast this with God’s choice of a man after His own heart (16:7,12).

**9:3** Saul was sent after donkeys; David looked after sheep (16:11-13; Ps 78:71-72).

**9:6** “*Man of God*”— see 2:27.

“*This city*”— probably Ramah, Samuel’s home town. The servant knew what Saul, apparently, did not. See v 18.

“*Takes place*”— 3:19; Deut 18:21-22; Jer 28:9.

can show us the way that we should go”.

<sup>7</sup>Then said Saul to his servant, “But, look, *if* we go, what shall we take the man? For the bread is gone from our sacks, and *there is* no present to take to the man of God. What do we have?”

<sup>8</sup>And the servant answered Saul again and said, “Look, I have in hand a fourth of a shekel of silver. I will give *that* to the man of God to tell us our way”. <sup>9</sup>Previously in Israel when a man went to inquire from God, he spoke like this: “Come and let us go to the seer”, for *one who is* now called a prophet was previously called a seer.

<sup>10</sup>Then said Saul to his servant, “Well said. Come, let’s go”. So they went to the city where the man of God was.

<sup>11</sup>As they went up the hill to the city, they found *some* young women coming out to draw water and said to them, “Is the seer here?”

<sup>12</sup>And they answered them and said, “He is. Look, *he is* in front of you. Hurry now, for today he has come to the city, because *there is* a sacrifice of the people today in the high place. <sup>13</sup>As soon as you have come into the city, you will meet him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, because he blesses the sacrifice. *And* afterwards those who have been invited eat. So now go on up, for about now you will find him”.

<sup>14</sup>And they went up into the city. *And* when they entered the city, there Samuel came out opposite them to go up to the high place.

<sup>15</sup>Now a day before Saul came the LORD had spoken in Samuel’s ear, saying, <sup>16</sup>“About this time tomorrow I will send a man to you from the region of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him *to be* the leader over my people Israel, so that he may save my people out of the hands of the Philistines. For I have looked on my people, because their cry has come to me”.

<sup>17</sup>And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, “See the man about whom I spoke to you. This is the one who will reign over my people”.

<sup>18</sup>Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, “Please tell me where the seer’s house *is*”.

<sup>19</sup>And Samuel answered Saul and said, “I *am* the seer. Go up ahead of me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today. And tomorrow I will let you go, and will tell you all that *is* in your heart. <sup>20</sup>And as for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they are found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on you, and on all your father’s house?”

<sup>21</sup>And Saul answered and said, “Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And *is not* my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why

**9:7** It was right that the people should have a sense of obligation in material things to the prophet who ministered to them. On his part, the true prophet did not look for any material reward. He ministered only because the Lord had called him. In the Bible those who played prophet for what they could get are condemned (Ezek 13:17-19; Micah 3:5,11).

**9:8** “*Fourth of a shekel*”— about 3 grams.

**9:9** The word “seer” in Hebrew (as in English) comes from the verb “to see”. What the seer saw was the truth God revealed in whatever way God chose to reveal it. They were enlightened to know God and to receive messages from Him. Nine persons in the Bible are called seers. Samuel was the first and doubtless the greatest. The others were Zadok, Gad, Heman, Iddo, Hanani, Asaph, Jeduthun, and Amos. All the true prophets were also seers.

**9:12** Note at Lev 26:30.

**9:15** God had promised that when the people wanted a king He would choose one for them (Deut 17:14-15). This does not mean, however, that Saul was God’s ideal person to be king. God chose him in anger with

Israel (Hos 13:11); that is, God gave them Saul with judgment and punishment in His mind. Note at v 2.

**9:16** “*Cry*”— 8:19-20; Ex 2:23-25.

**9:17** An example of how God revealed things to a seer.

**9:18** Let us learn something of Saul by this. Samuel was the most famous man in Israel, a great spiritual leader who traveled widely in the land, including the territory of Benjamin. Saul lived in Gibeah (10:26), not far from Samuel’s town. Yet it seems Saul had never heard of Samuel (v 6), and he certainly did not recognize him. His interest in spiritual matters must have been very small indeed.

**9:19** “*In your heart*”— this is another thing that God may give a seer to see. But not always – 8:1-3; 16:6-7.

**9:20** “*Found*”— a seer could see such things as this also.

“*Desire*”— 8:5,20.

**9:21** At first, Saul seemed humble and without personal ambition (10:21-23; 15:17). He started well enough. What is more important, however, is how a person finishes.

then do you speak so?"

<sup>22</sup>And Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and had them sit in the chief place among those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons.

<sup>23</sup>And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, put it near you".

<sup>24</sup>And the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, "See what has been kept for you. Put it in front of you and eat. Because it has been kept for you for this time, since I said that I have invited the people". So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

<sup>25</sup>And when they had come down from the high place into the city, Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof of the house. <sup>26</sup>And they arose early and about the break of day, it happened that Samuel called to Saul on the roof of the house, saying, "Arise, so that I may send you away". And Saul arose, and both of them, he and Samuel, went outside. <sup>27</sup>As they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go on ahead of us", (and he went on) "but you stand still for a while, so that I may tell you the word of God".

**10** 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 to be the leader over his inheritance? <sup>2</sup>When you have left me today, then you will find two men by Rachel's tomb on the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and

**9:27** "The word of God"— this was the work of a seer, and the work of Samuel's whole life from childhood (3:18) to old age (15:16).

**10:1** Anointing with oil spoke of God's anointing. Saul was declared king on three separate occasions. Here at Ramah the anointing was private and no one but Samuel observed it. At Mizpah there was a public proclamation (10:17-24), and later still at Gilgal Saul was confirmed as king (11:12-15). Samuel accepted Saul as king although, in doing so, his own public position and that of his family was eclipsed. How important it is that God's servants should be ready to step aside and fade into the background when God's time comes, and allow others to take the prominent position! Compare John 3:30.

"Inheritance"— God's inheritance is His people. See Ex 34:9; Deut 4:20; Ps 33:12.

**10:2** Saul had not known Samuel and could not know whether he delivered God's message. Samuel gave him three signs which would show

they will say to you, "The donkeys which you went to seek are found, and, look, your father has stopped caring about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, 'What shall I do about my son?'"

<sup>3</sup>"Then you shall go on from there and come to the plain of Tabor, and there three men will meet you going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a wineskin full of wine. <sup>4</sup>And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you are to take from their hands.

<sup>5</sup>"After that you will come to the hill of God, where the garrison of the Philistines 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 harp and a tambourine and a flute and a lyre before them, and they will prophesy. <sup>6</sup>And the Spirit of the LORD will come on you, and you will prophesy with them and will be changed into another man. <sup>7</sup>And let it be like this: when these signs come to you, do for yourself as the occasion demands; for God is with you.

<sup>8</sup>"And you shall go down before me to Gilgal. And, look, I will come down to you, to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings. You must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do".

<sup>9</sup>And it happened when he had turned his back to go away from Samuel, that God gave him another heart. And all those signs

that Samuel was a true prophet of God and that Saul should believe his message.

**10:5** "Hill of God"— or "Gibeah"— v 26; 11:4.

"Prophets"— note at Gen 20:7.

**10:6** "Spirit"— 11:6; Num 11:25-29; Jud 14:6. This sign in particular would confirm Saul as being anointed by God to be king.

"Changed"— Saul was a shy farmer's son (11:5), not interested in national events. He became a warrior able to command an army and lead a nation. When God chooses a person for any task He equips him for that task. Saul miserably failed to be the kind of leader he should and could have been, but this was not because God had not given him the ability for leadership.

**10:7** "Do"— do whatever would establish him as king.

"With you"— Josh 1:5; Jud 6:12.

**10:8** This was a test for Saul which he failed— 13:8-10.

"Peace offerings"— see Lev 3:1.



took place that day. <sup>10</sup> And when they came to the hill, there a company of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God came on him, and he prophesied among them. <sup>11</sup> And it came about, when all who knew him previously saw that now he prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What *is* this *that* has happened to the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets?" <sup>12</sup> And someone from that place answered and said, "But who *is* their father?" Therefore it became a proverb, "*Is* Saul also among the prophets?" <sup>13</sup> And when he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.

<sup>14</sup> And Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?" And he said, "To look for the donkeys. And when we did not see *them* anywhere, we went to Samuel".

<sup>15</sup> And Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you".

<sup>16</sup> And Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys were found". But he did not tell him about the subject of the kingdom, which Samuel spoke about.

<sup>17</sup> And Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpeh, <sup>18</sup> and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hands of the Egyptians and out of the hands of all the kingdoms *and* of those who oppressed you. <sup>19</sup> And today you have rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your disasters and your distresses, and you have said to him, 'No, but set a king over us.' Now therefore

**10:9** "*Took place*"— this confirmed to Saul that Samuel was a true prophet and had given him God's message. When God appoints a person to a task He wants that person to know that He has done so.

**10:10** Verses 5,6. It is not revealed what sort of prophesying this was. It was done to the accompaniment of music and among a group of prophets (v 5). Perhaps in this case it was simply praising God under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Compare 1 Chron 25:1.

**10:11** The Spirit of God had begun His work of making Saul a different person, and people noticed it with great surprise.

**10:16** "*Kingdom*"— it would probably have sounded absurd to Saul's uncle.

**10:18** Jud 6:8-9.

**10:19** 8:6-8; 12:12.

**10:20** Apart from God speaking through His prophets, Israel had two methods of determining God's will in public matters— casting lots (14:42; Josh 18:6-10; Neh 10:34), and the Urim and

present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands".

<sup>20</sup> And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. <sup>21</sup> When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he could not be found. <sup>22</sup> Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, "Has the man come here yet?" And the LORD answered, "Look, he has hidden himself among the baggage".

<sup>23</sup> And they ran and brought him there. And when he stood up among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders on up. <sup>24</sup> And Samuel said to all the people, "See the one whom the LORD has chosen; for *there is* no one like him among all the people". And all the people shouted and said, "God save the king!"

<sup>25</sup> Then Samuel told the people the plan of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, each man to his house.

<sup>26</sup> And Saul also went home to Gibeah, and a band of men, whose hearts God had touched, went with him. <sup>27</sup> But *some* wicked fellows said, "How will this man save us?" And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he kept silent.

**11** Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and camped against Jabesh-Gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make

Thummin (Ex 28:30). In this case they probably cast lots. Only Samuel knew at this time that God had chosen Saul as king. This event was for the purpose of revealing it to the nation.

**10:22** Saul was initially a shy and retiring person. God's Spirit made him a different person (v 6), but the old still struggled with the new.

**10:24** "*No one like him*"— in physical appearance and personality. The people were delighted with God's choice— at first.

**10:25** "*Plan*"— see Deut 17:14-20.

**10:26** "*Touched*"— when God plans a new work He will raise up men to do it.

**10:27** "*Wicked fellows*"— when God does a new thing there will always be those who scornfully oppose it. Compare Acts 2:13.

"*Save us*"— compare Matt 27:41-43.

**11:1** The Ammonites were the descendants of Lot (Gen 19:36-38; Deut 2:19), and therefore related to Israel. But they were enemies of God's people (Jud 3:13; 11:4-32). Jabesh-Gilead was a town east of the Jordan River and north of Ammon.

a covenant with us, and we will serve you”.

<sup>2</sup>And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, “I will make a *covenant* with you on this *condition*: that I may gouge out all of your right eyes, and so bring disgrace on all of Israel”.

<sup>3</sup>And the elders of Jabesh said to him, “Give us seven days’ respite, so that we can send messengers to all the territories of Israel. And then, if *there is* no one to save us, we will come out to you”.

<sup>4</sup>Then the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and told the news in the hearing of the people, and all the people raised their voices and wept. <sup>5</sup>And just then Saul came from the field behind his oxen, and Saul said, “What *is wrong with* the people that they are weeping?” And they told him the news about the men of Jabesh.

<sup>6</sup>And the Spirit of God came on Saul when he heard that news, and his anger burned greatly. <sup>7</sup>And he took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent *them* throughout all the territories of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, “So will it be done to the oxen of the one who does not come out after Saul and after Samuel”. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out as one man. <sup>8</sup>And when he counted them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

<sup>9</sup>And they said to the messengers who had come, “This is what you are to say to the men of Jabesh-Gilead, ‘Tomorrow, by *the time* the sun is hot, you will have help.’” And the

messengers came and told *this* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. <sup>10</sup>Therefore the men of Jabesh said to *Nahash*, “Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you can do with us all that seems good to you”.

<sup>11</sup>And on the next day this occurred: Saul put the people in three groups, and they came into the middle of the camp in the morning watch, and killed the Ammonites until the heat of the day. And it came about that those who remained were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

<sup>12</sup>And the people said to Samuel, “Who *is* the one who said, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Bring the men so we can put them to death”.

<sup>13</sup>And Saul said, “Not a man will be put to death this day, for today the LORD has worked deliverance in Israel”.

<sup>14</sup>Then said Samuel to the people, “Come and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there”. <sup>15</sup>And all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal, and there they offered sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

**12** And Samuel said to all Israel, “See, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me, and have set a king over you. <sup>2</sup>And now, look, the king walks before you. And I am old and gray, and, see, my sons *are* with you. And I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. <sup>3</sup>Look, here I *am*. Testify against me before

**11:2** Any sort of treaty with evil people results in some kind of loss (Ex 34:12; 1 Kings 20:34,42; 2 Chron 18:1; 2 Cor 6:14-18).

**11:3** Apparently the Ammonites thought no one would be willing to come to help. Israel was at war with the Philistines.

**11:4** Gibeah was in Benjamin and Benjamin had close family ties with the people of Jabesh (Jud 21:12-14).

**11:5** Was Saul more interested in farming than in being king?

**11:6** The Spirit of God now propelled Saul into the forefront of the national life of Israel.

**11:7** “*Fear of the LORD*”— to fulfill His purposes, God can as easily move a whole people as He can one man.

**11:8** Bezek was west of the Jordan, but not far from Jabesh east of the Jordan.

**11:11** “*Morning watch*”— nights were divided into three “watches”. The third was from 2 to 6 A.M.

**11:12** 10:27.

**11:13** Once more Saul shows modesty.

**11:14** 10:8,25. Though here Saul is confirmed as King, in the chapter which follows Samuel teaches the people that God was still the Ruler over Israel, and that both they and King Saul must obey God (vs 13-15).

**11:15** “*Peace offerings*”— see Leviticus chapter 3.

“*Rejoiced greatly*”— they had gotten their way and everything seemed to be going well.

**12:1** “*Israel*”— in this chapter, which gives Samuel’s speech on handing over the reins of government to Saul, he retires from his administrative responsibilities, but not his work as spiritual leader.

“*You*”— 8:5-7; 10:24.

**12:2** 3:10,19,20; 8:1,5.

**12:3** Samuel is saying that he has not used his position of leadership to oppress the people or to make gain for himself. Compare Paul’s speech to the elders of the church of Ephesus in Acts 20:17-35. In every age the church desperately needs these kinds of leaders.

the LORD and before 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 received any bribe to blind my eyes with it? *Tell me* and I will return it to you”.

<sup>4</sup>And they said, “You have not defrauded us or oppressed us, and you have not taken anything from anyone’s hand”.

<sup>5</sup>And he said to them, “The LORD *is* a witness against you, and his anointed *is* a witness today, that you have not found anything in my hand”. And they answered, “*He is* a witness”.

<sup>6</sup>And Samuel said to the people, “*It is* the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron, and who brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. <sup>7</sup>Now therefore stand there, so that I may reason with you in the LORD’s presence about all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he has done for you and for your fathers.

<sup>8</sup>“After Jacob had come into Egypt, and your fathers had cried to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and caused them to live in this place.

<sup>9</sup>“And when they forgot the LORD their God, he sold them into the hands of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the king of Moab and they fought against them. <sup>10</sup>And they cried to the LORD and said, ‘We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and Ashtaroath. But now deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.’ <sup>11</sup>And the LORD

sent Jerubbaal and Bedan and Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hands of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety.

<sup>12</sup>“And when you saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, you said to me, ‘No, but a king shall reign over us’, when the LORD your God was your king. <sup>13</sup>Now therefore see the king whom you have chosen *and* whom you have desired. And, see, the LORD has set a king over you. <sup>14</sup>If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandments of the LORD, then both you and also the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. <sup>15</sup>But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandments of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

<sup>16</sup>“Now therefore stand there and see the great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes. <sup>17</sup>*Is it* not wheat harvest today? I will call to the LORD, and he will send thunder and rain, so that you may perceive and see that great *is* your wickedness which you have done in the sight of the LORD in asking a king for yourselves”.

<sup>18</sup>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.

<sup>19</sup>And all the people said to Samuel, “Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, so that we do not die, for to all our sins we have added *this* evil of asking for a king for ourselves”.

**12:4** A great testimony to Samuel’s good character.

**12:5** “*Anointed*”— Saul.

**12:6** Because they testified to his good character he can go on. If religious leaders are known to be bad men, they should keep their mouths shut until they are willing to repent and serve God from the heart.

**12:7** Compare Micah 6:1-5.

**12:8** Ex 2:23-25; 3:10; 4:14-16.

**12:9** The people could find no fault with Samuel’s life, but the reverse was not the case. The history of Israel was full of rebellion against God.

“*Forgot*”— Deut 32:18; Jud 3:7; Ps 106:21.

**12:10** Jud 2:4,12,13; 3:7,15; 10:10,15,16.

**12:11** 7:13; Jud 4:6; 6:31-32; 7:1; 11:1.

“*Jerubbaal*”— Gideon.

“*Bedan*”— possibly another name for Barak.

**12:12** “*God was your King*”— 8:6-7; Jud 8:23.

**12:14** “*LORD*”— Samuel is saying that Jehovah

God is still the Ruler and will exercise His authority over them. Notes on fear of God at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**12:15** “*Fathers*”— Samuel clearly warns the people that simply having a king will not be the answer to their problems. Political changes will never be effective if people rebel against God. There is never any solution to the problems of God’s people apart from obedience to Him and submission to His will.

**12:16** God was willing to give striking evidence at the word of Samuel to demonstrate how evil the motive of the people had been.

**12:18** “*Called*”— Ps 99:5.

“*Samuel*”— compare Ex 14:31.

**12:19** The people now recognized their sin, but it was too late. When men have made a choice they have to face the consequences of it.

<sup>20</sup>And Samuel said to the people, “Do not be afraid. You have done all this wickedness, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart,<sup>21</sup> and do not turn aside. For *then you would go* after vain *things*, which cannot profit or deliver, for they *are* vain.<sup>22</sup> For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you his people.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.<sup>24</sup> Only fear the LORD and serve him in truth with all your heart. For consider what great *things* he has done for you.<sup>25</sup> But if you continue to do wickedly, you will be swept away, both you and your king”.

**13** Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,<sup>2</sup> Saul chose for himself three thousand *men* of Israel. *Of these* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in Bethel mountain, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. And he sent the rest of the people away, each one to his tent.

**12:20** “*Do not be afraid*”— if people have faith and an obedient heart, God can turn even evil into blessing. Compare Gen 50:20. If a bad choice has been made and cannot be changed, believers should not despair but go forward with God and let Him work things out for the best.

**12:21** Ps 115:3-8; Isa 41:29; 44:17-20; Jer 16:19; Hab 2:18-19.

**12:22** “*His great name’s sake*”— God’s reputation was (and is) bound up with His people (Num 14:13-16; Ps 23:3; 25:11; Isa 48:9; Jer 14:21; Ezek 20:9). What they do affects what others think of Him.

“*His people*”— Deut 7:6-11; 31:6; 1 Kings 6:13; Isa 43:21.

**12:23** “*Ceasing*”— not doing something God requires (sins of omission) is just as much sin as doing what God forbids (sins of commission). See Num 32:23; Deut 23:3-4; Matt 25:24-27,41-46; 1 Tim 5:8. Both kinds of sin are “against the LORD”. See Ps 51:4.

“*Teach*”— Samuel was old and no longer the administrative leader of the people. But God still had a spiritual ministry for him. He could still pray and teach. And if the time ever came when he could no longer teach, he could still pray. There is ministry for every believer in Christ, though the ministry of many may be hidden from the eyes of others.

**12:24** “*Fear*”— v 14; Deut 10:12.

“*Great things*”— Ex 14:31; Deut 4:32; 10:21; 11:7; Josh 24:17-18. By considering the great things God has done for His people their hearts may

<sup>3</sup>And Jonathan struck the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it*. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout the whole land, saying, “Let the Hebrews hear”.<sup>4</sup> And all Israel heard *it* said *that* Saul had struck a garrison of the Philistines, and also *that* Israel had become odious to the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

<sup>5</sup>And the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen and people as numerous as the sand on the seashore, and they came up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-Aven.<sup>6</sup> When the men of Israel saw that they were in a tight place (for the people were hard pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves and in thickets and in rocks and in high places and in pits.<sup>7</sup> And *some of* the Hebrews went over the Jordan to the region of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

<sup>8</sup>And he waited seven days in accordance with the time that Samuel had set, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him.<sup>9</sup> And Saul said, “Bring a burnt offering here to me, and

be moved to gratitude, praise, and obedience. Consider what great things God has done through Christ for believers now, as recorded in the New Testament!

**12:25** 31:1-7; Josh 24:20.

**13:1** Some manuscripts of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament (Septuagint) have Saul’s age here as thirty when he became king. The Hebrew here does not have the word generally used for “one”, and has the plural for year. So some scholars think the first line of the text should read – “Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign”. Acts 13:21 says that Saul reigned for forty years.

**13:2** “*Jonathan*”— Saul’s oldest son (14:49).

**13:3** “*Trumpet*”— Num 10:9; Jer 4:19.

“*Hebrews*”— another name for Israelites (Gen 10:21; 14:13).

**13:4** “*Odious*”— Gen 34:30; Ex 5:21; 2 Sam 10:6; 16:21.

**13:5** “*Thirty*”— some ancient manuscripts have “three”. Since there were only 6000 charioteers 3000 chariots seems more likely. In any case, theirs was a mighty army, superior to Israel’s.

“*Beth-Aven*”— that is, Bethel.

**13:6** Their joy and confidence in their king (8:20; 11:15) seems to have evaporated.

**13:8** “*Samuel*”— 10:8.

**13:9** Samuel’s instructions had been very clear and they had been given at a time when he had given three signs that God was speaking through him (10:1-7).

peace offerings". And he offered the burnt offering. <sup>10</sup>And it came about that as soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, suddenly Samuel came, and Saul went out to meet him to greet him.

<sup>11</sup>And 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 had gathered together

**13:12** "Favour"— we cannot gain the Lord's favor by disobedience (15:22-23).

"Forced myself"— he was compelled only by his fear, rash spirit, and lack of confidence in God. **13:13** Saul had some good qualities, but here are two great weaknesses. He was foolish (26:21), and he lacked an obedient heart (15:10-11,24). Many people there are who cannot be trusted with leadership because of these two failings. In our study of Saul we can see many ways in which a leader may fail and make himself unfit for leadership.

"Commanded you"—through Samuel (9:27; 10:8).

"Forever"—Saul was tested as to his worthiness for the office of king, and he failed, as God knew he would fail.

**13:14** 15:28; 16:1; Ps 89:20; Acts 13:22. From the context we can understand that a man after (or according to) God's heart is a person who will be spiritually wise and obedient, and not like Saul who was foolish and disobedient. But no doubt it will be profitable for us to consider in more detail why God regarded David as a man after His own heart. We can see why David was such a man by studying his history and the psalms he wrote. In general it means that David knew something of the heart of God and tried to keep his heart in harmony with what he knew. But more specific qualities and attitudes of heart can be mentioned.

Let us strive to obtain the following qualities and heart attitudes seen in David, and earnestly pray that God will produce them in us. And let us remember that David did not have such qualities and attitudes by nature. He was a fallen human being with a sinful nature just like the rest of the human race, and this he himself understood quite well (Ps 51:5). His sins were his own, his good qualities were produced in him by the Spirit of God, with, of course, David's cooperation.

(a) David had great confidence and trust in God, not in himself – 1 Sam 17:37,47; Ps 18:2; 23:1-6; 28:7; 44:6-8; 56:4.

(b) David always praised God for what was accomplished, not himself – Ps 9:1; 28:7; 33:1-3; 34:1; 56:4.

(c) David wanted glory and honor to be given to God, not to himself – 1 Sam 17:26,36,46; Ps 25:11; 29:1-2; 31:3; 34:3; 115:1.

(d) David wanted to obey God's will, not his own – Ps 143:10; 1 Sam 23:2; 2 Sam 5:19,22,23.

(e) David delighted in the Word of God and made it his business to know it and obey it

at Michmash, <sup>12</sup>therefore I said, Now the Philistines will come down on me to Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's favour. So I forced myself and offered a burnt offering".

<sup>13</sup>And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you. *If you had*, now the LORD would have established your kingdom in Israel forever. <sup>14</sup>But now your

– Ps 12:6; 17:4; 19:9-11; 56:10; 119:11,16,17,67,74,89,101,105,133,148,160,162,172 (assuming here that David wrote Psalm 119); Ps 130:5.

(f) David was a man of integrity, faithful in the tasks given him to do, whether it was tending sheep or ruling a kingdom – 1 Sam 17:34-35; 1 Kings 9:4; Ps 78:70-72. Dishonesty, unfaithfulness, lying, crookedness of any kind were all hateful to him – Ps 15:1-5; 26:4-5; 101:1-8. He knew that God was a God of truth and faithfulness and determined that he would be a man of truth and faithfulness – Ps 25:5; 26:3; 31:5; 51:6; 86:11.

(g) David did not strive to gain position or power (as is the usual way of men), even though God had chosen him to be king. He patiently waited for God's time and God's way – 1 Sam 24:4-7; 26:7-11; 31:1-5.

(h) David was a humble man who was aware of his weakness and helplessness and tried to keep himself free of that pride and arrogance which God hates – 2 Sam 12:7-13; Ps 25:7,11; 40:17; 51:1-17; 131:1-2.

(i) David loved God, God's name, God's work, God's people, God's house – Ps 8:1; 16:3; 18:1; 26:8; 27:4; 34:3; 51:13; 119:97,127; 2 Sam 24:17. We may say that this love was at the center of his being, governing his whole course of life.

(j) David had the fear of the Lord which made him spiritually wise and obedient – Ps 5:7; 19:9; 34:11-14; 119:63,120.

(k) David showed his love and gratitude toward God by both words and deeds – Ps 30:12; 35:18; 119:62; 2 Sam 24:24; 1 Chron 29:2-5.

(l) David was teachable. He longed to understand God's truth and God's ways and walk in them, and was willing to examine himself and correct anything he saw to be wrong – Ps 25:4; 27:11; 43:3; 86:11; 119:59; 139:23-24.

(m) David was a man of prayer who acknowledged his need and helplessness and opened his heart and life to God to meet his need, a man who nourished his spiritual life in the presence of God – Ps 5:3,7; 40:17; 42:1-2; 51:11 (his psalms are full of this and innumerable references might be given).

(n) He loved God's holiness and wanted his whole life to be conformed to it – Ps 19:13-14; 24:3-4; 29:2; 30:4; 51:7-10; 103:1,3; 119:11,133; 145:21.

Such are some of the qualities which made David a man after God's own heart. Others could be added to this list but these are enough to show why God was pleased with him.

kingdom will not continue. The LORD has sought for himself a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him *to be* the leader over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you”.

<sup>15</sup>And Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul counted the people *who were* present with him, about six hundred men.

<sup>16</sup>And Saul and his son Jonathan and the people *who were* present with them, stayed in Gibeah of Benjamin, but the Philistines were camping at Michmash. <sup>17</sup>And the raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three groups; one group turned toward the road *that goes to* Ophrah, to the region of Shual, <sup>18</sup>and another group turned toward Beth-Horon, and another group turned toward the border that overlooks the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

<sup>19</sup>Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout the whole land of Israel, for the Philistines said, “So that the Hebrews cannot make swords or spears *for themselves*”.

<sup>20</sup>But all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines, so that each one could sharpen his plowshare and his sickle and his axe and his mattock. <sup>21</sup>And there was a sharpening *charge* for the mattocks and for the sickles and for the forks and for the axes and to set the points of the goads.

<sup>22</sup>So it came about on the day of battle that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who *were* with Saul and Jonathan, but they were found with Saul and with his son Jonathan. <sup>23</sup>And an outpost of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

**14** Now one day it came about that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who was his armour bearer,

“Come and let us go over to the Philistines’ outpost that is on the other side”. But he did not tell his father.

<sup>2</sup>And Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron, and the people who *were* with him *were* about six hundred men. <sup>3</sup>And Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod’s brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD’s priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

<sup>4</sup>And on the pass by which Jonathan sought to reach the Philistines’ outpost, *there was* a rocky crag on one side and a rocky crag on the other side. The name of one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. <sup>5</sup>The one crag was situated toward the north opposite Michmash, and the other toward the south, opposite Gibeah.

<sup>6</sup>And Jonathan said to the young man who was his armour bearer, “Come, and let us go over to the outpost of these uncircumcised *men*. It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can prevent the LORD from saving *whether* by many or by few”.

<sup>7</sup>And his armour bearer said to him, “Do all that *is* in your heart. Turn yourself *forward*. See, I *am* with you according to your desire”.

<sup>8</sup>Then Jonathan said, “Look, we will cross over to *these* men, and we will let ourselves be seen by them. <sup>9</sup>If they speak to us like this: ‘Wait until we come to you’, then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. <sup>10</sup>But if they speak like this: ‘Come up to us’, then we will go up, for the LORD has delivered them into our hands. And that *will be* a sign to us”.

<sup>11</sup>And both of them let themselves be seen by the outpost of the Philistines, and the Philistines said, “Look, the Hebrews

**13:15** 13:2,4,6,7. Fear had made many hundreds run away.

**13:19** The Philistines believed in total disarmament – for Israel, not for themselves. Of course this gave them a tremendous advantage in any battle between the two nations.

**13:22** Two swords for a whole nation! But they had bows and arrows and spears, etc.

**14:1** The first 23 verses of this chapter record one of the great individual military exploits in the Bible.

**14:3** “*Ephod*”– Ex 28:6-8.

**14:6** “*Uncircumcised*”– the Philistines were

not in covenant relationship with God (Gen 17:9-14), and they had no right to remain in the land. All of Canaan as far as the Mediterranean Sea had been given to Israel (Josh 1:2-5; 13:2).

“*Few*”– if it is God who works He can accomplish His purpose with very small, very frail instruments (17:46-47; Lev 26:8; Jud 7:4,7; 2 Chron 14:11). What God wants to see is not large numbers but faith and obedience. Jonathan’s faith made him bold.

**14:10** 6:9; Gen 24:14; Jud 6:36-40.

**14:11** “*Hebrews*”– 13:3.

have come out of the holes where they have hidden themselves". <sup>12</sup>And the men of the outpost responded to Jonathan and his armour bearer and said, "Come up to us, and we will tell you something".

And Jonathan said to his armour bearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hands of Israel".

<sup>13</sup>And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and on his feet, and his armour bearer after him. And the *Philistines* fell before Jonathan, and his armour bearer killed *some* after him. <sup>14</sup>And about twenty men *fell* in that first attack which Jonathan and his armour bearer made, within about half an acre of land, *which a yoke of oxen might plow*.

<sup>15</sup>And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled, and the earth quaked, so it became a very great trembling.

<sup>16</sup>And Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and saw the mob melting away, moving here *and there*. <sup>17</sup>Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Make a count now and see who has gone from us". And when they had made a count, it was seen that Jonathan and his armour bearer were not there.

<sup>18</sup>And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring here the ark of God". For at that time the ark of God was with the children of Israel. <sup>19</sup>And it came about, while Saul was talking to the priest, that the noise in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased. And Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand".

<sup>20</sup>And Saul and all the people who were with him assembled and went to the battle, and they saw that every man's sword was

against his fellow *soldier*, and that there was very great confusion. <sup>21</sup>Moreover the Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines, who had gone up with them to the camp *from the surrounding countryside*, they also *turned and came* to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. <sup>22</sup>Likewise all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines had fled, they also followed close behind them in the battle. <sup>23</sup>So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle passed over to Beth-Aven.

<sup>24</sup>And the men of Israel were in distress that day, because Saul had put the people under an oath, saying, "Cursed *be* the man who eats *any* food until evening, so that I may take vengeance on my enemies". So none of the people tasted *any* food.

<sup>25</sup>And all *the people* of the land came into the woods, and there was honey on the ground. <sup>26</sup>And when the people came into the woods, *they* saw the honey dripping, but no man put his hand to his mouth, because the people were afraid of the oath. <sup>27</sup>But Jonathan did not hear when his father charged the people with the oath, so he put out the end of the staff that was in his hand, and dipped it in a honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes shone. <sup>28</sup>Then one of the people responded and said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed *be* the man who eats *any* food today.' " And the people were faint.

<sup>29</sup>Then said Jonathan, "My father has troubled the land. Please see how my eyes have shone, because I tasted a little of this

**14:12** "*LORD has delivered*"— Jonathan's dependence was not on his skill and ability but on God.

**14:13** "*Feet*"— the terrain was very difficult, but faith looks to God, not at difficulties.

**14:14** "*Half an acre*"— in Hebrew "half a yoke". A "yoke" was the amount of land a yoke of oxen could plow in one day.

**14:15** "*Great trembling*"— all this because of the faith of one man. See also 7:10; Josh 10:9,11; Ps 18:6-15.

**14:18** Saul's intention was to find God's will for the present occasion. Compare 23:9-11; 30:7-8. Like Saul some people want to find God's will when there is the prospect of some success or other, but think little of seeking Him simply to know their duty.

**14:19** It seems Saul decided to pursue the Philistines without waiting to see what God would say. Such action was typical of Saul.

**14:20** Jud 7:22; 2 Chron 20:23.

**14:23** "*The LORD*"— 11:13; Ex 14:30; Josh 23:4-5; 2 Chron 32:22; Ps 33:16-19; 44:6-7; Hos 1:7.

"*Beth-Aven*"— Bethel.

**14:24** "*Oath*"— Saul again shows a rash and foolish spirit. His oath may have had an appearance of spiritual devotion, but it meant that the strength of the army was sapped before the day was over (vs 28,31).

**14:27** "*His eyes shone*"— even a little nourishment brought strength to a tired man – vs 29,30.

**14:29** "*Troubled*"— one rash oath brought trouble to the whole country, and showed once again that Saul was not fit to be king.

honey. <sup>30</sup>How much more *they could have done*, if the people today had eaten freely of the plunder of their enemies which they found! For would there not have been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

<sup>31</sup>And they struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon, and the people became very faint. <sup>32</sup>And the people fell on the plunder and took sheep and oxen and calves and slaughtered *them* on the ground, and the people ate *them* with the blood. <sup>33</sup>Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD, by eating *meat* with the blood". And he said, "You have transgressed. Roll a great stone to me today". <sup>34</sup>And Saul said, "Scatter among the people and say to them, 'Each man must bring here to me his ox and each man his sheep, and slaughter *them* here and eat, and not sin against the LORD by eating *meat* with the blood.'" And each man from all the people brought his ox with him that night and slaughtered *it* there. <sup>35</sup>And Saul built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

<sup>36</sup>And Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and plunder them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them". And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you". Then the priest said, "Let us here draw near to God".

<sup>37</sup>And Saul asked counsel from God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you deliver them into the hands of Israel?" But *the LORD* did not answer him that day.

<sup>38</sup>And Saul said, "Draw near here, all you leaders of the people, and find out and see how this sin has happened today. <sup>39</sup>For,

as the LORD who saves Israel lives, even if it is in my son Jonathan, he shall surely die". But *there was* not a man among all the people *who* answered him.

<sup>40</sup>Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will be on the other side". And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you".

<sup>41</sup>Therefore Saul said to the LORD God of Israel, "Give a perfect *lot*". And Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people were cleared.

<sup>42</sup>And Saul said, "Cast *lots* between me and my son Jonathan". And Jonathan was taken. <sup>43</sup>Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done". And Jonathan told him, saying, "I just tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that *was* in my hand, *and*, look, I must die!"

<sup>44</sup>And Saul answered, "God do so and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan".

<sup>45</sup>And the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? God forbid! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he has worked with God today". So the people rescued Jonathan, so that he did not die.

<sup>46</sup>Then Saul went up from following the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

<sup>47</sup>So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab and against the children of Ammon and against Edom and against the kings of Zobah and against the Philistines, and wherever he turned, he troubled *them*.

<sup>48</sup>And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of

**14:32** "*Blood*"— forbidden by God (Gen 9:4; Lev 3:17; Deut 12:23-24; Acts 15:19-20).

**14:35** "*The first*"— Saul was not suddenly becoming spiritual and devoted to God. Evidently he was much worried that God would forsake his army because of its sin in eating blood.

**14:36** Having gone through the forms of devotion, Saul's self-confidence returns, his fear abates. He is ready to rush after the Philistines without seeking God's will. He needed the priests' reminder to "enquire of God".

**14:37** "*The LORD did not answer*"— even though Saul's oath was a foolish one, an oath was an oath, and God heard it, and the people were bound by it (v 24). See Eccl 5:2-7. Far better to make no oaths (Matt 5:33-37). For another very foolish oath see Jud 11:30-31.

**14:39** Saul adds another vow to his original one. This one too went unfulfilled.

**14:41-42** Casting lots to find God's will was a common practice then – Josh 7:14; 18:6; 1 Chron 24:5.

**14:44** It would have been better for Saul if he had been as determined to put Agag to death as he was to kill Jonathan (15:8).

**14:45** The men decided that if it came to a matter of oaths they too could make them.

**14:46** The confusion of the previous incident meant that a great opportunity to crush the Philistines was lost.

**14:47** Israel was surrounded by enemies. Moab and Ammon were to the east beyond the Jordan River. Edom was south, Zobah north, the Philistines west.



the hands of those who plundered them.

<sup>49</sup>Now Saul's sons were Jonathan and Ishui and Melchishua. And *these were* the names of his two daughters: the name of the firstborn was Merab and the name of the younger was Michal. <sup>50</sup>And Saul's wife's name was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. <sup>51</sup>And Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

<sup>52</sup>And the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul, and when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for his *service*.

**15** And Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you *to be* king over his people, over Israel. Now therefore listen to the message from the voice of the LORD. <sup>2</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I remember what Amalek did to Israel, how he opposed him along the way when *Israel* came up from Egypt. <sup>3</sup>Now go and attack Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and sucking child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' "

<sup>4</sup>And Saul gathered the people together and counted them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. <sup>5</sup>And Saul came to a city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley. <sup>6</sup>And Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, get away from among the Amalekites, or I

will destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt". So the Kenites went away from among the Amalekites.

<sup>7</sup>And Saul struck down the Amalekites from Havilah *until* you come to Shur, which is east of Egypt. <sup>8</sup>And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. <sup>9</sup>But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fat animals and the lambs and all *that was good*, and were not willing to utterly destroy them, but they utterly destroyed everything *that was despised* and worthless.

<sup>10</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, <sup>11</sup>"I regret that I have appointed Saul *to be* king, for he has turned back from following me and has not carried out my commandments". And Samuel was troubled and cried out to the LORD all night.

<sup>12</sup>And Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and, look, he set up a monument for himself, and has turned and proceeded to go down to Gilgal".

<sup>13</sup>And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "May you *be* blessed by the LORD. I have carried out the commandment of the LORD".

<sup>14</sup>And Samuel said, "Then what *is the meaning* of this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

<sup>15</sup>And Saul said, "They have brought

**14:49** "Ishui"—he was also known as "Ish-bosheth" and "Esh-Baal".

**14:52** "Service"—8:11-12.

**15:1** 9:16.

**15:2** See Ex 17:8-16; Num 24:20; Deut 25:17-19. The time had come for God to punish this wicked people. Notes on such punishment at Gen 6:7; 15:16; Lev 18:24; Deut 13:12-18.

**15:3** Similar to instructions God gave about Jericho—Josh 6:17-21.

**15:6** The Kenites were a Midianite tribe living to the south of Israel in the desert. Moses' father-in-law was a Kenite.

**15:8** This refers to the chief town of the Amalekites (v 5). There were Amalekites living in other places whom Saul did not destroy (27:8; 30:1,18; 2 Sam 1:1; 8:11-12).

**15:9** Once again we see that Saul was the kind of person who did what he pleased regardless of God's commands (10:8; 13:8-9). Disobedience to God cost him a great deal, as it will anyone,

any time.

**15:11** "I regret"—Gen 6:6; 2 Sam 24:16; Ps 78:40; Hos 11:8; Matt 23:37; Luke 19:41-42; Eph 4:30.

"Troubled"—the prophets in tune with God's mind experienced something of what God felt. See Jer 4:19-26; 6:11.

**15:12** "Carmel"—not Mt Carmel in the north of Israel, but a town south of Hebron.

"Monument for himself"—by this Saul showed again that he was on the slippery slope to ruin (Matt 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14). God does not give success that we might glorify ourselves.

**15:13** A show of outward spirituality that covered deception.

**15:14** Fire can be hidden for a time, but what about the smoke? What good is a mask of piety when evidence of disobedience cries out all around?

**15:15** Saul, the leader who was responsible for everything, tries to put the blame on his men (vs 21,24). Compare Gen 3:12-13.

them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed”.

<sup>16</sup>Then Samuel said to Saul, “Stop! Now I will tell you what the LORD said to me tonight”. And he said to him, “Speak on”.

<sup>17</sup>And Samuel said, “When you were little in your own sight, were you not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and *did not* the LORD anoint you king over Israel? <sup>18</sup>And the LORD sent you on a journey and said, ‘Go and utterly destroy those sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are no more.’ <sup>19</sup>Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but fell on the plunder and did evil in the sight of the LORD?”

<sup>20</sup>And Saul said to Samuel, “Yes, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. <sup>21</sup>But the people took *some* of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal”.

<sup>22</sup>And Samuel said, “Has the LORD as *great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Look, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to listen

*is better* than the fat of rams. <sup>23</sup>For rebellion *is like* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is like* wickedness and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you as king”.

<sup>24</sup>And Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and your words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. <sup>25</sup>Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, so that I may worship the LORD”.

<sup>26</sup>And 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 as king over Israel”.

<sup>27</sup>And as Samuel turned around to go away, *Saul* clutched the edge of his robe, and it tore. <sup>28</sup>And Samuel said to him, “Today the LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you and has given it to a neighbour of yours *who is* better than you. <sup>29</sup>And also the Strength of Israel will not lie or repent, for he *is* not a man that he should repent”.

<sup>30</sup>Then he said, “I have sinned. Yet please honour me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, so that I may worship the LORD your God”. <sup>31</sup>So Samuel followed Saul back, and Saul worshipped the LORD.

<sup>32</sup>Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag the king of the Amalekites”. And Agag came

**15:17** “*Little*”— a comparison of 9:21; and 10:22; with 15:12 gives us an example of how power and position can corrupt a leader.

**15:18** Verse 3.

**15:19** “*Not obey*”— 13:13.

**15:20-21** Saul seemed to think that partial obedience would be acceptable to God. Actually partial obedience is disobedience. God did not send him to bring back Agag and those animals. His command was to destroy all and everything.

**15:21** “*To sacrifice*”— to escape from the charge of disobedience Saul again makes a show of piety.

**15:22** These are words we should all write on our hearts and read daily. Outward ritual can never take the place of heart obedience – Ps 50:7-23; 51:16-17; Prov 21:3; Isa 1:11-17; Jer 7:22-23; Hos 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Mark 12:33; Heb 10:6-9.

**15:23** “*Witchcraft*”— see Lev 19:26; Deut 18:9-12.

“*Stubbornness*”— 12:14-15. The one thing above all Saul should not have done he did. He stubbornly rebelled against God’s command. To ignore God’s commands and do one’s own will is really a kind of idolatry – worship of oneself.

“*Rejected*”— anyone unwilling for God’s rule over himself is not fit to rule others.

**15:24** Confession with repentance is a fine thing.

Confession without repentance is worse than useless. See Ex 10:16-17. And true repentance does not include an excuse for sin as Saul makes here. Compare with this David’s simple, heartfelt statements in 2 Sam 12:13; Ps 51:3-4.

**15:25** “*Pardon*”— in this too Saul seems lacking in true repentance – he asks for Samuel’s forgiveness, not God’s.

“*Worship*”— judging from all that is said about him Saul was never much interested in worshiping God, and here, too, he had other motives (v 30).

**15:28** “*Better*”— 13:14; 16:1,13; 28:17-18.

**15:29** Num 23:19; Isa 40:8; Titus 1:2; Jam 1:17.

**15:30** “*Honour*”— Matt 23:5-7; John 5:44; 12:43; Rom 2:29. Saul had his eyes on people, not on God. He was afraid that Samuel and all Israel would reject him, and thought that a little honor from men might help him to retain his position.

He is an example of the kind of person we often see in Christian circles today. Contrast all this with David’s concern with his inner being (Ps 51:10).

**15:31** Samuel loved Saul (v 11; 16:1), and gave in to his desperate request.

**15:32** Perhaps Samuel’s reason for going with Saul was not to honor him but to finish the work God gave Saul to do.

to him weakly. And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past”.

<sup>33</sup>And Samuel said, “Just as your sword has made women childless, so will your mother be childless among women”. And Samuel cut Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

<sup>34</sup>Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. <sup>35</sup>And Samuel did not come again to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel grieved for Saul, and the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

**16** And the LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have chosen a king for myself among his sons”.

<sup>2</sup>And Samuel said, “How can I go? If 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.’ <sup>3</sup>And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will tell you what you must do, and you shall anoint for me *the one* whom I name to you”.

<sup>4</sup>And Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, “Do you come in peace?”

<sup>5</sup>And he said, “In peace. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice”. And he

consecrated Jesse and his sons and called them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup>And it came about, when they arrived, that he looked at Eliab and said, “Surely the LORD’s anointed *is* before him”.

<sup>7</sup>But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance, or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does not see as man sees*; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart”.

<sup>8</sup>Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one”. <sup>9</sup>Then Jesse had Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one”. <sup>10</sup>And Jesse had seven of his sons pass in front of Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these”.

<sup>11</sup>And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all *your* children here?” And he said, “There still remains the youngest, and, see, he is tending the sheep”. And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he has come here”.

<sup>12</sup>And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, *and* with a fine appearance and handsome *features*. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him, for this *is the one*”.

<sup>13</sup>Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD came on David from that day onwards. So Samuel got up and went to Ramah.

<sup>14</sup>But the Spirit of the LORD left Saul, and

**15:33** Gen 9:6; Ex 21:23-25; Deut 19:21; Jud 1:7. This was absolute justice at work.

**15:35** Though Samuel loved Saul he refused to have fellowship with him because Saul was disobedient and rejected by God. Compare 1 Cor 5:1-2,9-11.

**16:1** “*How long*”—it was right for Samuel to mourn. God Himself was grieved (15:35). But he had mourned enough and there was work to do. No servant of God should let his grief keep him from fulfilling his responsibilities in God’s service.

“*Jesse*”—Ruth 4:18-22.

**16:2** Saul’s instability was apparently quite obvious. He had become treacherous and vindictive (19:1,9-11; 22:18-19). It is unlikely that Samuel was afraid to die. He wondered, though, how he would be able to obey God’s command.

**16:3** “*I will tell you what you must do*”—when we set out to obey God we can expect His constant guidance (Ps 25:9; Prov 3:6; Isa 30:21; 58:10-11).

**16:4** Evidently the visit of a prophet was not

always welcome. Did the elders at Bethlehem have a guilty conscience about something?

**16:5** “*Consecrate*”—Ex 19:10,14; Lev 15; Num 19:11-22.

**16:6** Even Samuel the seer could be deceived by outward appearances. See 9:19.

**16:7** 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chron 28:9; Ps 139:1-4; Luke 16:15; Heb 4:13.

**16:11** “*Tending the sheep*”—the one the Lord chose to shepherd Israel was a shepherd—Ps 78:71-72. He is a small picture of another who has a shepherd’s heart (John 10:11-16; Heb 13:20).

**16:12** But God did not choose him for his handsome looks (13:14).

**16:13** “*Brothers*”—Samuel knew why he anointed David (v 1), but as far as we know he did not give the reason at that time. David knew, of course, that he was being set apart for some special purpose. Observe that the Spirit of God Himself anointed David to be king as He had Saul (10:10).

an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

<sup>15</sup>And Saul's servants said to him, "Look now, an evil spirit from God is troubling you. <sup>16</sup>Let our lord now command your servants, *who are* before you, to seek for a man *who* plays the harp skillfully. And it will be *like this*: when the evil spirit from God is on you, he will play *the harp* with his hand, and you will get well".

<sup>17</sup>And Saul said to his servants, "Find me now a man who can play well, and bring *him* to me".

<sup>18</sup>Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *who is* skillful in playing. And *he is* a strong man and a brave warrior, and prudent in speech and handsome, and the LORD *is* with him".

<sup>19</sup>Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David *who is* with the sheep". <sup>20</sup>And Jesse took a donkey, *loaded it* with bread, and a wineskin of wine and a young goat, and sent *them* to Saul by his son David.

<sup>21</sup>And David came to Saul, and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armour bearer. <sup>22</sup>And Saul sent *word* to Jesse, saying, "Please let David stay *here* with me, for he has found favour in my sight".

<sup>23</sup>And it would come about, whenever the *evil spirit* from God was on Saul, that David would take a harp and play *it* with his hand. So Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would leave him.

**16:14** "*Evil spirit*" – or "injurious spirit" – 18:10; Jud 9:23; 1 Kings 22:19-23; Job 1:12; 2:6; Mark 5:11-13; 2 Cor 12:7. Evil spirits cannot do as they please. They need God's permission for their activities (even men know how to keep dangerous dogs on leashes or chains). It seems God sometimes sends evil spirits in judgment on men to punish them for their sin.

"*LORD*" – God's Spirit had anointed Saul to be king. He was now rejected as king and so the Spirit departed from him. This has nothing to do with the question of whether Saul was saved or lost as an individual. It has to do only with his position as king.

"*Troubled*" – a thing evil spirits delight to do (Job 2:7; Mark 5:1-5; 9:20-22; Luke 13:11,16). With Saul it seems the torment took the form of mental anguish.

**16:18** This was God's way of bringing David to the king's court and eventually into great popularity in Israel.

**16:20** Prov 18:16.

**17** Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and assembled at Shochoh, which *belongs* to Judah, and camped between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-Dammim. <sup>2</sup>And Saul and the men of Israel gathered together and camped at the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. <sup>3</sup>And the Philistines took a stand on a hill on one side, and Israel took a stand on a hill on the other side, with a valley between them.

<sup>4</sup>And a champion came out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. <sup>5</sup>And *he had* a bronze helmet on his head, and he *was* wearing a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of bronze. <sup>6</sup>And *he had* bronze shin guards on his legs, and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. <sup>7</sup>And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron. And one carrying a shield went before him.

<sup>8</sup>And he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel and said to them, "Why have you come out to set *your* battle in array? *Am I* not a Philistine, and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. <sup>9</sup>If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants, but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you will be our servants and serve us". <sup>10</sup>And the Philistine said, "Today I defy the armies of Israel. Give me a man, so that we can fight together". <sup>11</sup>When Saul and all

**16:21** Prov 22:29.

"*Armour bearer*" – probably it was after David defeated Goliath that this took place.

**16:23** Good music can have good influences on the mind. Evil music (and there is much of it in the world) has evil influences on those who listen to it.

**17:1** "*Shochoh*" – west of Bethlehem near the border between Israel and the Philistines.

**17:4** Num 13:32-33.

"*Six cubits and a span*" – slightly less than three meters.

**17:5** "*Five thousand shekels*" – nearly 57 kilograms.

**17:7** "*Six hundred shekels*" – about 7 kilograms.

**17:8-9** In ancient days it sometimes happened that chosen representatives of opposing armies met in combat to decide the issue between the armies. **17:10** Goliath was defying not only Israel but the God of Israel. But it seems only David understood this fully and took it to heart – vs 26,36,45.

**17:11** If the leader is afraid, what can be expected of his men?

Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

<sup>12</sup>Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah, whose name was Jesse. And Jesse had eight sons. And the man in the days of Saul has become aged among men. <sup>13</sup>And the three oldest sons of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to the battle; and the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. <sup>14</sup>And David was the youngest, and the three oldest followed Saul. <sup>15</sup>But David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

<sup>16</sup>And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself for forty days.

<sup>17</sup>And Jesse said to his son David, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this parched *grain* and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to your brothers. <sup>18</sup>And take along these ten cheeses to the captain of *their* thousand, and see about the welfare of your brothers, and bring *some* token from them". <sup>19</sup>Now Saul and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

<sup>20</sup>And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took *the things* and went, just as Jesse had ordered him. And he came to the lines just as the army was going out to the fight and were shouting the war cry. <sup>21</sup>For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up the battle lines, army against army. <sup>22</sup>And David left his baggage in the hands of the baggage keeper, and ran in among the troops and came and greeted his brothers. <sup>23</sup>And as he talked with them, suddenly there came the champion, the Philistine of Gath, named Goliath, from

the armies of the Philistines, and spoke those same words, and David heard *them*. <sup>24</sup>And when all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were very afraid.

<sup>25</sup>And the men of Israel said, "Did you see that man who came up? He comes up to defy Israel. And it so happens *that* the man who kills him will be given great riches by the king. And *he* will give him his daughter, and make his father's household free in Israel".

<sup>26</sup>And David spoke to the men who were standing near him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away this reproach from Israel? For who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

<sup>27</sup>And the people answered him like this, saying, "So it will be done for the man who kills him".

<sup>28</sup>And his oldest brother Eliab was listening when he spoke to the men, and Eliab's anger burned against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the wickedness of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle".

<sup>29</sup>And David said, "What have I done now? Can't *I speak* a word?" <sup>30</sup>And he turned away from him toward another *man* and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him with the same words as before. <sup>31</sup>And when the words David spoke were overheard, they reported *them* to Saul; and he sent for him.

<sup>32</sup>And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine".

<sup>33</sup>And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you *are only* a youth, and he *is* a warrior from his youth".

**17:12** "*Ephrathite*"— the area around Bethlehem was called Ephratha (Micah 5:2).

**17:15** 16:11.

**17:17** "*Ephah*"— probably about one half bushel.

**17:20** Even in the exciting prospect of visiting the battlefield David did not forget his sheep. He was faithful in small matters before he was faithful in large matters (Luke 16:10).

**17:25** Saul was afraid to fight, but by making promises of great reward tried to find someone else willing to fight.

**17:26** "*God*"— David saw the main point right away. To him it was disgraceful that the people of the true and living God should cringe in fear from someone who did not know God. He here

revealed one of the reasons why he was a man after God's own heart – 13:14.

**17:28** "*Anger*"— his language was very scornful, very unfair. Was jealousy at work in Eliab? Compare Gen 37:3-11. He had been passed by and David, his younger brother, had been anointed (16:6-7,13).

**17:29** David did not allow ill-will and discouraging words from his brother to hinder his faith.

**17:32** 16:18; Deut 20:1-4.

**17:33** In any venture of faith there may be those who speak words of discouragement. What Saul did not realize was that David was trusting God for victory, not himself.

<sup>34</sup>And David said to Saul, “Your servant was tending his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, <sup>35</sup>I went after it and attacked it, and rescued *the lamb* from its mouth. And when it rose against me, I caught *it* by its beard and struck it and killed it. <sup>36</sup>Your servant killed both the lion and the bear. And this uncircumcised Philistine will become like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God”. <sup>37</sup>David also said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine”. And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you”.

<sup>38</sup>And Saul put his tunic on David, and put a bronze helmet on his head and dressed him in a coat of mail. <sup>39</sup>And David fastened his sword over his tunic and tried to walk *around*, for he had not tested *it*. And David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested *them*”. And David took them off. <sup>40</sup>And he took his staff in his hand, and chose for himself five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in a shepherd’s bag which he had, in a pouch. And his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

<sup>41</sup>And the Philistine came on and drew near to David, and the man who was carrying the shield *went* before him. <sup>42</sup>And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was *only* a youth, and ruddy and with a handsome appearance. <sup>43</sup>And the Philistine said to David, “*Am I* a dog, that you come to me with staves?”

**17:34-37** Past experiences of God’s help gave confidence that God would help him now.

**17:38** David’s trust was in God. He did not need someone else’s armor and weapon. He was willing, as we all should be, to go forward in the abilities God had given him rather than to try to imitate others with different abilities.

**17:40** David was not a small boy with a boy’s sling. He had already killed fierce wild animals with his bare hands (vs 34,35), and the sling could be a deadly weapon of war (Jud 20:16; 2 Kings 3:25; 2 Chron 26:14). With such slings stones weighing up to 500 grams could be hurled at speeds up to 150 kilometers an hour.

**17:42** “*Youth*”— this is a translation of a Hebrew word that could mean a boy, or a grown-up young man. In v 55 David is called a “young man”.

**17:43** “*Cursed*”— David well knew that Goliath’s gods were powerless and he did not fear any

And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. <sup>44</sup>And the Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field”.

<sup>45</sup>Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. <sup>46</sup>Today the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I will strike you down and take off your head, and today give the carcasses of the armies of the Philistines to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, so that the whole world may know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup>And all this assembly will know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear, for the battle *is* the LORD’s and he will give you into our hands”.

<sup>48</sup>And it came about, when the Philistine came on up and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the army to meet the Philistine. <sup>49</sup>And David put his hand in his bag and took from there a stone and slung *it*, and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead. And he fell on his face to the ground.

<sup>50</sup>So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But *there was* no sword in David’s hand. <sup>51</sup>Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, and seized his sword and drew it out of its scabbard, and killed him and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they

curses uttered in their name.

**17:45** “*Spear*”— Goliath’s trust was in his own strength and weapons. David’s trust was in God, and that made all the difference. Against such a superior force Goliath had not the slightest chance of victory.

“*Name of the LORD of hosts*”— 2 Chron 14:11; 32:8; Ps 9:10; 20:7-8; 124:8; Prov 18:10.

**17:46** “*World may know*”— this was David’s great desire, the desire of all God’s true servants. This fight between two men was to have far-reaching results.

**17:47** 14:6; 2 Chron 20:15; Ps 33:16-17; 34:2; 44:4-8; Zech 4:6; 1 Tim 6:12.

**17:48** “*David ran quickly*”— confident and eager for victory and the glory of God’s name.

**17:51** Heb 11:34. The power of faith can equally well overcome other kinds of enemies— Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14; Jam 4:7.

fled. <sup>52</sup>And the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of the valley and to the gates of Ekron. And the Philistines' wounded *men* fell down along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and to Ekron. <sup>53</sup>And when the children of Israel returned from pursuing, the Philistines, they plundered their tents. <sup>54</sup>And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent.

<sup>55</sup>Now when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the captain of the host, "Abner, whose son *is* this young man?" And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know".

<sup>56</sup>And the king said, "Find out whose son the young man *is*".

<sup>57</sup>And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

<sup>58</sup>And Saul said to him, "Whose son *are* you, young man?" And David answered, "I *am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite".

**18** And it came about, when he had finished speaking with Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. <sup>2</sup>And Saul took him that day, and would no longer let him go home to his father's house. <sup>3</sup>Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him

**17:55-58** Saul knew David (16:18-23). But he had forgotten David's family background. Remember, he was much troubled in mind (16:14), and occupied with his own fears.

**18:1** "Jonathan"—20:17; 2 Sam 1:26. Saul's oldest son was a great warrior himself and a man of faith (14:1-15). He recognized in David a kindred spirit and a man superior to himself (he had not dared to go against Goliath). He was filled with admiration for David.

**18:3** Jonathan's love caused him to make a covenant (19:1; 20:8,13-16,41,42; 23:18); to give David prized possessions (v 4); to do anything possible to help him (20:4); to risk his own life for David (20:30-35; 23:16); and to willingly take second place to David (23:17-18). Jonathan was more than a great warrior—he was a true friend, absolutely loyal to the end. The friendship of these two men of God is an example of what true, sanctified friendship can be in God's service. And Jonathan's attitude to David is a picture of what ours should be for the Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our love for Him should cause us

as his own soul. <sup>4</sup>And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe he *had* on and gave it to David, and his tunic, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

<sup>5</sup>And David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and* conducted himself wisely. And Saul appointed him over the warriors, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

<sup>6</sup>And it so happened when David was returning from killing the Philistine, as they were coming, the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. <sup>7</sup>And the women responded to *each other* as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands".

<sup>8</sup>And Saul became very angry, for the saying displeased him, and he said, "They have given credit to David *for* tens of thousands, and to me they have given credit *for only* thousands. And *what* more can he have but the kingdom?" <sup>9</sup>And Saul kept an eye on David from that day on.

<sup>10</sup>And it so happened on the next day that the evil spirit from God came on Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. And David was playing *the harp* with his hand, as at other times, and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand. <sup>11</sup>And Saul threw the javelin, for he said *to himself*, "I will strike David to the wall *with it*". And David escaped from his presence twice.

to give everything we have to Him and to gladly do anything possible in His service.

**18:5** God was training David for his future position as king. A person who is going to be in authority should first learn to be under authority.

"*Wisely*"—or "successfully" (as it could be translated)—vs 14,30; Gen 39:3,23; 2 Kings 18:7; 2 Chron 20:20; Ps 1:3.

**18:8-9** Saul adds to his other sins the destructive sin of envy. On envy see Prov 14:30; 27:4; Dan 6:3-4; Matt 27:18; Acts 7:9; 13:45; 17:5; Jam 3:16; Rom 13:13-14.

**18:10** "*Evil*"—or "injurious".

"*From God*"—note at 16:14.

"*Prophesied*"—note at Gen 20:7. Evidently Saul was uttering words under the control of the evil spirit. This is a debased kind of prophesying which is common enough in the world.

**18:11** 19:10; 20:33. Since Saul was acting under the control of the evil spirit this was doubtless an attempt by Satan to thwart God's plan for David and the future of Israel. But God enabled David to escape.

<sup>12</sup>And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and had departed from Saul. <sup>13</sup>Therefore Saul removed him from his *presence*, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. <sup>14</sup>And David conducted himself wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him. <sup>15</sup>Therefore, when Saul saw that he conducted himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. <sup>16</sup>But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

<sup>17</sup>And Saul said to David, “See my elder daughter Merab. I will give her to you as *your* wife. Only *serve* me bravely, and fight the LORD’s battles”. For Saul said *to himself*, “Let not my hand be on him, but let the hand of the Philistines be on him”.

<sup>18</sup>And David said to Saul, “Who *am* I? And what *is* my life, or my father’s family in Israel, that I should be a son-in-law of the king?” <sup>19</sup>But it came about at the time when Saul’s daughter Merab should have been given to David, that she was given as a wife to Adriel the Meholathite.

<sup>20</sup>And Saul’s daughter Michal loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. <sup>21</sup>And Saul said, “I will give her to him, so that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him”. Therefore Saul said to David a second time, “Today you will become my son-in-law”.

<sup>22</sup>And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, “Speak with David secretly and say, ‘Look, the king delights in you, and all his servants love you. So now become the king’s son-in-law.’ ”

<sup>23</sup>And Saul’s servants spoke those words in the ears of David. And David said, “Does it seem a *light thing* to you to be a king’s son-in-law, since I *am* a poor man and lightly

esteemed?”

<sup>24</sup>And Saul’s servants told him, saying, “This is the way David spoke”.

<sup>25</sup>And Saul said, “You shall tell David this: ‘The king does not want any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king’s enemies.’ ” But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

<sup>26</sup>And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king’s son-in-law. Before the days had expired, <sup>27</sup>David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, so that he could become the king’s son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michal as *his* wife.

<sup>28</sup>And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and *that* Saul’s daughter Michal loved him. <sup>29</sup>And Saul was even more afraid of David, and Saul became David’s permanent enemy.

<sup>30</sup>Then the leaders of the Philistines came out *to battle*, and after they came out, it happened *that* David conducted himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name *was* highly honoured.

**19** And Saul told his son Jonathan, and all his servants, that they should kill David. <sup>2</sup>But Saul’s son Jonathan greatly delighted in David, and Jonathan told David, saying, “My father Saul is seeking to kill you. Now therefore, please watch out for yourself until morning, and stay in a secret *place* and hide yourself. <sup>3</sup>And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you *are*, and I will talk with my father about you. And I will tell you what I find out”.

<sup>4</sup>And Jonathan spoke well of David to

**18:12** 16:13-14,18; 18:15,29.

**18:13** The ungodly always want to get rid of the godly by some means or other. Saul hoped David would be killed in battle (vs 17,21,25).

**18:14-16** Saul’s plan resulted in the complete opposite of what he had hoped, for it resulted in even further success and popularity for David. Compare Ps 33:10-11; 37:12-13. Note at Gen 50:20.

**18:17** See Saul’s promise at 17:23. He had not fulfilled it. But breaking his word was nothing to a man like Saul.

**18:18** Verse 23; 9:21. Unlike Saul David remained modest to the end (2 Sam 7:18).

**18:23** “*Poor man*”— it was the custom in Israel

for the bridegroom to pay a dowry to the parents of the bride (Gen 34:12; Ex 22:16). Saul names the price in v 25, hoping for David’s death.

**18:27** The Philistines were enemies of God’s people and had no right to be in the land with Israel (Josh 1:4; 13:1-2; 23:4-5). Israel was not to treat the idolatrous nations of Canaan with any respect or pity, but rather to destroy them (Deut 7:16). See note at 15:2.

**18:30** “*David conducted himself more wisely*”— or “David met with more success”.

**19:1** “*Kill*”— 18:10-11,25.

**19:2** “*Greatly delighted*”— 18:1.



his father Saul, and said to him, “May the king not sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his actions toward you *have been* very good. <sup>5</sup>For he put his life in jeopardy and killed the Philistine, and the LORD accomplished a great deliverance for all Israel. You saw *it* and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?”

<sup>6</sup>And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul gave *his* oath, “As the LORD lives, he will not be killed”.

<sup>7</sup>And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

<sup>8</sup>And there was war again, and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and killed them in a great slaughter; and they fled from him.

<sup>9</sup>And the evil spirit from the LORD was on Saul as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand, and David was playing *the harp* with *his* hand. <sup>10</sup>And Saul tried to strike David to the wall with the javelin, but he slipped away from Saul’s presence, and *Saul* struck the javelin into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.

<sup>11</sup>And Saul sent messengers to David’s house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And David’s wife Michal told him, saying, “If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed”. <sup>12</sup>So Michal let David down through a window, and he went out and fled and escaped. <sup>13</sup>And Michal took an idol and laid it in the bed, and put a rug of goats’ *hair* at its head, and

covered it with a cloth.

<sup>14</sup>And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, “He *is* sick”.

<sup>15</sup>And Saul *again* sent the messengers to see David, saying, “Bring him up to me on the bed, so that I can kill him”. <sup>16</sup>And when the messengers went in, they saw that *there* was an idol in the bed, with a rug of goats’ *hair* at its head.

<sup>17</sup>And Saul said to Michal, “Why have you deceived me so, and sent my enemy away, so that he has escaped?” And Michal answered Saul, “He told me, ‘Let me go; why should I kill you?’ ”

<sup>18</sup>So 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. <sup>19</sup>And it was told Saul, saying, “Look, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah”. <sup>20</sup>And Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the group of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *there* as their leader, the Spirit of God came on the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. <sup>21</sup>And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. <sup>22</sup>Then he also went to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu, and asked and said, “Where *are* Samuel and David?” And *someone* said, “Look, *they are* at Naioth in Ramah”.

<sup>23</sup>And he went there, to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God came on him also, and he went on, prophesying, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. <sup>24</sup>And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel,

**19:6** Saul was quick to make oaths, but not to keep them (14:24,44). He was, like Reuben (Gen 49:4), unstable as water.

**19:9** “*Evil*”– or “injurious” – 16:14; 18:10.

**19:10** 18:11.

**19:11** “*Morning*”– David wrote a whole psalm about this event – Psalm 59. In it he claims God as his refuge and is able to praise God in faith.

**19:12** Saul hoped that by giving Michal to David he would be killed (18:25). Instead, she becomes a means of his escape. Note at 18:14-16.

**19:13** “*Idol*”– in Hebrew “teraphim”. It is not recorded where Michal obtained this idol.

**19:14** Josh 2:4-5.

**19:17** Michal was as quick to lie as Saul to make oaths.

**19:18** 7:17.

**19:20** 10:5-6,10.

**19:23** Note at 10:10. He went to kill David and yet here he is prophesying. By this we can see that a certain kind of prophesying, even by the Spirit of God (as here), had nothing to do with the character or life style of the person who did it, and was no mark of spirituality. See also Num 24:2; John 11:49-51.

**19:24** “*Samuel*”– this is the last time we read of Samuel until his death in 25:1. After Saul became king, Samuel retired to Ramah from his administrative responsibilities. But he went out on occasion to deliver God’s message. It seems he lived his last years with a “company of prophets” (v 20), no doubt passing on to younger men the truth he himself had learned. Compare 2 Tim 2:2.

like *the others*, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

**20** And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said to Jonathan, “What have I done? What is my wickedness, and what *is* my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?”

<sup>2</sup>And he said to him, “God forbid! You will not die. Look, my father will do nothing either great or small without telling me, and why should my father hide this thing from me? *It is not so*”.

<sup>3</sup>And David again solemnly swore, saying, “Your father certainly knows that I have found favour in your eyes, and he says, ‘Don’t let Jonathan know this, or he will be grieved.’ But as surely as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, *there is* but a step between me and death”.

<sup>4</sup>Then said Jonathan to David, “I will do for you whatever your soul desires”.

<sup>5</sup>And David said to Jonathan, “Look, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit down to eat with the king. But let me go, so I can hide myself in the field until evening of the third *day*. <sup>6</sup>If your father misses me at all, then say, ‘David earnestly asked *leave* from me so he could run to his city Bethlehem, for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.’ <sup>7</sup>If he speaks like this, ‘*It is well*’, your servant will be safe. But if he becomes very angry, *then* be sure that he is set on evil. <sup>8</sup>Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant. For you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. However, if there is any iniquity in me, kill me yourself; for why should you bring me to your father?”

<sup>9</sup>And Jonathan said, “Far be it from you! For if I knew for a fact that my father was set on bringing evil on you, then would I

not tell you *about it*?”

<sup>10</sup>Then said David to Jonathan, “Who will tell me? Or what *if* your father answers you roughly?”

<sup>11</sup>And Jonathan said to David, “Come, and let us go out into the field”. And both of them went out into the field.

<sup>12</sup>And Jonathan said to David, “The LORD God of Israel *be witness!* When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, *or on* the third *day*, and see *that the situation is* good for David, then if I do not send *word* to you, and tell it to you, <sup>13</sup>the LORD do *harm* and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father *to do* you harm, then I will tell you *about it* and send you away, so *that* you may go in peace. And *may* the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. <sup>14</sup>And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I am still alive, so that I do not die, <sup>15</sup>but *also* you shall never cut off your kindness from my household; no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth”.

<sup>16</sup>So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, “May the LORD demand *an account* at the hand of David’s enemies”. <sup>17</sup>And Jonathan had David take an oath again, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

<sup>18</sup>Then Jonathan said to David, “Tomorrow *is* the new moon, and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. <sup>19</sup>And *when* you have stayed *here* three days, *then* you must go down quickly and come to the place where you hid yourself on the day of the incident, and remain by the stone Ezel. <sup>20</sup>And I will shoot three arrows to the side *of it*, as though I shot at a mark. <sup>21</sup>And, look, I will send a lad, *saying*, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I plainly say to the lad, ‘See, the arrows *are* on this side of you; pick them up’,

“*Night*”— to enable His servants to escape, God can overpower any enemy and make him unable to do any harm. Notes at Gen 31:7; 50:20.

**20:1** The event recorded in 19:24 gave David the opportunity to escape to his friend.

**20:2** Jonathan’s loyalty to his father made him try to think the best of him. In spite of what Saul had said to him (19:1), he could not believe that his father could have such evil intentions against David.

**20:5** “*New moon*”— Num 10:10 (note); 28:11-15. The new moon, the beginning of the month of the lunar calendar used by Israel, was a special

festival time.

**20:6** Apparently once a year families came together to observe a new moon festival.

**20:8** “*Covenant*”— 18:3.

**20:13-15** Jonathan recognized that one day David would be king. See 23:16-17. It was not uncommon in ancient times for kings come newly to the throne to kill all who could be rivals (1 Kings 15:29; 16:11; 2 Kings 10:7; 11:1).

**20:16** If the first covenant was one of friendship (v 42), this was one of allegiance to the future king.

**20:17** 18:1.

then you come; for *there is* peace for you, and no harm, as *sure as* the LORD lives. <sup>22</sup>But if I say this to the young man: ‘See, the arrows *are* beyond you’, go your way, for the LORD is sending you away. <sup>23</sup>And as *for* the matter which you and I have spoken about, look, the LORD *is* witness between you and me forever”.

<sup>24</sup>So David hid himself in the field. And when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. <sup>25</sup>And the king sat on his chair, as at other times, the chair by the wall. And Jonathan got up, and Abner sat down at Saul’s side, but David’s place was empty. <sup>26</sup>Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, “Something has happened to him. He *is* not clean, surely he *is* not clean”. <sup>27</sup>And it happened on the next day, *which was* the second day of the month, that David’s place was empty. And Saul said to his son Jonathan, “Why has not the son of Jesse come to eat, either yesterday or today?”

<sup>28</sup>And Jonathan answered Saul, “David earnestly asked *leave* from me *to go* to Bethlehem. <sup>29</sup>And he said, ‘Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has ordered me *to be there*. And now, if I have found favour in your eyes, please let me go and see my brothers.’ Therefore he has not come to the king’s table”.

<sup>30</sup>Then Saul’s anger burned against Jonathan, and he said to him, “You son of the 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? <sup>31</sup>For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore now send and bring him to me; for he shall surely die”.

<sup>32</sup>And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, “Why should he be killed?

What has he done?” <sup>33</sup>And Saul hurled a javelin at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to kill David.

<sup>34</sup>So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food on the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had dishonoured him.

<sup>35</sup>And it came about in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a small lad was with him. <sup>36</sup>And he said to his lad, “Run, find now the arrows which I am about to shoot”. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. <sup>37</sup>And when the lad went to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad and said, “*Is* not the arrow beyond you?” <sup>38</sup>And Jonathan cried out after the lad, “Hurry! Be quick! Don’t stop!” And Jonathan’s lad gathered up the arrows and came to his master. <sup>39</sup>But the lad did not know anything; only Jonathan and David knew the matter. <sup>40</sup>And Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said to him, “Go, carry *them* to the city”.

<sup>41</sup>As soon as the lad had gone, David arose from the south side *of the place*, and prostrated himself to the ground and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another and wept together, but David’s *grief* was greater.

<sup>42</sup>And Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for both of us have sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘The LORD is a *witness* between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring forever.’ ” And he arose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.

**21** Then David went to Nob to Ahimelech the priest, and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting with David, and said to him,

**20:23** “*Spoken about*”— vs 14-17.

**20:26** “*Not clean*”— Lev 7:20-21; 11:24-25,39,40; Deut 23:10-11. Ceremonial uncleanness made a person ineligible to take part in a sacrificial feast. However, the uncleanness lasted for only a day, so when David did not appear on the second day, Saul knew there was another reason for his absence.

**20:30** “*Anger*”— v 7. In his anger, Saul uses the most bitter language against his son, and is ready to kill him to satisfy his own jealousy. Uncontrolled

jealousy is murderous – Prov 27:4.

**20:32** Envy and hatred do not need good reasons to kill. Compare Matt 27:22-23.

**20:36** Verses 20-22.

**20:41** “*Bowed*”— David showed honor to a true and loyal friend.

**20:42** “*Departed*”— this marks the start of a long period during which David was a fugitive from Saul.

**21:1** Nob was a town of priests (22:19) very near Jerusalem.

“Why are you alone, and no one with you?”

<sup>2</sup>And David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king gave me orders about a matter and said to me, ‘Let no one know anything of the matter about which I am sending you, and what I have commanded you.’ And I have directed *my* servants to such and such a place. <sup>3</sup>So now what do you have on hand? Give five *loaves of bread* into my hand, or whatever is there”.

<sup>4</sup>And the priest answered David and said, “*There is no ordinary bread at hand, but there is consecrated bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women*”.

<sup>5</sup>And David answered the priest and said to him, “Certainly women *have been kept from us about these three days, since I came away, and the vessels of the young men are holy. And the bread is, in a manner of speaking, ordinary, yes, even though it has been consecrated today in the vessel*”.

<sup>6</sup>So the priest gave him consecrated *bread*. For there was no bread there except the Showbread, that had been taken from the presence of the LORD, in order to put hot bread on the day when it was taken away.

<sup>7</sup>Now a man *who was one of Saul’s servants* was there that day, detained before the LORD, and his name was Doeg. *He was an Edomite, the chief of Saul’s shepherds.*

<sup>8</sup>And David said to Ahimelech, “And is there not here a spear or a sword on hand?”

For I have not brought my sword or my weapons with me, because the king’s business required haste”.

<sup>9</sup>And the priest said, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, look, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you wish to take that, take *it*, for *there is none here except that*”. And David said, “*There is none like that. Give it to me*”.

<sup>10</sup>And David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. <sup>11</sup>And the servants of Achish said to him, “*Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another about him in dances, saying, ‘Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?’*”

<sup>12</sup>And David took these words to his heart, and was very afraid of Achish the king of Gath. <sup>13</sup>And he changed his behaviour before them and pretended to be insane in their hands, and made marks on the doors of the gate and let his spit run down on his beard.

<sup>14</sup>Then Achish said to his servants, “Look, you see the man is mad. Why *then* have you brought him to me? <sup>15</sup>Do I have a lack of madmen, that you have brought this *fellow* to play the madman in my presence? Should this *fellow* come into my house?”

**22** So David left there and escaped to the cave Adullam. And when his brothers

**21:2** Why did David invent this story? There seems to be two possibilities. Perhaps his faith and courage failed him. He may have feared that if he told the truth Ahimelech would not help him but report him to Saul. Or it could be that David was trying to protect Ahimelech. He may have thought that Saul would spare him if he was not knowingly involved in David’s escape. In either case, this deception was both wrong and unnecessary. God does not need man’s tricks to fulfill His purposes, but people often seems to think otherwise. See notes at Gen 12:13; 27:18-26. **21:4** Verse 6; Ex 25:30; Lev 24:5-9. This bread had been offered to God and so was only for the priests.

“*Kept themselves from women*”— that is, ceremonially clean (Ex 19:15; Lev 15:18).

**21:6** See Matt 12:3-7. There the Lord Jesus showed that compassion is more important than the letter of the ceremonial law.

**21:7** Doeg went and reported the matter to Saul (22:9-10). This became the occasion of David’s writing Psalm 52. In that psalm he reveals that his faith had not failed (Ps 52:8-9).

**21:9** 17:54.

**21:10** “*Gath*”— one of the five major cities of the Philistines. Ps 34 was written by David after his experience with Achish. Achish is called Abimelech in the title of Psalm 34. Abimelech was probably a title of successive kings as Pharaoh was of Egypt’s kings. David, anointed to be king, is here in exile. Often it may appear that God leads His people in ways opposed to the fulfilling of His purposes, but all is part of His preparation. Consider the experiences of Joseph in Genesis chapters 37–50.

**21:12** “*Afraid*”— very brave men can be afraid in certain situations.

**21:13** This trick also was not necessary, but a man alone and afraid may act strangely on the spur of the moment. Later he acknowledged that his escape was God’s gracious answer to his prayer (Ps 34:4,6,17,19).

**22:1** “*Adullam*”— Gen 38:1; 2 Sam 23:13. This was situated in the hills southwest of Bethlehem. David spent considerable time in the area and may have written Psalms 57 and 142 while there. See 24:3-4, and the titles of those Psalms.

“*Brothers*”— compare 17:28. By now everyone recognized David’s ability.

and all his father's household heard *it*, they went down there to him. <sup>2</sup>And everyone *who* was in distress, and everyone *who* was in debt, and everyone *who* was discontented, gathered around him and he became their leader. And about four hundred men were with him.

<sup>3</sup>And David went from there to Mizpeh in Moab, and said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come over *and be* with you, until I know what God is going to do for me". <sup>4</sup>And he brought them before the king of Moab, and they lived with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.

<sup>5</sup>And the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not remain in the stronghold. Leave and go into the land of Judah". Then David departed and came into the forest of Hareth.

<sup>6</sup>When Saul heard that David and the men *who were* with him had been discovered (now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing around him). <sup>7</sup>Then Saul said to his servants *who were* standing around him, "Listen now, you Benjamites! Is the son of Jesse giving each one of you fields and vineyards, *and* making you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, <sup>8</sup>so that all of you have conspired against me, and no one tells me that my son has made a treaty with the son of Jesse, and none of you is sorry for me, or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in ambush, *as it is today*?"

<sup>9</sup>Then Doeg the Edomite, who had been

appointed over the servants of Saul, answered and said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. <sup>10</sup>And he consulted the LORD for him, and gave him food and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine".

<sup>11</sup>Then the king sent *men* 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. <sup>12</sup>And Saul said, "Listen now, you son of Ahitub". And he answered, "Here I *am*, my lord".

<sup>13</sup>And Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you gave him bread and a sword, and consulted God for him, so that he would rise up against me to lie in ambush, *as it is today*?"

<sup>14</sup>Then Ahimelech answered the king and said, "And among all your servants *who is* as faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and goes on your orders, and is honoured in your house? <sup>15</sup>Did I just begin consulting God for him today? Be it far from me. Let not the king impute anything to his servant *or* to the whole household of my father, for your servant knew nothing whatever of all this".

<sup>16</sup>And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you, and all your father's household".

<sup>17</sup>And the king said to the guardsmen who stood around him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew

**22:2** "*Discontented*"— those unhappy with Saul's reign.

**22:3** "*Moab*"— David's ancestress, Ruth, was a Moabite (Ruth 1:4; 4:13,21,22).

**22:5** "*Gad*"— the first mention of an important prophet in David's time. See 2 Sam 24:11; 1 Chron 29:29; 2 Chron 29:25.

"*Go*"— God knew just where David should be to escape Saul, and informed him through Gad. This was in answer to David's prayer (Ps 142:6). See also Ps 56:4; 118:6; Rom 8:31.

**22:7** Saul appeals for loyalty on two grounds — tribal connection (Saul was from Benjamin, David from Judah), and worldly matters (property and power). Alas, caste and money are often still the chief considerations today, even in Christian circles. True servants of God should avoid these considerations like they would the plague.

**22:8** "*Conspired*"— Saul's disordered mind sees enemies behind every bush.

"*Sorry for me*"— another disagreeable aspect of Saul's character — self-pity.

"*As it is today*"— totally false.

**22:9** "*Doeg*"— 21:1,7. In Psalm 52 (written about Doeg) David says Doeg plotted destruction, loved harmful words, and practiced deceit. What Doeg said to Saul was true but not the whole truth, and it created a false impression. To practice deceit it is not always necessary to tell lies — hiding part of the truth can be just as effective. Both ways of deceiving are hateful to God.

**22:14** This was true. Often those in authority prefer to believe deceptive words rather than the plain truth.

**22:16-19** Reveals Saul totally corrupted by power and envy.

**22:17** Saul's guards were right in their refusal to obey. When the choice is between obeying God or man, God must be obeyed. Compare Acts 4:19; 5:29.

when he fled, and did not tell it to me". But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to attack the priests of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>And the king said to Doeg, "You turn and attack the priests". And Doeg the Edomite turned and attacked the priests, and on that day killed eighty-five persons who wore a linen ephod. <sup>19</sup>And he struck Nob, the city of the priests, with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and infants, and oxen and donkeys and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

<sup>20</sup>And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. <sup>21</sup>And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the LORD's priests. <sup>22</sup>And David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have brought about *the death* of all the persons of your father's household. <sup>23</sup>You stay with me. Don't be afraid, for the one who is seeking my life is seeking your life, but you *will be safe with me*".

**23** Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and they are robbing the threshing floors". <sup>2</sup>Therefore David consulted the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah".

<sup>3</sup>And David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?"

<sup>4</sup>Then David consulted the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will

deliver the Philistines into your hands". <sup>5</sup>So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and struck them down with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. <sup>6</sup>And it so happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, *that he came down with an ephod in his hand*.

<sup>7</sup>And it was told Saul that David had gone to Keilah. And Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hands, for by entering a town that has gates and bars, he is closed in". <sup>8</sup>And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.

<sup>9</sup>And David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him, and he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here". <sup>10</sup>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 account of me. <sup>11</sup>Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hands? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech you, tell your servant". And the LORD said, "He will come down".

<sup>12</sup>Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hands of Saul?" And the LORD said, "They will deliver *you up*".

<sup>13</sup>Then David and his men, *who were* about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. And it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, and he decided not to go *there*.

<sup>14</sup>And David stayed in the desert in strongholds, and remained in a mountain in the desert of Ziph. And Saul looked for

**22:18** See 2:31.

**22:19** Saul was not willing to kill God's enemies (15:9), but God's priests were a different matter.

**22:20** 23:6,9; 1 Kings 2:26-27.

**22:22** David's meaning may be that he made a mistake in not dealing with Doeg at the time. Or it may be he meant that his very appeal to Ahimelech for help resulted in this tragedy.

**23:1** "*Keilah*"— a town belonging to Israel near the Philistine border.

**23:2** "*Consulted*"— 2 Sam 5:19,23. David made a practice of finding God's will before acting. Observe that David, though persecuted by Saul, is concerned for others, and desires to help them, leaving his own situation in the hands of the Lord.

**23:4** When others were in doubt David sought

confirmation of God's will.

**23:6** In Israel in those days it was possible to find God's will by means of the Urim and Thummin in the ephod. Note at Ex 28:30. In these days the Holy Spirit is willing to infallibly guide the earnest believer.

**23:7** "*God*"— God had departed from Saul (16:14), and the kingdom had been stripped from him (15:28). But he still vainly imagined God is working with him in his murderous designs! Another illustration of Jer 17:9.

**23:9-12** Verse 6. An example of using the Urim and Thummin.

**23:13** "*Six hundred*"— 22:2. David's men were growing in number.

**23:14** 26:2; Ps 32:7.

him every day, but God did not delivered him into his hands.

<sup>15</sup>And David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life; and David was in the desert of Ziph in a wooded area. <sup>16</sup>And Saul's son Jonathan arose and went to David in the woods, and strengthened his hand in God. <sup>17</sup>And he said to him, "Do not be afraid, for the hand of my father Saul will not find you. And you will be king over Israel, and I will be next to you. And my father Saul also knows this". <sup>18</sup>And the two of them made a covenant before the LORD, and David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his house.

<sup>19</sup>Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is not David hiding himself among us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hachilah, which is south of Jeshimon? <sup>20</sup>Now therefore, O king, come down whenever it pleases you to come down, and our part will be to deliver him into the king's hand".

<sup>21</sup>And Saul said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, for you have compassion on me. <sup>22</sup>Please go, make further preparations, and find out and take a look at his place, where his feet take him and who has seen him there, for I have been told that he is very cunning. <sup>23</sup>Therefore look and learn about all the lurking places where he hides himself, and come back to me with definite information, and I will go with you. And it will be, if he is in the land, that I will search him out through all the thousands of Judah".

<sup>24</sup>And they arose and went to Ziph before Saul, but David and his men were in the desert of Maon, in the plain south of Jeshimon. <sup>25</sup>And Saul and his men went to look for him. And they told David, so he came down to the rock and stayed in the desert of Maon. And when Saul heard that,

he pursued David in the desert of Maon.

<sup>26</sup>And Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain, and David was hurrying to get away for fear of Saul, for Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to take them. <sup>27</sup>But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land". <sup>28</sup>Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines. So they called that place Sela Hammahlekoth. <sup>29</sup>And David went up from there and stayed in strongholds at Engedi.

**24** And it happened, when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Look, David is in the desert of Engedi". <sup>2</sup>Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to look for David and his men at the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

<sup>3</sup>And he came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. And David and his men were sitting far back in the cave. <sup>4</sup>And David's men said to him, "See, this is the day about which the LORD said to you: 'Look, I will deliver your enemy into your hands, so that you can do to him as seems good to you.'" Then David got up, and stealthily cut off the edge of Saul's robe.

<sup>5</sup>And it so happened afterwards that David was conscience-stricken, because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe. <sup>6</sup>And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the anointed of the LORD". <sup>7</sup>So David held back his men with these words and did not allow them to rise against Saul. Then Saul arose, left the cave

**23:16** "Jonathan arose and went to David"— note at 18:3-4.

**23:18** 18:3; 20:12-17; 2 Sam 9:1; 21:7.

**23:19** At this time David wrote Psalm 54 by inspiration of God's Spirit, in which he revealed the character of his enemies (v 3), and declared his own trust in God (vs 4,7).

**23:21** "The LORD"— v 7. The men of Ziph would not be blessed by trying to destroy God's anointed! Saul had no right even to take God's name on his lips. Compare Ps 50:16-17; Isa 29:13.

**23:26** God has many ways to protect His people. See Gen 37:22,26,27; 1 Kings 18:13; Esther 6:1-2; Jer 38:7-10; Dan 3:25-26; 6:21-23; Acts 12:5-11.

**23:28** "Sela Hammahlekoth"— means "rock of parting".

**24:4** "The LORD said to you"— there is no record of God saying this to David. God's way for David to attain the throne was not by murder and violence, and David knew it. His tender conscience was bothered even by the simple act of cutting of the hem of Saul's garment. God's purposes must be fulfilled in God's way, and men should learn to wait on God in faith. See Ps 33:20; 37:9,34; 59:3.

**24:5** "David was conscience-stricken"— literally, "David's heart struck him".

**24:6** 26:11.

and went on *his* way.

<sup>8</sup>Afterwards David also stood up and went out of the cave, and cried out after Saul, saying, “My lord the king!” And when Saul looked behind him, David bent over with his face toward the ground and bowed down. <sup>9</sup>And David said to Saul, “Why do you listen to men’s words, saying, ‘Look, David is seeking to harm you?’” <sup>10</sup>Look, today your eyes have seen how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. And *some* told *me* to kill you, but I spared you, and said, ‘I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he *is* the LORD’s anointed.’

<sup>11</sup>“Moreover, my father, look, yes, see the edge of your robe in my hand. Because in my cutting off the edge of your robe and not killing you, you can know and understand that *there is* no evil or rebellion in my hand, and that I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. <sup>12</sup>The LORD will judge between me and you, and the LORD will take vengeance for me on you. But my hand will not be against you. <sup>13</sup>As the proverb of the ancients says, ‘Wickedness comes from the wicked’, but my hand will not be against you.

<sup>14</sup>“After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? After a dead dog, after a flea. <sup>15</sup>Therefore may the LORD be the judge, and judge between me and you, and see and plead my cause, and rescue me out of your hands”.

<sup>16</sup>And it came about, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, “Is this your voice, my son David?” And Saul raised his voice and wept. <sup>17</sup>And he said to David, “You are more righteous

than I, for you have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. <sup>18</sup>And you have showed today how you have treated me well, for when the LORD delivered me into your hands, you did not kill me. <sup>19</sup>For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore the LORD reward you well for what you have done for me this day. <sup>20</sup>And now, look, I well know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. <sup>21</sup>Therefore now swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father’s house”.

<sup>22</sup>And David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

**25** And Samuel died, and all the Israelites assembled and mourned for him and buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

<sup>2</sup>And *there was* a man in Maon whose possessions *were* in Carmel, and the man was very rich. He had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats, and he sheared his sheep in Carmel. <sup>3</sup>Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife was Abigail; and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful appearance. But the man was mean and evil in his dealings; and he was a *descendant* of the house of Caleb.

<sup>4</sup>And David in the wilderness heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep. <sup>5</sup>And David sent out ten young men, and David said to the young men, “Go up to Carmel and approach

**24:8** David showed that he was willing to submit to Saul’s authority and respect him as king.

**24:9** 22:13.

**24:11** “Father”– 18:27.

**24:12** “Judge”– v 15; Gen 31:53; Jud 11:27; Job 5:8. David was confident that God would work everything out according to perfect justice. Compare the behavior of the Lord Jesus (1 Pet 2:21-23).

“Vengeance”– Ex 21:23-25; Num 31:2; Ps 94:1.

**24:13** Compare Matt 7:16-20.

**24:16** Saul was mentally and emotionally unstable, an example of the man in Jam 1:8. This was a result of his sin and disobedience – as it so often is among human beings. His remorse here is an example of false repentance. Afterwards he again pursued David to kill him (26:1-2).

**24:17** 26:21.

**24:20** 23:17.

**24:21** 20:14-17; 2 Sam 21:5-9.

**24:22** David had no confidence in Saul’s seeming repentance.

**25:1** “Mourned”– they recognized Samuel as a great man and a great leader. Compare Gen 50:10; Num 20:29; Deut 34:8.

**25:2** 23:24.

**25:3** Nabal means “fool”. See v 25, and note at Ps 14:1 where the same word is used in Hebrew. Very intelligent men can be fools in the Bible sense of the word. Abigail means “father of joy”.

“Caleb”– it is sad that a descendant of the faithful Caleb (Num 13:30; 14:24; Josh 14:6-14) should be a fool. Alas, a man’s sinful nature is inherited by his descendants (Gen 5:3; Ps 51:5), but not any spiritual qualities he may have attained by God’s grace.



Nabal and greet him in my name. <sup>6</sup>And you are to say this: ‘Long life to you! Peace *be* to you, and peace *be* to your household and peace *be* to all that you have!

<sup>7</sup>“And now I have heard that you have shearers. Now your shepherds *were* with us. All the time they were at Carmel we did them no harm, and nothing of theirs was missing. <sup>8</sup>Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let *our* young men find favour in your eyes, for we come on a good day. Please give to your servants, and to your son David, whatever you find at hand.’ ”

<sup>9</sup>And when David’s young men arrived, they spoke to Nabal all those words in the name of David, and waited.

<sup>10</sup>And Nabal answered David’s servants and said, “Who *is* David? And who *is* the son of Jesse? There are many servants today, each man breaking away from his master. <sup>11</sup>Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give *it* to men who *are* from I know not where?”

<sup>12</sup>So David’s young men turned around and went on their way again, and came and told him all these words. <sup>13</sup>And David said to his men, “Each one of you fasten on his sword”. And each one of them fastened on his sword, and David also fastened on his sword. And about four hundred men followed David, and two hundred stayed with the baggage.

<sup>14</sup>But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal’s wife, saying, “Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he screamed at them. <sup>15</sup>But the men *were* very good to us, and we were not harmed, and while we were in the fields we did not miss anything, as long as we went about with them. <sup>16</sup>They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we

were with them, keeping the sheep. <sup>17</sup>Now therefore know *this* and consider what you should do. For something bad is being devised against our master and against his whole household, for he *is such* a wicked man that *no one* can speak to him”.

<sup>18</sup>Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves and two wineskins of wine and five sheep already dressed and five measures of roasted grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and placed *them* on donkeys. <sup>19</sup>And she said to her servants, “Go on ahead of me. See, I am coming after you”. But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

<sup>20</sup>And it *so* happened, as she rode on the donkey, that she came down by a hidden place in the hill, and there appeared David and his men coming down opposite her, and she met them. <sup>21</sup>Now David had said, “It certainly has been useless for me to guard all that this *fellow* has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *belonged* to him. For he has repaid me evil for good. <sup>22</sup>May God do *harm* and more also to the enemies of David, if, of all who *belong* to him, I leave any male *alive* until morning light”.

<sup>23</sup>And when Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey, and prostrated herself before David and bowed down to the ground, <sup>24</sup>and fell at his feet and said, “On me, my lord, *let this* blame *be on* me; and please let your maid servant speak in your hearing, and listen to the words of your maidservant. <sup>25</sup>Please, may my lord pay no attention to this wicked man Nabal, for he *is* just like his name. His name *is* Nabal, and folly *is* with him. But I, your maid servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent.

<sup>26</sup>“Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, since the LORD has kept you from bloodshed, and from

**25:7** David had not only refused to steal from Nabal’s shepherds, he kept others from stealing from them. He thought Nabal would recognize this and reward it.

**25:10-11** Nabal showed he was indeed a fool.

**25:13** See vs 21,22. David had not taken vengeance on Saul, but now determined to personally avenge himself on Nabal – a thing he knew was contrary to God’s Word. When even a godly man gives in to bad passions which arise from his sinful nature he is capable of all manner of sin and foolishness. Not one man on earth,

except the Lord Jesus, was ever fully consistent all his days.

**25:18** Abigail realized that David’s anger could have terrible results and set out to avert them.

**25:19** “*Husband*” – in his folly he would have forbidden her to go.

**25:21** Ps 109:5.

**25:22** Even David who loved justice could be moved to act unjustly, and resolved to kill many because of the insult of one. Oh, such is man, even the best of men.

**25:24** Prov 15:1.

taking vengeance for yourself with your own hand, may your enemies and those who seek to harm my lord, be like Nabal. <sup>27</sup>And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. <sup>28</sup>Please forgive the trespass of your maid servant, for the LORD will certainly make a sure house for my lord, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and no evil has been found in you *all* your days. <sup>29</sup>Yet a man has risen to pursue you and to seek your life. But the soul of my lord will be bound up in the bundle of life with the LORD your God, but he will hurl away the souls of your enemies, *as from* the pocket of a sling. <sup>30</sup>And it will be, when the LORD does for my lord all the good that he has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, <sup>31</sup>that this will not become a grief to you or reason for a troubled heart to my lord, that you have shed blood needlessly or that my lord has taken vengeance for himself. And when the LORD deals well with my lord, then remember your maid servant”.

<sup>32</sup>And David said to Abigail, “Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel who sent you today to meet me, <sup>33</sup>and may your discernment *be* blessed, and *may* you *be* blessed, who have kept me today from bloodshed and from taking vengeance for myself with my own hand. <sup>34</sup>For indeed, *as* the LORD God of Israel lives, who has kept me from harming you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, by morning light there certainly would not have been left to Nabal any male”.

<sup>35</sup>So David took from her hand what she

had brought him, and said to her, “Go up in peace to your house. See, I have listened to your voice and have accepted you”.

<sup>36</sup>And Abigail came to Nabal and saw that he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal’s heart was merry within him, and he was very drunk. Therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until the morning light. <sup>37</sup>But it came about in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him and he became like a stone. <sup>38</sup>And it happened about ten days *later* that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.

<sup>39</sup>And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Blessed *be* the LORD who has pleaded my cause concerning the reproach at the hands of Nabal, and has kept his servant from evil. For the LORD has returned the wickedness of Nabal onto his own head”. And David sent a message to Abigail about taking her as his wife.

<sup>40</sup>And when the servants of David had come to Abigail to Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, “David sent us to you to take you as his wife”.

<sup>41</sup>And she arose, and bowed down with *her* face to the ground, and said, “See your maid servant. *She will be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord”. <sup>42</sup>And Abigail hurriedly got up and rode on a donkey, with her five maids who attended her, and she followed the messengers of David, and became his wife. <sup>43</sup>David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them were his wives. <sup>44</sup>But Saul had given Michal

**25:26** “*Vengeance*”— Lev 19:18; Num 31:2; Deut 32:35; Ps 94:1; Matt 5:39; Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30.

**25:28** “*A sure house*”— a royal dynasty. Abigail had great perception.

“*Battles of the LORD*”— against the enemies of Israel.

“*No evil*”— to keep David from doing wrong was a chief aim of her coming.

**25:29** Ps 91:9-10; 121:7; Isa 25:4; Phil 1:6; 2 Tim 1:12.

**25:30** 13:14; 15:28.

**25:31** “*Grief*”, “*troubled heart*”— to a good man with a tender conscience like David, this would have been the result.

**25:32** David recognized her as a messenger of God and praises the One who sent her. All men should be this quick to praise God when kept from doing wrong.

**25:33-34** David fully confesses his evil intention and immediately forsakes it – the mark of a spiritual man who wants God’s best.

**25:38** “*Struck*”— 2:6; Gen 38:7,10; Lev 10:1-2; Num 16:31,35; Acts 5:4-5,10. God can take vengeance on wicked men directly. To slay Nabal He did not need David’s sword – He has His own (Deut 32:41; Ps 7:12; Jer 12:12). God’s judgment on Nabal may well have confirmed David in his view that God would deal with Saul also when the time came. See 26:10.

**25:39** Ps 7:15-16.

**25:42-44** Abigail became David’s third wife, after Michal (18:27), and Ahinoam (27:3; 30:5). Later he married five other women. In this he was not a good example but a bad one (note at Gen 30:1). Eventually it brought great trouble on himself and his family. See 2 Sam 13; 15; 1 Kings 5—7.

his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

**26** And the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is not David hiding himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is before Jeshimon?*"

<sup>2</sup>Then Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. <sup>3</sup>And Saul camped by the road at the hill of Hachilah, *which is before Jeshimon*. But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. <sup>4</sup>David therefore sent out spies, and found out that Saul had indeed arrived.

<sup>5</sup>And David arose and came to the place where Saul was camping; and David saw the place where Saul and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army, were lying. And Saul was lying inside the lines, and the people were camped all around him. <sup>6</sup>Then David answered and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, the brother to Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul at the camp?" And Abishai said, "I will go down with you".

<sup>7</sup>So David and Abishai came to the people at night and saw that Saul lay sleeping inside the lines, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people lay all around him. <sup>8</sup>Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now therefore please let me strike him with the spear into the ground at once, and I will not *strike* him the second time".

<sup>9</sup>And David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed and be innocent?" <sup>10</sup>David also said, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day to die will come, or he will go down to the battle and perish. <sup>11</sup>The LORD forbid

that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But please now take the spear that *is* at his head and the jug of water, and let us go".

<sup>12</sup>So David took the spear and the jug of water from near Saul's head and they went away. And no man saw *it* or knew *it*, and no one woke up, for they *were* all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

<sup>13</sup>Then David went over to the other side and stood on the top of a hill at a distance, *with* a wide space between them. <sup>14</sup>And David cried out to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Abner! Will you not answer?" Then Abner answered and said, "Who *are* you *who* calls to the king?"

<sup>15</sup>And David said to Abner, "Are you not a *brave* man? Who *is* like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy your lord the king. <sup>16</sup>This thing you have done *is* not good. As the LORD lives, you *deserve* to die, because you have not guarded your master, the LORD's anointed. And now look! Where *is* the king's spear, and the jug of water that was at his head?"

<sup>17</sup>And Saul recognized David's voice, and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And David said, "It *is* my voice, my lord, O king". <sup>18</sup>And he said, "Why does my lord pursue his servant like this? For what have I done? Or what evil *is* in my hands? <sup>19</sup>Now therefore please let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let him accept an offering. But *if it is* the children of men, *may they be* cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out today from living in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' <sup>20</sup>Now therefore, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD, for the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when someone hunts a partridge in the mountains".

**26:1** 23:19. See Psalm 54, written when David heard that the Ziphites had betrayed him to Saul.  
**26:2** Note at 24:16.

**26:6** "Hittite"—note at Gen 26:34-35. Uriah also was a Hittite (2 Sam 11:3).

"Zeruiah"—an older sister of David.

**26:8** 24:4-7. David's first concern was not for his own safety, but to be blameless before God.  
**26:10** 25:38.

**26:12** "All asleep"—God gave David further opportunity to prove his innocence to Saul.

**26:17** 24:16.

**26:19** "Driven me out"—men were trying to drive David from Israel, the land of the one true God, to another land where false gods were worshiped. Compare the alarm of the tribes of Reuben and Gad in Josh 22:24-27.

<sup>21</sup>Then Saul said, “I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no longer harm you, because my life was precious in your eyes today. Look, I have played the fool and have erred exceedingly”.

<sup>22</sup>And David answered and said, “See the king’s spear! Let one of the young men come over and get it. <sup>23</sup>The LORD repays every man *according to* his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into *my* hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD’s anointed. <sup>24</sup>And, look, as your life was very valuable today in my eyes, so let my life be very valuable in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all trouble”.

<sup>25</sup>Then Saul said to David, “*May you be blessed, my son David! You will both do great things and also prevail*”. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

**27** And David said in his heart, “I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul. *There is nothing better for me than to escape quickly to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of seeking me any more in any territory of Israel. So I will escape out of his hands*”.

<sup>2</sup>And David arose and crossed over with the six hundred men who were with him to Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath. <sup>3</sup>And David stayed with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, David with his two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail from Carmel, Nabal’s wife. <sup>4</sup>And it was told Saul that David had

fled to Gath and he did not search any more for him.

<sup>5</sup>And David said to Achish, “If I have now found favour in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, so that I can live there; for why should your servant live in the royal city with you?”

<sup>6</sup>Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day. Therefore Ziklag belongs to the kings of Judah to this day. <sup>7</sup>And the time that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

<sup>8</sup>And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites and the Gezrites and the Amalekites, for in former times those *nations were* the inhabitants of the land as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>And David attacked the land and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep and the oxen and the donkeys and the camels and the clothing, and turned back and came to Achish.

<sup>10</sup>And Achish said, “Where have you made a raid today?” And David said, “Against the south of Judah and against the south of the Jerahmeelites and against the south of the Kenites”. <sup>11</sup>And David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring *news* to Gath, saying, “Or they will tell about us, saying, ‘This is the way David acted, and this *will be* his way all the time he lives in the country of the Philistines.’ ”

<sup>12</sup>And Achish believed David, saying, “He has made his people Israel to utterly abhor him; therefore he will be my servant forever”.

**26:21** There are many ways to confess one’s sins, but only one way is acceptable to God – 15:24,30; Ex 9:27; Num 22:34; Josh 7:20; 2 Sam 12:13; 24:10; Matt 27:4; Luke 15:21. See 2 Chron 7:14; Prov 28:13; Isa 55:7.

“Return” – David did not trust him (24:22). He well knew Saul’s instability.

**26:23** Ps 7:8; 18:25-26; 62:12; Rev 22:12.

**26:25** Even Saul had to acknowledge David’s greatness. As far as we know, Saul and David never met again after this parting.

**27:1** David had no reason to trust Saul, but he had much reason to trust God more than he did. This was a failure of faith, and was contrary to what David had written and believed (Ps 54:4,7; 56:3-4; 57:2-3,7). Even men of great faith may sometimes waver under continual pressure and depressing circumstances. And do not all of us have reason to use words such as are found in Mark 9:24?

**27:2** Achish had once driven David away (21:10-15). Now he receives him, thinking to use him for his own purposes (v 12; 28:1).

**27:3** This flight of David to the land of the Philistines and his attaching himself to Achish were completely unnecessary, and involved David in further difficulties.

**27:5** David did not want to be under Achish’s control. He well knew Achish would direct him to do things he would not wish to do.

**27:8** David and his men had raided common enemies of the Philistines and Israel.

“*Amalekites*” – Ex 17:16.

**27:9** Deut 7:16; Josh 6:21; 8:1-2,24. Note at Gen 6:7. In David’s case he had a further reason for destroying those people (v 11).

**27:10** One failure (v 1) leads to another. Even though Achish was an idolatrous king of an enemy people, David was wrong to practice this deception.

**28** And it came about in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, “Know for certain that you will go out with me to the battle, you and your men”.

<sup>2</sup>And David said to Achish, “You will really find out what your servant can do”. And Achish said to David, “Therefore I will make you my bodyguard forever”.

<sup>3</sup>Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put away mediums and spiritists from the land.

<sup>4</sup>And the Philistines gathered together and came and camped in Shunem, and Saul gathered all Israel together and they camped in Gilboa. <sup>5</sup>And when Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart greatly trembled. <sup>6</sup>And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, not by dreams or by Urim or by prophets. <sup>7</sup>Then Saul said to his servants, “Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and consult her”. And his servants said to him, “Look, *there is* a woman at Endor who is a medium”.

<sup>8</sup>And Saul disguised himself and put on different clothes, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman at night, and he said, “Please use divination

for me by a spirit, and bring up for me *the one whom I name to you*”.

<sup>9</sup>And the woman said to him, “Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off mediums and spiritists from the land. So why are you laying a snare for my life, to cause my death?”

<sup>10</sup>And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, “As the LORD lives, no punishment will come to you for this thing”.

<sup>11</sup>Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” And he said, “Bring up Samuel for me”.

<sup>12</sup>And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, “Why have you deceived me? For you *are* Saul”.

<sup>13</sup>And the king said to her, “Do not be afraid. For what did you see?” And the woman said to Saul, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth”.

<sup>14</sup>And he said to her, “What *is* his appearance *like*?” And she said, “An old man is coming up, and he *is* wrapped in a cloak”. And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bent over with *his* face toward the ground and bowed down.

<sup>15</sup>And Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me, to bring me up?” And Saul answered, “I am very distressed, for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not

**28:1** 27:2. David was in a very awkward situation, faced with fighting against God’s people with their enemies. God in mercy delivered him from this (chapter 29).

**28:3** Strict instructions are given in the Old Testament against trying to have dealings with the realm of spirits, and sorcerers and sorceresses were to be put to death. Notes at Ex 22:18; Deut 18:10-14.

**28:4** Shunem was in the plain of Megiddo, or Mageddon, also called Jezreel. Mt Gilboa is a range of hills to the east of the plain.

**28:5** If Saul had kept close to the Lord he would not have been afraid of the Philistines (Heb 13:6).

**28:6** “*Did not answer*”— Saul had demonstrated many times that he was disobedient to God and wanted his own way. There comes a time when God will no longer answer such people. If we ignore God we have no right to expect Him to save us out of our troubles. See Ps 66:18; Prov 1:24-31; 15:29; Isa 1:15; 59:2; John 9:31; 1 John 3:21-22. This verse speaks of three ways God revealed His will in Old Testament days.

“*Dreams*”— Gen 15:12; 28:12; Num 12:6.

“*Urim*”— Ex 28:30.

“*Prophets*”— 15:16; Deut 18:18-22.

**28:7** Saul’s disobedience was the reason God would not answer him. He shows his character by going further into disobedience. This time it cost him his life. See 1 Chron 10:13-14.

**28:12** It is not said that the woman brought up Samuel, only that she saw him. Samuel’s appearance was a great shock to her and made her realize that this was God’s doing. It seems clear that the person who came up was indeed Samuel. It is said that she saw him, and the message he brought was later completely fulfilled. The case of the witch at Endor was unique in that God’s purpose was to be accomplished. Spirit mediums... but there is no good reason to think that today they can contact any spirit of a human being who has died.

**28:13** “*gods*”— this was the impression the event created in the mind of this superstitious woman. She thought some sort of divine beings were appearing.

**28:14** 15:27.

**28:15** For the righteous, the realm of the dead was a place of quietness and rest. Compare Job 3:17.

answer me any more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have called you, so that you may tell me what I should do”.

<sup>16</sup>Then Samuel said, “Then why do you consult me, since the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? <sup>17</sup>And the LORD has done for him just as he spoke through me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom from your hand and given it to your neighbour, to David, <sup>18</sup>because you did not obey the voice of the LORD, or execute his fierce wrath on Amalek. Therefore the LORD has done this thing to you today. <sup>19</sup>Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel, along with you, into the hands of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons *will be* with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines”.

<sup>20</sup>Then immediately Saul fell prostrate on the ground, and was very afraid, because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had not eaten any bread all day and all night.

<sup>21</sup>And the woman came to Saul, and saw that he was very troubled and said to him, “Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have listened to your words which you spoke to me. <sup>22</sup>So now please listen also to the voice of your maidservant, and let me set a piece of bread before you, and eat, so that you can have strength when you go on your way”.

<sup>23</sup>But he refused and said, “I will not eat”. But his servants, together with the woman, pressed him, and he listened to their voice. So he arose from the ground and sat on the bed.

<sup>24</sup>And the woman had a fat calf in the house, and she hurriedly killed it, and took flour and kneaded *it* and baked unleavened bread with it. <sup>25</sup>And she brought *it* to Saul and to his servants, and they ate. Then they got up and went away that night.

**29** Now the Philistines gathered all their armies together at Aphek, and the Israelites camped by a spring which is in Jezreel. <sup>2</sup>And the lords of the Philistines

marched on, by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men marched on in the rear with Achish.

<sup>3</sup>Then said the commanders of the Philistines, “What *are* these Hebrews *doing here?*” And Achish said to the Philistine commanders, “Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or *indeed* these years? And I have found no fault in him since he deserted *to me* to this day”.

<sup>4</sup>But the Philistine commanders were angry with him, and the Philistine commanders said to him, “Make this fellow go back, so that he will return to his place which you have assigned him, and do not let him go down with us to fight. *Otherwise* in the battle he may become our enemy. For with what would he regain his master’s favour, *if* not with the heads of these men? <sup>5</sup>Is this not David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying, ‘Saul killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?’”

<sup>6</sup>Then Achish called David and said to him, “As the LORD lives, you have certainly been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army *has been* good in my sight, for I have not found evil in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. However, you are not acceptable to the lords. <sup>7</sup>Therefore return now, and go in peace, so that you do not displease the Philistine lords”.

<sup>8</sup>And David said to Achish, “But what have I done? And what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you to this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?”

<sup>9</sup>And Achish answered and said to David, “I know that you *are* good in my sight, like an angel of God. However, the Philistine commanders have said, ‘He shall not go up with us to the battle.’ <sup>10</sup>So now rise up early in the morning with your master’s servants who have come with you, and leave as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light”.

<sup>11</sup>So David and his men rose up early in the morning to leave *and* to return to the

**28:16** “*Enemy*”— Saul’s behavior had made God his enemy. See also Isa 63:10; Jer 21:5; Lam 2:5. **28:18** 15:20.

**28:19** “*Will be with me*”— in death’s realm.

**29:1-7** Note at 28:1. This was God’s way of saving David from the sin of fighting against

God’s people.

**29:5** 18:7; 21:11.

**29:8** David kept up his pretense of loyalty to Achish. No doubt inwardly he was rejoicing in this escape from going into battle against Israel.

land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

**30** And it came about when David and his men had come to Ziklag on the third day, *they saw* that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and had attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, <sup>2</sup>and had taken captive the women who *had been* in it. They did not kill any, either great or small, but carried *them* off and went on their way.

<sup>3</sup>So David and his men came to the city and saw *that it had been* burned with fire, and *that* their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive. <sup>4</sup>Then David and the people who *were* with him raised their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. <sup>5</sup>And David's two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail the wife of Nabal from Carmel, had been taken captive. <sup>6</sup>And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of every one of the people was grieved, each man for his sons and for his daughters. But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

<sup>7</sup>And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me". And Abiathar brought the ephod there to David. <sup>8</sup>And David consulted the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue after this troop? Will I overtake them?" And he answered him, "Pursue, for you will certainly overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*".

<sup>9</sup>So David went, he and the six hundred men who *were* with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind stayed, <sup>10</sup>but David continued to pursue, he and four hundred men. But two hundred, who were so weary that they could not cross the brook Besor, stayed behind.

<sup>11</sup>And they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he ate, and they gave him water to drink, <sup>12</sup>and they gave him a piece

of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And when he had eaten, his spirit revived in him, for he had not eaten bread or drunk any water for three days and three nights.

<sup>13</sup>And David said to him, "To whom do you belong? From where do you come?" And he said, "I *am* a young man from Egypt, a servant of an Amalekite. And my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. <sup>14</sup>We made a raid on the south of the Kerethites and on *the territory* which *belongs* to Judah and on the south of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire".

<sup>15</sup>And David said to him, "Can you take me down to that troop?" 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 take you down to that troop".

<sup>16</sup>And when he had brought him down, there *they were* spread out all over the ground, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great plunder that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines and out of the land of Judah. <sup>17</sup>And David struck them down from twilight to the evening of the next day, and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. <sup>18</sup>And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. <sup>19</sup>And there was nothing of theirs missing, either small or great, either sons or daughters, or plunder, or anything that they had taken for themselves. David recovered all. <sup>20</sup>And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drove ahead of the *other* livestock, and said, "This *is* David's plunder".

<sup>21</sup>And David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they had stay at the brook Besor. And they went out to meet David and to meet the people who *were* with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them. <sup>22</sup>Then all the wicked men and evil scoundrels among those who had gone with David, answered and

**30:1** "Amalekites"— 15:2,7; 27:8.

**30:6** "Spoke of stoning him"— this is an indication of the fickleness and un-spirituality of some of the people who gathered around David. Compare Ex 17:4; Num 14:5,10; John 8:59.

"Encouraged himself" or "found strength" — Ps 18:1-2; 27:1; 29:11; 37:39; 46:1.

**30:7** 23:2,4,9.

**30:18-20** This was in accordance with God's good

promise in v 8. When believers lose ground in the spiritual life, by God's grace it is possible for them to regain it (Ps 51:12; Isa 57:17-19; Jer 30:17; Joel 2:25; Gal 6:1; Rev 2:4-5). Actually David gained more than he had before; he took all that had belonged to the Amalekites.

**30:22** "Evil scoundrels"— v 6; 22:2. Every leader has to beware of such people trying to join his ranks.

said, “Because they did not go with us, we will not give them *any* of the plunder that we have recovered, except to each man his wife and his children, so that they can lead *them* away and leave”.

<sup>23</sup>Then said David, “My brethren, you must not do so with what has been given us by the LORD, who has preserved us and delivered the troop that came against us into our hands. <sup>24</sup>And who will listen to you in this matter? But the portion of the one who stayed with the baggage *will be* the same as the portion of the one who went down to the battle. They shall share alike”. <sup>25</sup>And so it was from that day on. He made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

<sup>26</sup>And when David came to Ziklag, he sent *some* of the plunder to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, “Look, a present for you from the plunder from the enemies of the LORD”.

<sup>27</sup>He sent to *those* who were in Bethel, and to *those* who were in south Ramoth, and to *those* who were in Jattir, <sup>28</sup>and to *those* who were in Aroer, and to *those* who were in Siphmoth, and to *those* who were in Eshtemoa, <sup>29</sup>and to *those* who were in Rachal, and to *those* who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *those* who were in the cities of the Kenites, <sup>30</sup>and to *those* who were in Hormah, and to *those* who were in Korashan, and to those who were in Athach, <sup>31</sup>and to *those* who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men had gone about.

**31** Now the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. <sup>2</sup>And the Philistines closely pursued Saul and his sons, and the Philistines killed

Jonathan and Abinadab and Melchishua, Saul’s sons. <sup>3</sup>And the battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was badly wounded by the archers.

<sup>4</sup>Then Saul said to his armour bearer, “Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, or these uncircumcised *men* will come and pierce me through and abuse me”. But his armour bearer would not, for he was very afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. <sup>5</sup>And when his armour bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him. <sup>6</sup>So Saul and his three sons and his armour bearer and all his men died together that same day.

<sup>7</sup>And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, and *those* who were on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned the cities and fled. And the Philistines came and stayed in them.

<sup>8</sup>And it came about the next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. <sup>9</sup>And they cut off his head and stripped off his armour, and sent *word* into the land of the Philistines all around, to proclaim *it in* the temple of their idols and among the people. <sup>10</sup>And they put his armour in the temple of Ashtaroth and fastened his body to the wall of Beth-Shan.

<sup>11</sup>And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, <sup>12</sup>all the valiant men arose and travelled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-Shan, and came to Jabesh and burned them there. <sup>13</sup>And they took their bones and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

**30:24** Num 31:25-27; Josh 22:8. Not every person could be on the front line, but every one had a task that deserved reward when faithfully done. This is true now with believers.

**30:26** An unselfish, gracious, and wise thing to do.

**31:1-2** 2 Sam 1:6-10; 1 Chron 10:1-12.

**31:2** “Saul’s sons”— one son, Ish Bosheth, survived and became king for a little while (2 Sam 2:8-9).

**31:4** “Uncircumcised”— 14:6.

**31:6** “All his men”— Saul’s close associates in the kingdom.

**31:9** “Idols”— they did not realize that their victory was a result of God’s judgment on Israel, and so they ignorantly attributed it to their gods. Compare Jud 16:23-24.

**31:10** “Ashtaroth”— note at 1 Kings 11:5.

**31:11-13** They remembered how Saul had delivered them (11:1-13), and showed their gratitude in this way.

