

# 1 Samuel

*by*  
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## CONTENTS

Lesson	Heading	Page
1	The Birth Of Samuel (1:1-28)	7
	Hannah's Prayer (2:1-11)	7
	Eli's Wicked Sons (2:12-26)	8
	A Prophecy Against The House Of Eli (2:27-36)	8
2	Samuel's Calling (3:1-8)	11
	Samuel Established As A Prophet (3:8-21)	11
	The Philistines Capture The Ark (4:1-11)	11
	The Death Of Eli (4:12-22)	12
3	The Ark Of God At Ashdod, Cath And Ekron (5:1-12)	15
	The Ark Returned To Israel (6:1-21)	15
4	Israel Repents (7:1-6)	17
	Samuel Is Confirmed (7:7-17)	17
	Israel Asks For A King (8:1-22)	17
5	Good Planning (9:1-17)	19
	Samuel Anoints Saul As King (9:18-10:1)	19
	The Three Signs (10:2-16)	19
	Saul Chosen To Be King (10:17-27)	19
6	Saul's First Battle (11:1-11)	21
	Saul's Kingship Reaffirmed (11:12-15)	21
	Samuel's Speech (12:1-25)	21
7	Saul's Disobedience (13:1-22)	23
	Jonathan Attacks The Philistines At Michmash (14:1-23)	24
	Pursuing The Philistines (14:24-52)	24
8	Saul's Mission (15:1-9)	27
	Saul Rejected As King (15:10-35)	27
	David Anointed As King (16:1-113)	27
	Saul Employs David (16:14-23)	28
9	The Challenge Of Goliath (17:1-24)	29
	David Steps Into The Limelight (17:25-58)	29
	Saul's Jealousy (18:1-30)	30
10	Jonathan Saves David (19:1-10)	33
	Michal Saves David (19:11-24)	33
	David And Jonathan (20:1-42)	33
11	David At Nob (21:1-9)	35
	David In Enemy Territory (21:10-22:5)	35
	The Priests Of Nob Murdered (22:6-23)	36
12	David Saves Keilah (23:1-6)	39
	Saul's Pursuit Of David (23:7-29)	39
	David Spares Saul's Life (24:1-22)	39
13	David And Nabal (25:1-13)	41
	No Time To Lose (25:14-35)	41
	Nabal's Death (25:36-44)	42
	A Dangerous Mission (26:1-12)	42
	The Final Parting (26:13-25)	42
14	David Lives Among The Philistines (27:1-28:2)	45
	Saul Visits A Medium (28:3-25)	45
15	Achish Sends David Back To Ziklag (29:1-11)	47
	The Amalekites Raid Ziklag (30:1-8)	47
	David Pursues The Amalekites (30:9-31)	47
	The Final Conflict (31:1-13)	48



## LESSON 1

### Chapters 1-2

#### I. THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL (1:1-28)

- A. Elkanah was from the town of Ramah, in the region of Zuph, in the country of Ephraim (1 Samuel 1:1 > 19; cp. Joshua 18:25).
1. Elkanah had two wives - Hannah<sup>1</sup> and Peninnah.
  2. God's intention from the beginning has been one wife for one man (Genesis 2:7, 18, 21-24).
- B. Hannah, having no children, would have been reproached in Israel (Luke 1:25).
1. The story of Hannah is similar to that of Sarai (Genesis 11:30; 16:4).
  2. Hannah was tormented year after year and she turned to the Lord to take away her reproach (1 Samuel 1:10).
  3. The vow that Hannah makes (1 Samuel 1:10) is reminiscent of the Nazirite vow (Cp. Numbers 6:1; Judges 13:1-5).
  4. Hannah receives a blessing from Eli. *"In those days blessing was no mere formality; to give a blessing involved the exercise of all one's power for good in the interest of the one to be blest"* (Peake's, page 319).
- C. Shiloh was the place of worship (1 Samuel 1:3), and this had been so since the Israelites began to take possession of the land and divide it up among themselves (Joshua 18:1).
1. We are told that Elkanah went to Shiloh, 'year after year' (1 Samuel 1:3).
  2. It was required of Jews to attend three annual feasts (Exodus 23:14-17).
    - a. The feast of Unleavened Bread.
    - b. The feast of Harvest.
    - c. The feast of Ingathering
- D. After years of reproach and torment, much prayer, and a blessing from Eli the priest, the Lord answered Hannah's prayers. Hannah named her son Samuel<sup>2</sup> (1 Samuel 1:18-20).
- E. The Lord had remembered Hannah and now she remembers her vow (see 1 Samuel 1:10-11).
1. After weaning the child she goes with her husband to Shiloh. Here, Hannah offered a sacrifice unto the Lord (Note: According to the law, the firstborn was to be redeemed – Exodus 13:13. see also Numbers 15:8-10).
  2. After the sacrifices, Samuel was handed over to Eli (1 Samuel 1:25-28).
  3. The Lord also granted Hannah other sons and daughters (1 Samuel 2:21).

#### II. HANNAH'S PRAYER (2:1-11)

- A. I have broken this prayer or song of Hannah into four parts.
1. The first part (1 Samuel 2:1-3) speaks of three things.
    - a. Rejoicing in the salvation of the Lord (Cp. Psalms 13:5-6).
    - b. The Lord is Holy and our only defence (Cp. Psalms 31:2-3).
    - c. God will judge those who are proud and arrogant (Cp. Psalms 73:8-11).

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah means "Favored" (CWSD).

<sup>2</sup> Samuel means "Heard of God" (Strong's).

2. The second part (1 Samuel 2:4-5) speaks of the warriors, the full (of food), and the fertile women.
  - a. In each case the Lord strengthens the weak, gives food to the hungry, and opens the womb of the barren; while the enemies suffer the opposite.
  - b. This seems to resound verse one.
3. The third part (1 Samuel 2:6-8) could be a warning against pride and arrogance when wealth increases, which leads to oppression.
  - a. The Lord is the one who gives life and death, it is the Lord who sends wealth and poverty, and the Lord decides who rules.
  - b. This seems to resound verse three.
4. The third part (1 Samuel 2:8b-10) seems to be saying that those who trust in the Lord, their rock, will be watched over by the Lord, but the enemies of God will be judged. This seems to resound verse two.

### III. ELI'S WICKED SONS (2:12-26)

- A. Eli is unable to control his sons and they do wicked things before the Lord.
  1. We may have had a hint of how bad things may have been at that time when Eli thought Hannah to be drunk when praying (1 Samuel 1:13-14).
  2. Had it become a common thing for people to appear before the Lord drunk with wine?
- B. *"The ritual fault of which Eli's sons are accused is that of valuing their own share of the sacrificial victim more highly than that due to God"* (Peake's page 319). This fault was manifest in two parts:
  1. The servant of the priest would take from the pot with a flesh hook all that the flesh hook brought up (1 Samuel 2:13-14).
  2. Before the meat was boiled the fat was to be taken off and offered to the Lord (Leviticus 3:3-5, 16), but these demanded portions of raw meat, even before the fat was removed (1 Samuel 2:15).
- C. Another of their crimes was that they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting (1 Samuel 2:22b; cp. Exodus 38:8; see also Deuteronomy 23:17-18).
- D. These wicked things came to the ears of Eli, and he sharply rebuked his sons.
  1. But his sons took no notice of him (1 Samuel 2:22-25).
  2. A principle we may all do well to take note of is recorded in 1 Samuel 2:25; *"If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?"*
- E. Among these verses we also read of the relationships between Eli, Samuel, and Samuel's parents (1 Samuel 2:18-21).
  1. Each year Hannah would come to Shiloh with Elkanah her husband. And each year Hannah would make a little robe for her son. Also, just before returning home, Eli would bless them both (1 Samuel 2:20). We also learn that, despite all the wickedness around him, Samuel seems to be unaffected (1 Samuel 2:26).
  2. Sometimes, when we see evil increasing all around us, our resolve to do good is strengthened (Cp. Acts 4:16-29). We may also compare 1 Samuel 2:26 with Luke 2:52.

### IV. A PROPHECY AGAINST THE HOUSE OF ELI (2:27-36)

- A. The man of God begins his rebuke of Eli by reminding him of all the favour that God had shown him, and what a privileged position he was in (1 Samuel 2:27-28; cp. Leviticus 7:34).



1. Surely Eli's conscience is pricked for we hear no words of defence in these verses.
- B. Having pricked Eli's conscience, the man of God reveals his sin.
  1. He had no respect for the sanctity of the sacrifices and offerings (1 Samuel 2:29a).
  2. He honoured his sons more than God (1 Samuel 2:29b). Although Eli had rebuked his sons earlier (1 Samuel 2:23) - and it's true they didn't listen - he could and should have restrained them. If he could not, then he would not have been rebuked (see 1 Samuel 3:13).
- C. The man of God now tells Eli, though he already knew, that such blessings as he had received of the Lord were conditional (1 Samuel 2:30). This of course is always true when God establishes a relationship with man. Eli had failed to honour God and now he would suffer the consequences.
- D. The Lord now reveals what is to come upon Eli.
  1. In his family line there would not be an old man; they would die in the prime of their life (1 Samuel 2:31, 33b), and those whom the Lord did not cut off from the altar would only remain to bring grief (1 Samuel 2:33).
  2. But this is not the end! God promises that He would raise up a faithful priest (The Zadokite line. Cp. 1 Kings 2:26, 35), and those left in Eli's line would bow before him for a piece of silver and a crust of bread (1 Samuel 2:35-36). A sign given to Eli was that his two sons would die on the same day (1 Samuel 2:34).

### Questions

1. Why did Peninnah torment Hannah so sorely?
2. In the King James Version we read, "*And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour...*" (1 Samuel 1:24). Is there anything in the text that might justify the alternative reading: "*And she took up with her a three year old bullock*"?
3. Hannah's prayer is similar to another famous mother's prayer, whose?
4. We have seen how Eli failed to restrain his sons. Is it fair of God to bring punishment upon Eli's descendants? Are the sons being punished for the sins of the father?

### Comments

*"Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD" (1 Samuel 1:9 NASB)*

In some parts of the East a seat is placed in the court-yard where the master of the house may sit and give judgment on all domestic affairs. This seat is usually placed in some shady part of the court, against a wall or column. Thus, in the text, Eli "*sat upon a seat by a post.*" So David sat upon a seat by the wall (1 Samuel 20:25). These seats probably had no backs, and were, therefore, placed near the post or wall for support.

*"Then Hannah prayed and said, My heart exults in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD, My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation." (1 Samuel 2:1 NASB)*

The *horn* is an emblem of power and of dignity; the exaltation of the horn therefore expresses elevation of privilege and honour, and its depression represents the opposite. See also 1 Samuel 2:10; Job 16:15; Psalms 75:4-5; 89:17, 24. The Druse ladies on Mount Lebanon wear a horn as a part of their head-dress. These horns are made of various materials according to the wealth of the owner: dough, pasteboard, pottery, tin, silver and gold. They vary in length from six inches to two feet and a half, and are three or four inches in diameter at the base, tapering almost to a point. The vial is thrown over the horn, and from it flows gracefully down. When once put on, the horn is never taken off; it remains on the wearer's head by day and at night, through sickness and health, even down to death.



## LESSON 2

### Chapters 3-4

#### I. SAMUEL'S CALLING (3:1-8)

- A. Samuel had been ministering before the Lord for a number of years now, and the time had come for God to keep His promise (1 Samuel 2:35a).
  - 1. Both Eli and Samuel were sleeping in the temple. It seems it may have been early morning when the Lord began calling Samuel, due to the fact that the writer says, "*The Lamp of God had not yet gone out*" (1 Samuel 3:3). The lamp of God was kept burning all night (Exodus 27:20-21).
- B. Now the Lord begins to call Samuel (1 Samuel 3:4) and he thinks it is Eli that calls, and so he goes running to him (1 Samuel 3:5).
  - 1. Eli's response is typical of tired adults, "*Go back to bed*". This is repeated three times before Eli realises what is going on. It seems to me that the Lord deliberately 'fools' Samuel in order to bring home the reality of the calling to both of them.
  - 2. Samuel had a great work ahead of him, which made it essential to leave no doubts of his calling. Cp. The Lord's calling of Paul, which was confirmed to both Paul and Ananias (Acts 9:1-19).

#### II. SAMUEL ESTABLISHED AS A PROPHET (3:8-21)

- A. After being awakened three times by Samuel, Eli now realises that it is the Lord who calls him (1 Samuel 3:8b).
  - 1. Having been instructed by Eli, Samuel waits once more for the Lord to call (1 Samuel 3:9).
  - 2. God restates what he had earlier told Eli concerning his descendants (see 1 Samuel 2:31-36).
    - a. Samuel is, understandably, reluctant to reveal the vision to Eli (1 Samuel 3:15), but Eli, who seems so desperate to know the vision (maybe he had an idea what the content was) resorts to threats to gain knowledge of the boy's vision (1 Samuel 3:17).
    - b. After hearing what the Lord had said, Eli responded, not in a bad way as Samuel may have feared, but with the words, "*He is the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him*" (1 Samuel 3:18b).
  - 3. We are here reminded of Job's attitude when various disasters came upon him: "*the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised*" (Job 1:21).
- B. Verses 19-21 and 4:1a may be seen as an introduction to the following chapters.
  - 1. The words, "*The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and let none of his words fall to the ground*" (1 Samuel 3:19) are past tense as none of these things had, as yet, come to pass; e.g., The death of Eli's sons (1 Samuel 2:34).
  - 2. But Samuel would certainly be established as a prophet before Eli's death. This is the last we see of Samuel until chapter seven (21 years?).

#### III. THE ADVENTURES OF THE ARK - THE PHILISTINES CAPTURE THE ARK (4:1-11)

- A. The Philistines held many cities of the Israelites and it seems that they intended to repossess them, beginning with Aphek (1 Samuel 4:1).
  - 1. So the Israelites go out to fight for Aphek, but the Philistines defeat them; killing four thousand (1 Samuel 4:2).
  - 2. The Israelites seem to think that having the ark in their camp will bring them victory! But of course it does not (1 Samuel 4:10).

3. Not only were they defeated but the Ark itself was captured (1 Samuel 4:11). The hearts of the people had strayed from God, and did they now think that the Ark would save them? Formulas and implements are of no value unless the heart is right with God; and we can all think of examples I'm sure.

B. While the Israelites were rejoicing, the Philistines became fearful (1 Samuel 4:7).

1. They seem to be only too aware of the power of the Hebrew God (Cp. 1 Samuel 6:6).
2. But fear of being slaves to the Israelites seems to embolden them (1 Samuel 4:9).

C. Religiously, the people are straying, which in turn leads to moral decay (Exodus 32:1-8).

D. As the nation plunges into these depths of decay certain prophecies begin to come true:

1. Eli's two sons are both killed on the same day (Cp. 1 Samuel 2:34 with 4:11).
2. But this is only the beginning of birth pangs as far as the trouble that is to come upon Eli's household.

#### IV. THE DEATH OF ELI (4:12-22)

A. We see now the house of Eli come tumbling down.

1. Having fled the front line, a young man comes into Shiloh bringing the bad news of defeat (1 Samuel 4:12-13). When Eli hears of his sons' deaths and that the Ark of God had been captured, he fell off his stool and broke his neck. He was 98 years old (1 Samuel 4:18).
2. A short time later Eli's daughter-in-law heard the bad news and went into labour (1 Samuel 4:19); she too died. But before she did she named her son Ichabod, which means, "*Inglorious*" (1 Samuel 4:21-22).

B. The house of Eli has fallen, vindicating Samuel's words (1 Samuel 3:19). The Ark of God is in the hands of the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:10-11).

1. But the time is not right for them to be delivered from their enemies.
2. First, Israel must turn away from her idols and call upon the Lord (Deuteronomy 30:16-20).

#### Questions

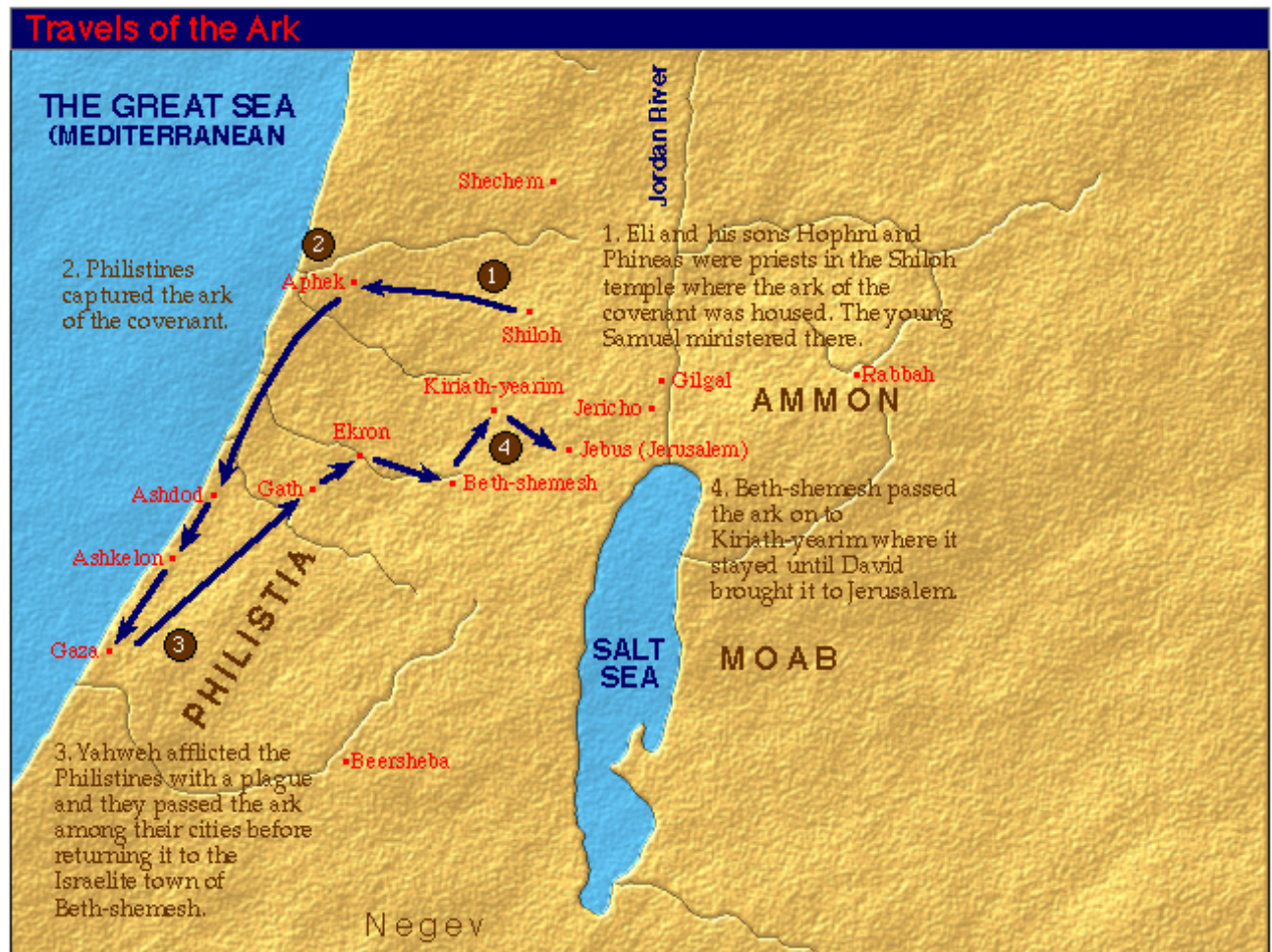
1. We have already derided the Israelites for thinking that bringing the Ark into the camp would save them, but did Eli approve of this? Did Eli send his sons with the Ark or did they just take it?
2. The Philistines, it seems, feared what the Hebrew God might do to them (1 Samuel 4:6-8). But some unknown person stood up and put the fear of slavery into them. What lessons might we learn from this?
3. What was one of Samuel's duties in the tabernacle while serving under Eli?

#### Comments

*"It happened at that time as Eli was lying down in his place (now his eyesight had begun to grow dim and he could not see well), and the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was" (1 Samuel 3:2-3 NASB)*

These verses probably describe what is technically known as an 'incubation oracle'. The devotee spends the night in the sanctuary in expectation of a divine revelation. Psalms 17:5 may refer to such an experience. Normally the person would remain awake, but sleep need not be regarded as invalidating the experience, especially in the case of one so young.

## Gilead







## LESSON 3

### Chapters 5-6

#### I. THE ARK OF GOD AT ASHDOD, GATH, AND EKRON (5:1-12)

- A. The Ark of God is now in the hands of the Philistines (1 Samuel 5:1) and remains in their territory for seven months (1 Samuel 6:1).
  1. While there, God brings destruction and death upon the inhabitants.
  2. They are soon forced to send the Ark back to Israel (1 Samuel 6:2).
- B. The first stop for the Ark is Ashdod (1 Samuel 5:1) and they placed it in the temple of Dagon, thinking to show his superiority over the Hebrew God.
  1. But the Lord brought down the idol of Ashdod and brought a plague of mice and tumours upon the people. We say a plague of mice for two reasons:
    - a. In the Septuagint, verse six of chapter five reads, "*And mice appeared in their land, and death and destruction were throughout the city*" (see margin NIV).
    - b. They later make models of the mice to send to the Israelites; these mice are described as having marred the land (1 Samuel 6:5).
  2. In desperation they call the five lords or rulers of the Philistines together to decide what to do (1 Samuel 5:8), and they decide to send the Ark to Gath.
  3. But the same plagues come upon them (1 Samuel 5:9).
    - a. As the Ark approached Ekron, home to the god Baal-Zebub (2 Kings 1:2), the people feared for their lives, not trusting in their gods any longer (1 Samuel 5:10).
    - b. The same plagues came upon Ekron and many died (1 Samuel 5:12).
- C. The incidents in this chapter are reminiscent of the incidents in Exodus, and the purpose of God is also the same...
  1. To bring judgement upon the gods of those people (Cp. Exodus 12:12).
  2. To show that He is "*A man of war*" (Exodus 15:3).

#### II. THE ARK RETURNED TO ISRAEL (6:1-21)

- A. The Philistines were suffering greatly while they possessed the Ark of God, but it says they had it for seven months (1 Samuel 6:1).
  1. Maybe this indicates their reluctance to believe that it was the possession of the Ark bringing this disaster upon them; an attitude that seems to be maintained to the last (1 Samuel 6:9b).
  2. This reminds us of Pharaoh's reluctance and stubbornness in releasing the Israelites (Exodus 7-13), and, in fact, the priests and diviners appeal to these events as a reason for sending the Ark back and averting further disaster (1 Samuel 6:6).
- B. In desperation the philistines turn to the priests and diviners for instructions on how to get rid of it (1 Samuel 6:3).
  1. The costly gold tumours and mice seem to depict the plagues that had come upon them; and at the same time request the removal of such.
  2. This trespass offering (1 Samuel 6:8) coupled with their acknowledgement of God's rule over them would solve their problems (1 Samuel 6:5).

C. To remove all doubts as to who was responsible for their afflictions, the God of Israel or chance, they decided to return the Ark of God in a particular way (1 Samuel 6:7-11).

1. The cart was new and the cows had never been yoked or drawn a cart. Depending on the direction the cows went would indicate whether their afflictions were of God or came by chance.
2. The experiment showed without a doubt that the Lord had brought these afflictions upon the Philistines (1 Samuel 6:12, 14, 16).

D The Ark of God comes home to Bethshemesh (1 Samuel 6:15) and the people rejoice and sacrifice to the Lord (1 Samuel 6:14-15).

1. But this rejoicing is short lived, for the Lord kills some of the people because they had looked into the Ark (Cp. Ex. 19:21:22). The number of men killed varies according to which translation you may have: some say 50070 and others 70; only a slight difference! However, two sources to which I went favoured the smaller number.
2. Like the Philistines, the men of Bethshemesh were anxious to part with the Ark, and so they send it to Kirjathjearim to the house of Abinadab, who sanctified his son Eleazar to look after it (1 Samuel 6:20-7:1).

### Questions

1. When the Philistines saw that possessing the Ark of God brought sore afflictions upon them, why did they not send it straight back to Israel, why send it to Gath?
2. What might the tumours have been that came upon the Philistines?
3. When the Philistines decided to send the Ark back to Israel; why didn't they just take it back and be done with it; why did they send it back in the manner that they did (1 Samuel 6:7-11)?
4. In what way did the mice mar the land (1 Samuel 6:5)?
5. Although the Philistines gave the glory to God for the disaster that had come upon them, what did this acknowledgement not achieve (1 Samuel 6:5)?
6. Why didn't the Israelites attack the Philistines during the months that affliction came upon them?

### Comments

*"Now the hand of the LORD was heavy on the Ashdodites, and He ravaged them and smote them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories" (1 Samuel 5:6 NASB)*

It is well known that rats carry bubonic plague, which causes painful swellings of the lymph nodes, or buboes, in the armpits and groin. Untreated, the disease is fatal in well over half of those who contract it. Little wonder there was panic if this was the illness they suffered (1 Samuel 5:9). It has been suggested that in moving the Ark the disease was spread.



## LESSON 4

### Chapters 7-8

#### I. ISRAEL REPENTS (7:1-6)

- A. It is now approximately 21 years later (Cp. 1 Samuel 6:1 > 7:2); the priests were corrupt (1 Samuel 2:12-17) and did not seem to be any better by this time (1 Samuel 8:3). Their enemies oppressed them and the land was full of idols (1 Samuel 8:4).
1. The Israelites were now turning to God with their hearts (1 Samuel 7:2; cp. Deuteronomy 4:29). But faith without works is dead being alone (James 2:17). *“So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the Lord only”* (1 Samuel 7:4).
  2. This principle is also seen in the New Testament: *“For many-who believed confessed their deeds and burnt all their magic books before all men”* (Acts 19:18-19). Samuel's time has come!
- B. Israel had destroyed her idols (1 Samuel 7:4) and must now be cleansed.
1. A sacrifice is offered up to God (1 Samuel 7:5-9). This took place at Mizpah (1 Samuel 7:5). *“They drew water and poured it out before the Lord”* (1 Samuel 7:6).
  2. One commentator suggests, *“This water is a symbol of the washing away of their communal sin”* (J. Baldwin). Cp. Lamentations 2:18; 2 Samuel 23:16.

#### II. SAMUEL IS CONFIRMED (7:7-17)

- A. It is likely that the great gathering at Mizpah caused the Philistines some anxiety, thinking they were to be attacked? (1 Samuel 7:10).
1. The Philistines were routed before the Israelites, but with God's help (1 Samuel 7:10). The Lord often used natural forces to decide the outcome of a battle (Joshua 10:11; Judges 5:4, 20-21).
  2. They marked the end of the battle by erecting a great stone, which they called Ebenezer, which means **Stone of Help** (1 Samuel 7:12).
- B. Israel had turned to God with their whole hearts and the Lord gave them victory over their enemies for as long as Samuel lived (1 Samuel 7:13).
1. How different from before when they called upon the Ark to save them (1 Samuel 4:1-3). In this battle the Ark is not mentioned!
  2. They not only subdued the Philistines but they recaptured cities (1 Samuel 7:14), and lived in peace with the Amorites (1 Samuel 7:14b; cp. Proverbs 16:7).
- C. We had seen in earlier chapters how the Lord had called Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-8), how Samuel had prophesied (1 Samuel 3:10-18), and how these things came true (1 Samuel 4:11-22). Now the people had turned to the Lord, Samuel is seen to be an intercessor between Israel and the Lord (1 Samuel 7:5-10); and their leader (1 Samuel 7:6b, 11).

#### III. ISRAEL ASKS FOR A KING (8:1-22)

- A. In the previous chapter we see Samuel as a young, strong leader but now things have changed.
1. Years have passed and Samuel is introduced as an old man (1 Samuel 8:1) who is not able to do what he used to, and so he appoints his two sons, Joel and Abijah, in his stead.
  2. These two sons remind us of Eli's sons: they are just after lining their own pockets and perverting justice rather than upholding it (1 Samuel 8:3).
  3. This seemed, to them, a good time to ask for a king (1 Samuel 8:4).

B. The people call for a king.

1. There are three reasons the people give for wanting a king:
  - a. They wanted to be like all the other nations around them: to have influence and status.
  - b. That our king may govern us: so taking responsibility from local leaders (Family heads) and providing a figure head.
  - c. A king to go out before us and fight our battles: having a ready army at his disposal (1 Samuel 8:20).
2. This demand for a king amounted to rebellion and rejection against God, and was foreknown (Deuteronomy 17:14-15).

C. The Lord reassures Samuel (1 Samuel 8:7) and tells him to concede to their demand for a king (1 Samuel 8:22); there is no hint of approval on God's part.

1. Although Samuel is to anoint a king over them, he warns them what this king will do:
  - a. Young men would be conscripted to serve in the king's army (1 Samuel 8:11-12).
  - b. Women would be taken to serve as perfumers and cooks (1 Samuel 8:13).
  - c. His attendants and officials would be given the best fields and groves etc. (1 Samuel 8:14-15).
  - d. He would take the best of their men, women, cattle, and other livestock for his own use (1 Samuel 8:16-18).
2. These warnings did not prevent them.

**Questions**

1. So often we see the Israelites turning away from God to worship foreign gods and idols, what is the attraction of these gods?
2. For what other reason might Israel have sought a king, other than those we have already considered (see 1 Samuel 12:12)?
3. If Samuel was to anoint a king over Israel, then what role would Samuel play?

**Comments**

**Dagon** - Pagan deity with the body of a fish, and the head and hands of a man. Probably a god of agriculture. Temples of this god were at Ashdod (1 Samuel 5:1-7), Gaza (Judges 16:21-30), and in Israel (1 Chronicles 10:10).

**Baal-Zebub** - A god of the Philistines whose temple was at Ekron (2 Kings 1:2-6).

**Ashtoreth** - The goddess of the Canaanites; male consort was apparently Baal, and the two were worshipped with lewd rites. Sometimes worshipped by Israelites (Judges 2:11-23; 1 Samuel 7:3-4; 1 Kings 11:4-8).

## LESSON 5

### Chapters 9-10

#### I. GOOD PLANNING (9:1-17)

- A. In the opening verses we are introduced to Israel's future king.
  - 1. Saul is described as, "*Choice and goodly, and taller than anyone among his people*" (1 Samuel 9:2). Although Saul's outward appearance was pleasant to the eye of man, we will see that he did not have the character or heart to match, and ends up taking his own life (1 Samuel 31:4).
  - 2. The next king after Saul is chosen by a different criterion (1 Samuel 13:14 > 16:7).
- B. As far as I am able to tell, Saul begins his journey from his hometown of Gibeah (1 Samuel 10:26) seeking for his father's donkeys, but ends up in Ramah (Cp. 1 Samuel 9:6 > 1:19) and anointed king by Samuel (1 Samuel 10:1).
- C. Although Saul's journey seems random and his meeting up with Samuel a coincidence:
  - 1. We are assured that all these things were of divine providence. This is seen in verses 15 and 16 (Ch. 9).
  - 2. The Lord had revealed to Samuel the day before that He would send the man to him who would be king. But Saul would yet need convincing.

#### II. SAMUEL ANOINTS SAUL AS KING (9:18-10:1)

- A. Upon meeting Saul, Samuel invites him to a feast where he is guest of honour, and he is given the leg of meat that was reserved for the priests (Cp. Exodus 29:27). Having been told he was *the desire of Israel* and having been honoured so, he must have awoken a little dazed the next morning!
- B. Samuel makes ready to send out Saul on a journey on which three meetings will confirm his election of God.
  - 1. Samuel says to Saul, "*I have a message from God for you*". This may remind us of the message that Ehud had for Eglon king of Moab (Judges 3:15-23).
  - 2. But Samuel's message was not lethal like Ehud's but pleasant like Elisha's (2 Kings 9:1-12).

#### III. THE THREE SIGNS (10: 2-16)

- A. Earlier on, Samuel had assured Saul that his donkeys had been found (1 Samuel 9:20). Now Saul is to meet the men who found the donkeys (1 Samuel 10:2).
  - 1. These men seem to know Saul's father, so maybe Saul knew them as well!
  - 2. This would seem to be a sign from God that confirms Samuel as a prophet.
- B. The second sign is unclear (1 Samuel 10:3-4). These two suggestions are offered:
  - 1. "*Saul is to accept the two loaves they offer him, even though he is not a priest. As the Lord's anointed he is a sacred person, and qualifies to eat 'holy' bread, as did David*" (J. Baldwin, p.91).
  - 2. Since this bread is consecrated it may symbolise Saul's consecration as king.
  - 3. The third sign would be that of the Holy Spirit (1 Samuel 10:5-6). When Saul joined in with prophets he would surely realise that God was with him. All these signs were fulfilled (1 Samuel 10:9).

#### IV. SAUL CHOSEN TO BE KING (10:17-27)

- A. Samuel summons Israel to Mizpah, as he had done on another great occasion (1 Samuel 7:5-6). Samuel takes this opportunity to remind Israel that God is the one who had previously won their battles for them, and yet now they reject Him (1 Samuel 10:17-19).

- B. The fact that Saul was hiding shows that the signs had convinced him that he was chosen to be king. It may also show his faith in the method chosen to select him (Casting lots). Although casting lots is not specifically mentioned it seems the most likely method (1 Samuel 10:20; cp. Leviticus 16:8-10; Joshua 7:16-18; 18:10; Proverbs 16:33; 18:18).
- C. Saul is made king and a copy of the regulations of kingship are written down and given to him (1 Samuel 10:25).
1. These regulations may have similar to Deuteronomy 17:14-20.
  2. They may have been given to all succeeding kings (Cp. 2 Kings 11:12).

### Questions

1. Before going into Ramah to see Samuel, Saul is concerned that he has no gift to bring to the prophet (1 Samuel 9:7). What might this verse suggest?
2. Saul's attitude toward himself may be described as 'humble', at least at first it could (1 Samuel 9:21). But later his view of himself seems to change (1 Samuel 15:17). What might have caused this change?
3. In what way would God change Saul into a different person (1 Samuel 10:6; cp. 10:9, 26)?
4. Where in the New Testament is the last time that casting lots is used?

### Comments

**THE LOT.** Among the Hebrews we find its use sanctioned by Divine authority. The scapegoat was selected by lot (Leviticus 16:8). The inheritances of the tribes in the land of promise were determined in the same way (Numbers 34:13; Joshua 14:2). The lot was used on various occasions subsequently. We cite a few instances. The men who attacked Gibeah were chosen by lot (Judges 20:9). In this manner Jonathan was detected as the violator of Saul's command concerning fasting, in his fight with the Philistines (1 Samuel 14:41-42). In this way the positions of the porters in the temple were decided (1 Chronicles 26:13). When the storm arose on board the ship where Jonah was, the heathen sailors cast lots to determine who had brought them into trouble (Jonah 1:7). See also Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Acts 1:26.

## LESSON 6

### Chapters 11-12

#### I. SAUL'S FIRST BATTLE (11:1-11)

- A. What time has elapsed between 1 Samuel 10:27 & 11:1? I do not know, but I imagine it is only a short time as Saul really needs the backing of all the people. At this time he did not have the backing of all, as 1 Samuel 10:27 indicates.
- B. Returning from the fields, Saul hears of the plight of Jabesh Gilead (1 Samuel 11:4-5).
  - 1. Saul's reaction upon hearing of their plight is immediate and he drafts men from all the tribes of Israel.
  - 2. This great army of 330,000 men gather at Bezek ready to do battle with the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11:7-8).
- C. Saul's method of calling an army together is unusual but effective (1 Samuel 11:7). This method used by Saul reminds us of the account in Judges 19:1-30 of the Levite and his concubine (Esp. v. 29).
  - 1. We have seen in the last lesson that Saul had a tendency to be humble (1 Samuel 9:21) and shy (1 Samuel 10:21b).
  - 2. But now that the Spirit of God has come upon him in power (1 Samuel 11:6) we see a different attitude. As we see, he threatens all the tribes of Israel: *"This is what will be done to the Oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel"*.
- D. Under the leadership of Saul, Israel slaughters the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11:11). However, Nahash the King escapes and remains king until his death (See 2 Samuel 10:1-2).

#### II. SAUL'S KINGSHIP REAFFIRMED (11:12-15)

- A. It was a long hard battle and they fought from dawn till the heat of the day (1 Samuel 11:11).
  - 1. The people are rejoicing in their victory and threatening to put to death any who oppose Saul (1 Samuel 11:12).
  - 2. But Saul, still showing signs of humility, refuses to put such men to death and gives the glory for victory over the Ammonites to God (1 Samuel 11:13).
- B. Now that all of Israel's doubts concerning Saul as king seem to be gone, Samuel sees this as an ideal time to reaffirm Saul's kingship.
  - 1. Samuel suggests this is done at Gilgal (1 Samuel 11:14).
  - 2. This confirmation did not take place on the same day because they had been fighting until 'the heat of day', and Gilgal was about thirty-five miles away.
- C. It is a great day and the Lord's choice of king is confirmed at Gilgal before all the people (1 Samuel 11:15). The nation at this point is united under one king.

#### III. SAMUEL'S SPEECH (12:1-25)

- A. Israel has rejected God as their king and now they have been given a king like the nations around them.
  - 1. Israel had desired a king since Gideon had led them in victory against the Midianites (Judges 7ff, esp. 8:22-23).
  - 2. Samuel had told Israel that in asking for a king they were rejecting God (1 Samuel 8:7 > 10:17-18). He also warned them what the future held in store (1 Samuel 8:11-18). All this fell on deaf ears.
- B. In order to convict them of their sin, Samuel first asks them to name some crime or injustice that he had committed (1 Samuel 12:3-5).

1. They found no fault. Samuel then reminds them of all the good that the Lord had done for them (1 Samuel 12:6-11).
  2. Samuel then gives them a sign - rain in the wheat harvest (1 Samuel 12:16-18). This sign finally convicted them of their sin (1 Samuel 12:19b); not that it made them reject Saul and ask for Samuel back.
- C. Even though Israel had rejected God as their king, for the sake of His great name, He would not reject His people (1 Samuel 12:22; cp. Romans 11:1).
1. If they now obey the Lord all will go well with them. This is followed by a warning should they persist in evil (1 Samuel 12:14-15, 24-25).
  2. Although Samuel hands over leadership to Saul, Samuel still has a role to play (1 Samuel 12:23).

### Questions

1. Why would Nahash allow the men of Jabesh Gilead to send for help (Cp. 1 Samuel 21:8)?
2. When Saul calls Israel to war he says, *“This is what will be done to the Oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel”* (1 Samuel 11:7). What reasons might Saul have for mentioning Samuel?
3. *“The Spirit of God came upon him in power”*. What might this mean (Cp. Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29)?
4. Now that Saul reigns as king, what role would Samuel play?

## LESSON 7

### Chapters 13-14

#### I. SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE (13:1-22)

- A. Saul chose 3000 men out of Israel (A Standing army). 2000 were with Saul at Michmash, while 1000 were with Jonathan (Saul's son. See 1 Samuel 13:16) at Gibeah.
  - 1. Jonathan has precipitated a crisis by attacking a Philistine outpost at Geba.
  - 2. At the instruction of Samuel (1 Samuel 13:8), Saul gathered with his army at Gilgal.
  - 3. The Philistines gathered at Michmash with their superior equipment. Also, they heavily outnumbered the Israelites.
  - 4. The sight of such a vast army made Saul's men tremble in their boots (1 Samuel 13:5-7).
- B. As Saul awaited Samuel's arrival his patients began to grow thin.
  - 1. As spiritual leader of the nation, Samuel would offer up a sacrifice to Jehovah. This sacrifice demonstrated Israel's dependence on Jehovah.
  - 2. But Saul's patients reached its end and he took it into his own hands to offer up the sacrifice (1 Samuel 13:9-10).
- C. Saul's excuse for disobedience is pretty thin in the light of what God has already done for him.
  - 1. Saul's reasoning was:
    - a. You were late.
    - b. The Philistine attack was imminent and so I felt compelled to attack.
  - 2. On the surface this may sound good, but now view this reasoning in the light of these facts.
    - a. Samuel had been established as a prophet.
    - b. He had anointed Saul as king and given him three signs, which were from God.
    - c. The Lord had given him victory over the Ammonites (1 Samuel 10:1-7 > 11:11).
  - 3. Saul's only compulsion should have been to obey God.
- D. Saul's act was a challenge of Samuel's spiritual authority and was also rebellion against God.
  - 1. The cost of disobedience is high: Saul would not set up a dynasty.
  - 2. And so Samuel parts from Saul on bad terms (1 Samuel 13:13-15).
- E. Saul and Jonathan are now at Gibeah (1 Samuel 13:16).
  - 1. It is difficult to know how much time has passed or why Saul moved from Gilgal. A few extra verses of explanation would have helped.
  - 2. But what we do see is a picture of further oppression by the Philistines. They have now, it seems, taken Michmash (1 Samuel 13:16). This is where our story began (1 Samuel 13:1-2). We have seen their superior military might (1 Samuel 13:5) and now we see that they had ensured that the Israelites had no weapons, for they had got rid of them! (1 Samuel 13:16-22).

## II. JONATHAN ATTACKS THE PHILISTINES AT MICHMASH (14:1-23)

- A. Since Samuel had departed from Saul (1 Samuel 13:15), Saul took Ahijah to be his spiritual leader (1 Samuel 14:3). Ahijah was the great grandson of Eli.
- B. The Philistines were not easily defeated. They may have lost Geba to Jonathan (1 Samuel 13:3) but they had gained Michmash (1 Samuel 13:16).
  - 1. Jonathan, full of courage and confidence in the Lord, is determined to attack the Philistines again. Perhaps Jonathan took to heart the saying of Samuel to Saul: *"He will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines"* (1 Samuel 9:16). Despite Jonathan's confidence he still feels it necessary to ask for a sign (1 Samuel 14:8-10).
  - 2. Had Saul not disobeyed the Lord, Jonathan would have made a fine king.
- C. Jonathan and his armour bearer attack the Philistines at Michmash and the Lord delivers them into Israel's hand.
  - 1. It would appear that the Lord sent an earthquake that caused the Philistines to panic, and so they became confused. All this panic and confusion made it easy for Saul to defeat them (1 Samuel 14:15).
  - 2. It is interesting to note that, many Hebrews who had defected and those who were in hiding now make an appearance and join the winning side (1 Samuel 14:21-22).
- D. We have already seen how the Lord often uses natural forces to determine the outcome of a battle (see Lesson 4, 2a), now we see the use, by God, of other natural forces; i.e., earthquakes (1 Samuel 14:15; cp. 1 Kings 19:11; Amos 1:1; 8:8; Matthew 27:54; Acts 16:26; Revelation 11:13-19; 16:18).

## III. PURSUING THE PHILISTINES (14:24-52)

- A. Here is a man who is always trying to please the Lord but never quite getting it right.
  - 1. Saul has already disobeyed God through his own inpatients (1 Samuel 13:7-10). His inpatients reared its head again at Gibeah and he attacked the Philistines while in the middle of a consultation with the priest Ahijah (1 Samuel 14:18-20).
  - 2. And now, perhaps still trying to find favour with the Lord, he imposes a fast on his men (1 Samuel 14:24). This only causes more problems, as we shall see (See Ecclesiastes 5:4-5).
- B. After pursuing the Philistines as far as Aijalon, the Israelites pounced on the plunder (1 Samuel 14:31-32). It was now evening and the food ban no longer applied.
  - 1. The men began to eat their meat with the blood still in it, which violated the law (See Leviticus 19:26). Seeking to please the Lord, Saul makes them drain the blood.
  - 2. For the first time Saul builds an altar to the Lord (1 Samuel 14:33-35).
- C. We must wonder what goes on in Saul's mind! He again is determined to make his own plans without consulting the Lord, but Ahijah makes the suggestion that he should (1 Samuel 14:36). It by lot that enquiry was made of the Lord, but on this occasion the Lord did not answer. Saul assumes that someone must have sinned and vows death to that person, even if it is his own son (1 Samuel 14:39).
  - 1. Although Jonathan is found to be the guilty party he does not die because the men won't allow it (1 Samuel 14:45).
  - 2. The plan now changes: instead of pursuing the Philistines further, Saul has a better idea - to go home! (1 Samuel 14:46).
- D. Despite Saul's personal failings the Lord keeps his promise: *"He will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines"* (1 Samuel 9:16). The writer reminds us of this in these verses.



## Questions

1. Again and again, Saul is disobedient and rash. Whatever happened to the Spirit that came upon him (1 Samuel 10:10)? Is this the change that was supposed to come upon him (1 Samuel 10:6)?
2. The fact that Saul 'employed' Ahijah as his new spiritual leader is seen in 1 Samuel 14:3. Would this in any way suggest that Saul did not take Samuel's threat seriously (See 1 Samuel 13:14)?
3. Despite Saul's personal failings, he did fight many glorious battles, and, through Saul, the Lord subdued the Philistines as He had promised (1 Samuel 9:16). How would the people be feeling at this time about their decision to have a king rule over them? Would they now view Samuel's prophecy as a mistake (See 1 Samuel 8:11-18)?
4. Reading 1 Samuel 14:45 with verse 47, do we detect some internal struggle that Saul had to overcome?
5. What was the difference between the weapons of the Philistines and Israelites?



## LESSON 8

### Chapters 15-16

#### I. SAUL'S MISSION (15:1-9)

- A. The Israelites, after crossing the Red Sea and while journeying to Sinai, were attacked by the Amalekites at Rephidim.
  - 1. Because of this, the Lord said, *"I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven"* (Exodus 17:8-16). The Lord later restates this decree and reveals that Israel would be the instrument to carry it out (Deuteronomy 25:17-20).
  - 2. In the opening verse, this decree is about to be executed through the instrumentality of Saul and his army of 210,000 men (1 Samuel 15:1-3). Saul is under strict orders to destroy *everything* (Compare Joshua 6:17).
- B. Saul, after 'completing' his mission, returns to Carmel where he erects a monument in his own honour [Saul seems to have overcome his humility problem!]. From Carmel Saul goes to Gilgal to offer sacrifices to the Lord (1 Samuel 15:2).

#### II. SAUL REJECTED AS KING (15:10-35)

- A. Samuel, having been told of Saul's disobedience by the Lord, finds Saul at Gilgal.
  - 1. Saul greets Samuel in 'innocents' but Samuel rebukes him, charging him with disobedience, rebellion, and arrogance (1 Samuel 15:19, 23).
  - 2. Saul denies these charges three times (1 Samuel 15:13, 15, 20-21) before finally confessing his sin (1 Samuel 15:24). Saul sinned because he was afraid to oppose his men's determination to take spoils (1 Samuel 15:24).
- B. Saul does not seem to realise the seriousness of his wrong or that this sin might have grave consequences (1 Samuel 15:25).
  - 1. But Saul has not forgotten his last act of disobedience and the message from Samuel, has he (1 Samuel 13:7-15)?
  - 2. Samuel, on that occasion, told Saul that he would not head a dynasty, and now he is told that he has been rejected by God as king (1 Samuel 15:26).
- C. Saul now seems concerned about saving face before Israel and persuades Samuel to go back with him (1 Samuel 15:31).
  - 1. After the worship and feasting was over, Agag, king of the Amalekites, was brought to Samuel.
  - 2. Saul had failed to destroy the Amalekites completely and Samuel finishes the job for him (1 Samuel 15:33).

#### III. DAVID ANOINTED AS KING (16:1-13)

- A. Verse 1 could almost be seen as a prophecy of Jesus: *"I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his descendants to be king"*. The mention of Bethlehem also reminds us of Micah's prophecy: *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times"* (Micah 5:2).
- B. Samuel goes to Bethlehem under the cover of sacrificing to the Lord lest Saul should discover his purpose and take his life (1 Samuel 16:2-5).
  - 1. The elders of Bethlehem held Samuel in awe and respect (1 Samuel 16:4).
  - 2. Samuel anoints David with many witnesses present, unlike that of Saul, and then returns to his home town Ramah (1 Samuel 16:13).

#### IV. SAUL EMPLOYS DAVID (16:14-23)

- A. Though Samuel is told not to look upon the outward appearance, we see that David is described as an impressive young man. He is lighter in skin colour than his fellows, good looking, speaks well, is talented musically, and is a brave man and a warrior (1 Samuel 16:18).
- B. The Spirit of the Lord had left Saul and an evil spirit came upon him (1 Samuel 16:14).
1. This evil spirit came intermittently and was driven away by music (1 Samuel 16:21). The musician, of course, was David, whom Saul 'liked very much' and kept him in his service; though this seemed only to be part time (See 1 Samuel 17:15).
  2. The departure of the Spirit of God from Saul was not, it seems to me, a sudden departure but gradual. The same is also true of the evil spirit. All this seems to coincide with Saul's change of character, which began in chapter thirteen. And so we leave this chapter with David anointed as king and in the service of king Saul.

#### Questions

1. The Lord told Samuel that he repented of having made Saul king and that he had failed to carry out His instructions (1 Samuel 15:10-11). Samuel is rightly upset but why was he so upset as to cry to the Lord all night?
2. Both Balaam and Samuel have stated that, *"God is not a man that he should repent or lie"* (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29). Can you reconcile this statement with 15:11, *"It repenteth me that I have set up Saul as king"*?
3. David is described as a warrior (1 Samuel 16:18) but was this true? Since he later says that he is not even used to wearing armour (1 Samuel 17:39b)!

#### Comments

In what sense did the Spirit of God come upon Saul?

In 10:10 we read, *"The Spirit of God came upon him in power"*. This is seen again in 1 Samuel 11:6, *"When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger"*. Then we see that the Spirit of God left him in 1 Samuel 16:14. What is the Spirit that came upon Saul? I do not believe that this was a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I believe that the *"Spirit of God came upon him in power"* means, 'He was given power or ability'. We read that Saul prophesied after the Spirit came upon him (1 Samuel 10:10). Again, the Spirit came upon Saul and his feelings were stirred, which led him to act upon them (1 Samuel 11:6) [Since the Spirit had to come upon him it implies that the Spirit left him between the incidents!]. Samson also had his feelings stirred by the Spirit (Judges 13:24-25). Samson also possessed great strength by the Spirit, but this strength was conditional upon his hair remaining long; when Samson's hair was cut his strength left him. This is described as the Lord leaving him (Judges 16:18) [Please also note that Samson did not know that the Lord had left him! This means you cannot know when you have the Spirit! If the Spirit dwells in the Christian then surely this verse shows that such an indwelling cannot be known by feeling?]. Moses also had the Spirit of the Lord upon him. This Spirit was also given to seventy elders who then prophesied (Numbers 11:25). Bezalel was filled with the Spirit of God and had skill and ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts (Exodus 35:30-31). We see then that to receive the Spirit is to receive power, skill, or ability from the Holy Spirit. This idea is more clearly seen in the New Testament.

In what sense did God send an evil spirit upon Saul?

We read again that, *"An evil spirit from the Lord tormented him"* (1 Samuel 16:14). To understand the sense of this verse let us look at 2 Thessalonians 2:11, which reads, *"For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie"*. Upon reading the context, we see that the lawless one is deceiving with counterfeit miracles and lying wonders those that do not have a love of the truth. So God allows or gives them over to their desire to believe that lie through delusion (Cp. Romans 1:24, 26). The main point of this verse is that God has total control over all things. If any of this makes sense then I would suggest that we understand 1 Samuel 16:14 in the same sense.

## LESSON 9

### Chapters 17-18

#### I. THE CHALLENGE OF GOLIATH (17:1-24)

- A. We have seen in the last chapter how David came to be in Saul's service; as one who played the harp during Saul's mad moments (1 Samuel 16:21-23). But now the real story of David begins - the story of his rise to power.
  - 1. David's entrance into the limelight is no small affair and he makes an immediate impression on Saul, who gave him a high rank in the army (1 Samuel 18:5).
  - 2. The story begins with Israel at war with the Philistines in the hills of the valley of Elah (1 Samuel 17:1-3).
- B. Our attention is now called to focus on Goliath - a giant! He was over nine feet tall. Goliath's armour and weapons were made of Bronze.
  - 1. This giant Philistine stepped forward and defied all Israel (1 Samuel 17:4-7). Goliath challenges Israel to a single combat (1 Samuel 17:8b).
  - 2. Goliath has much confidence in his stature and great strength and proposes that the losing side become slaves to the other [When the odds are 99-1 in your favour it is so easy to be boastful and make grand promises.].
- C. David had a dual responsibility, he still had to tend to his fathers flocks, but he also took supplies to his elder brothers on the front line. These brothers were, Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah.
  - 1. It is while bringing supplies to his brothers that David hears Goliath shouting his usual defiance at Israel (1 Samuel 17:23).
  - 2. Twice now, it has been said that the Israelites were terrified and ran from Goliath (1 Samuel 17:11, 24). This cowardice of many is to be contrasted with the bravery of one - David.

#### II. DAVID STEPS INTO THE LIMELIGHT (17:25-58)

- A. Saul was a man *"head and shoulders above his fellows"* (1 Samuel 9:2), but was not willing to face Goliath through fear (1 Samuel 17:11).
  - 1. But he was willing to give great wealth and his daughter's hand in marriage to the man who took away Israel's shame (1 Samuel 17:25).
  - 2. It is true that, in the past Saul has been victorious (1 Samuel 14:47), but since the Spirit of the Lord had left Saul (1 Samuel 16:14) we see his faith and confidence also leaves him.
- B. David is obviously not qualified to fight against Goliath - his brothers think so (1 Samuel 17:28), Saul thinks so (1 Samuel 17:33), and Goliath is insulted (1 Samuel 17:41-44).
  - 1. What a picture! The heavily armoured nine foot tall Goliath against a shepherd boy who likes to play the harp (Cp. 2 Corinthians 12:9).
  - 2. But David's strength is in the Lord. David was concerned about defending God's honour (1 Samuel 17:26, 36). He was brave (1 Samuel 17:32), he had faith in God (1 Samuel 17:37), and he came against Goliath in the name of the Lord (1 Samuel 17:45).
  - 3. Samuel's words seem relevant here, *"Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him"* (1 Samuel 16:7).
  - 4. Let us not forget that David had earlier been anointed by Samuel and received the Spirit in power (1 Samuel 16:13). This power had been demonstrated when David had saved his father's sheep from the lion and the bear (1 Samuel 17:34-35). In this the Lord was showing David that he must deliver his sheep [Israel] from the mouth of the wild beast [Philistines]. Reading David's speech to Goliath is like reading a portion from one of the prophets (1 Samuel 17:8-9).

- C. With one stone, David slew this uncircumcised fellow (1 Samuel 17:50), and with Goliath's own sword, David cut off the Giants head.
1. Whether defeating wild beasts or this Philistine there is no indication that David took the credit himself, all the glory went to God (1 Samuel 17:37).
  2. Upon seeing their hero dead the Philistine runaway, they seem to have forgotten what Goliath had said earlier (1 Samuel 17:8-9). The Israelites pursue the Philistines to Ekron leaving their bodies strewn along the road (1 Samuel 17:52).
- D. Although David has 'earned his spurs', Saul has not given his daughter to him, nor do we believe that he received great wealth and exemption from tax as promised (1 Samuel 17:25). After making his mark on the battlefield, David is taken to Saul for a chat by Abner [Aber was the commander of Saul's army and also his uncle's son (1 Samuel 14:50)].

### III. SAUL'S JEALOUSY (18:1-30)

- A. Jonathan, Saul's son, was first introduced to us in 1 Samuel 13:3 as a brave man of war, a man who had every faith in God (1 Samuel 14:6b). It is no surprise, then, that he and David should become friends (1 Samuel 18:1). *"Jonathan's action in stripping off his royal insignia and his royal armour and weapons, only to give them all to David, was more than spontaneous generosity to meet the need of his new found friend. It was a recognition of David's worth, for which Jonathan was willing to give his all, even his right to the throne, for 'he loved him as himself'"* (J. Baldwin. p 129).
- B. When David first entered Saul's service, Saul liked him very much (1 Samuel 16:21), but now we see this fondness turn to jealousy.
1. David won every battle that Saul sent him to fight, and this earned him a high ranking (1 Samuel 18:5).
  2. But a certain refrain that was sung when David returned from battle stirred up Saul's jealousy (1 Samuel 18:7-8). Let us not forget that Saul had been told that the kingdom would be taken away from him and given to another (1 Samuel 15:26-28). Who could it be?
  3. After hearing the joyful refrain we are not surprised that he keeps a jealous eye on David. Saul also knew that the Spirit that had left him now rested on David (1 Samuel 18:12).
- C. The Lord had sent an evil spirit upon Saul and he had frequent bouts of 'disturbance'.
1. These bouts were driven away by music (1 Samuel 16:23).
  2. During one of these bouts, while David played his harp, Saul makes two attempts on David's life (1 Samuel 18:10-11). Saul's mind is indeed troubled.
  3. To get David out of his sight, Saul sends him on campaigns (1 Samuel 18:13), but this only helped increase Israel's love for David and increased Saul's jealousy.
  4. Saul devises a plan whereby he will lose his life. Saul offers David his daughter's hand in marriage, but the price is 100 Philistine foreskins (1 Samuel 18:25); expecting him to lose his life in battle (1 Samuel 18:17b, 25b).
  5. David had already earned Saul's daughter's hand in marriage when he killed Goliath. Also, the man who killed Goliath was supposed to receive great wealth but David complains of being poor (1 Samuel 18:23; see 17:25).
  6. Saul's tactic comes to nothing, but it is a tactic that David uses successfully later on (2 Samuel 11:1-17).
- D. David proved to be a good Shepherd, protecting the flocks from wild beasts (1 Samuel 17:34-35). He was a musician and comforted Saul (1 Samuel 16:23). He was a very brave man and fought a giant (1 Samuel 17:50). In all his battles he was successful (1 Samuel 18:5, 14, 30). He was loved by the king's own son (1 Samuel 18:3), was popular with the people (1 Samuel 18:7). Despite or because of all this, Saul became his enemy (1 Samuel 18:29).

## Questions

1. Who killed Goliath, David (1 Samuel 17:50) or Elhanan (2 Samuel 21:19)?
2. What is the meaning of Jonathan giving David his robe, tunic, sword etc. (1 Samuel 18:4)?
3. Did Saul realise that David was the “neighbour” and the “one better than you”, that Samuel spoke of as being the next king (Cp. 1 Samuel 15:28; 18:8)?

## Comments

*“The Philistine said to David, Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods” (1 Samuel 17:43 NASB)*

The shepherd carries a staff that he holds in the centre. It is used not only as a support in climbing hills, but for the purpose of beating bushes and low brushwood in which the flocks stray, and where snakes and other reptiles abound. It may also be used for correcting the shepherd dogs, and keeping them in subjection. Thus Goliath says, “Am I a dog, that you come against me with staves?”

*“Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt” (1 Samuel 18:4 NASB)*

It is considered in the East a special mark of respect to be presented by a prince with some of the garments he has for his own wearing. The gift of a girdle is a token of the greatest confidence and affection, and is very highly prized. Joab expressed his intense desire for the death of Absalom by his willingness to give a girdle to the man who would murder him (2 Samuel 18:11. See also Esther 6:6-9).

The staff, scrip, and sling.

*“He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine” (1 Samuel 17:40 NASB)*

1. The shepherd carries a staff that he holds in the center. It is used not only as a support in climbing hills, but for the purpose of beating bushes and low brushwood in which the flocks stray, and where snakes and other reptiles abound. It may also be used for correcting the shepherd-dogs, and keeping them in subjection. Thus Goliath says, “Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?” verse 43. This useful accompaniment of a shepherd's life is mentioned in Genesis 32:10; Psalms 23:4; Micah 7:14, and in other passages.
2. The scrip was a bag of leather thrown over the shoulder, and used by shepherds and travellers to carry provisions. It is still used by Eastern shepherds, and is made of the skin of a kid stripped off whole and tanned. This is the only passage in the Old Testament where it is mentioned, but reference is made to it in several places in the New Testament – Matthew 10:10; Mark 6:8; Luke 9:3; 10:4; 22:35-36.
3. The sling was made of leather, or of plaited work or wool, rushes, hair, or sinews. The middle part, where the stone lay, was called the cup (caph) because of its cup-like depression. It was wider than the ends, but the sling gradually narrowed toward the extremities, so that it could be easily handled. In the Egyptian sling, which probably was the same as the Hebrew, there was a loop at one end which was placed over the thumb, in order to retain the weapon when the stone was hurled and the other end became free. The sling was used by shepherds to keep the beasts or prey from the flock, and also to keep the sheep from straying. Husbandmen likewise used it to drive away birds from the fields of corn. In war it was a formidable weapon in skilful hands. The Egyptian slinger carried a bag of round stones hanging from shoulder, as David did. The Assyrians, however, according to their sculptures, had lying at their feet a heap of pebbles, which they picked up as they were needed. In using the sling, the stone was put into the broad hollowed part, the ends were grasped together in the hand, and after a few whirls around the head to give impetus, the stone was discharged, frequently with force enough to penetrate helmet or shield.

A weapon so peculiar in its formation and so great in its power was appropriately referred to as an Illustration or swift and certain destruction. Thus Abigail said to David, "*The souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.*" 1 Samuel 25:9. Thus the Lord said to Jeremiah, "*I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once, and will distress them.*" Jeremiah 10:18. The figure in both these passages is drawn, not from the destructive power of the sling, but from the ease and rapidity with which, by a practiced hand, the stone was hurled from it.

The Benjamites were so skilful in the use of this weapon that some of them "*could sling stones at a hair, and not miss.*" Judges 20:16. The youthful David showed great skill, since he hurled the pebble with such aim and force that it smote the giant in the forehead and brought him to the ground. Verses 49, 50.



## LESSON 10

### Chapters 19-20

#### I. JONATHAN SAVES DAVID (19:1-10)

- A. Saul has made several unsuccessful attempts to kill David (1 Samuel 18:17, 20-27). But the Lord was with David and he became even more successful and popular (1 Samuel 18:30). Saul now changes tactics: “*No more Mr nice guy,*” just plain upfront orders to Jonathan and his attendants to kill David (1 Samuel 19:1).
1. Jonathan's friendship and love for David is rooted in deeper soil than national and family loyalty. Jonathan warns David of his father's intentions and sends him into hiding (1 Samuel 19:2-3).
  2. Jonathan has caught his father at one of his more 'sane' moments, as he is able to reason with him concerning David. Jonathan points out how much David has benefited him, how he risked his own life, and how he won a great victory for Israel.
  3. At this, Saul swears by God that he will not kill David (1 Samuel 19:4-6). Things are now patched up and David is back in Saul's service (1 Samuel 19:7).
- B. Saul's anger, fear and jealousy always seems to come to the surface when David is back in the limelight (1 Samuel 18:7-8; 14-15, 28), and here is another occasion: David had returned the victor from battle and now the evil spirit from the Lord comes upon Saul once more. While David is comforting Saul on his harp, Saul tries to kill him again (1 Samuel 19:9-10); Saul soon forgets his oath (1 Samuel 19:6). It is difficult to know how much time elapsed between verses 7 & 8?

#### II. MICHAL SAVES DAVID (19:11-24)

- A. David escaped Saul's attempt on his life and went home, but Saul has sent men to watch his house till morning (1 Samuel 19:11). Michal, Saul's daughter, David's wife, helps him to escape through a window (1 Samuel 19:11-12).
- B. Michal deterred those who came to arrest David for a while by putting an idol in his bed and saying he was ill (1 Samuel 19:13). Michal, we think, saved her own life by saying that David had threatened her (1 Samuel 19:17). The idol mentioned (1 Samuel 19:13) is a clue to the condition of that time. In 1 Samuel 18:28, the writer says that Saul regarded David as an enemy, and here (1 Samuel 19:17) Saul calls him an enemy with his own lips.
- C. David flees to Samuel at Ramah and tells of all that Saul had tried to do to him (1 Samuel 19:18). But David is not to be left in peace as Saul sends three detachments to arrest him. But the spirit of God came on each group causing them to prophecy (1 Samuel 19:20-21). Saul comes to Ramah himself but also prophecies (1 Samuel 19:23-24; cp. 10:9-13).

#### III. DAVID AND JONATHAN (20:1-42)

- A. David fled from Naioth at Ramah and sought Jonathan's help (1 Samuel 20:1, 3).
1. Jonathan seems to be unaware of the events that have taken place and is finding it difficult to believe that his father is trying to kill David. This is because he had a close relationship with his father, who would surely tell him of all his plans (1 Samuel 20:2). Not only this, he had his father's oath that he would not kill David (1 Samuel 19:6).
  2. Despite being a great prince and having a close relationship with his father, Jonathan does seem to be a little naïve.
- B. Between them, David and Jonathan devise a way to determine how Saul feels about David (1 Samuel 20:4-7). If Saul really seeks David's life, then David must flee. Jonathan, knowing that the Lord is with David, seeks an assurance from him that he will show his family kindness when he comes to power (1 Samuel 20:14).
- C. Saul's hatred for David is exposed to all (1 Samuel 20:24-30). Saul is so enraged in his fit of madness that he even tries to kill Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:33).

1. Jonathan now knows that David must flee to save his life and their departure is very emotional (1 Samuel 20:41-42).
2. Jonathan walks back into town to unsure relationships, while David heads out of town to an uncertain future.

### Questions

1. When does the evil spirit from the Lord usually come upon Saul (See 1 Samuel 18:8-11)?
2. When David fled from Saul he went to Samuel who was at Ramah (1 Samuel 19:18). Why to Samuel?
3. Three detachments of soldiers prophesied by the Spirit. Saul also prophesied by the Spirit (1 Samuel 19:20-24). Can you explain these verses?
4. After attempting to kill David, why is it that Saul still expected David to be at the feast (1 Samuel 20:25-26)?

### Comments

*“Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, so that he stuck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night” (1 Samuel 19:10 NASB)*

According to an ancient Asiatic custom, when a dart was thrown at a freedman, and he escaped from it by flight, he was thereby absolved from all allegiance to his master. Thus Saul by his murderous fury gave complete liberty to David, whose subsequent acts of war against the king could not be considered rebellion. From that hour he was no longer a subject of king Saul.

*“He also stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, is Saul also among the prophets?” (1 Samuel 19:24 NASB)*

This does not mean absolutely without any clothing. A person was called naked whose outer garments were thrown aside, leaving nothing but the tunic and girdle. Thus Isaiah was naked by simply removing his sackcloth mantle (Isaiah 20:2). This is also the meaning of “*flee away naked*” in Amos 2:16. The young man who followed Jesus at the time of His arrest was probably “*naked*” in this sense (Mark 14:51-52). Peter was also “*naked*” in the same way at the time he cast himself into the sea to meet the Lord (John 21:7; cp. 2 Samuel 6:14, 20).

## LESSON 11

### Chapters 21-22

#### I. DAVID AT NOB (21:1-9)

- A. David, fleeing from Saul, went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest (1 Samuel 21:1).
  - 1. It seems that Nob was the place of worship since Shiloh had been taken.
  - 2. But why did David come here? David's immediate needs are food, shelter, a weapon, and above all guidance from God.
- B. Ahimelech trembles in the presence of such a visitor as David and seeks to know what has become of his bodyguards and royal provisions. For these would certainly be expected of a royal ambassador.
  - 1. In order to satisfy all of his questions David makes up a story about being on a secret mission, which the priest believes (1 Samuel 21:2-4).
  - 2. Ahimelech supplies all of David's needs: food, five loaves of consecrated bread.
    - a. This was not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, but an exception was made in this case.
    - b. In the New Testament Jesus endorses this action (Matthew 12:3-7).
  - 3. A weapon, the sword that David took from Goliath, was here at Nob. It had previously been in David's own tent (1 Samuel 17:54). Guidance from God: although the text does not here say that he enquired of God on David's behalf, we read later that he did (1 Samuel 22:13-14).
- C. We understand David's deceit but we do not approve when we realize that Ahimelech was the brother of Ahijah, who was now Saul's new spiritual adviser after Samuel had withdrawn his services (1 Samuel 14:3). Also, Doeg the Edomite, Saul's head shepherd, was present. Tied up with ceremonial duties (1 Samuel 21:7). Doeg may have been enlisted into Saul's service after defeating the Edomites earlier on (See 1 Samuel 14:47).

#### II. DAVID IN ENEMY TERRITORY (21:10-22:5)

- A. Having received provisions and a weapon, David goes to Gath (1 Samuel 21:10).
  - 1. We may be excused for thinking that David is also now losing his mind, for he has come into enemy territory, the home town of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:4), carrying Goliath's sword, and he hopes not to be recognised!
    - a. Surprisingly, some of Achish's servants think they recognise David and bring him before the king (1 Samuel 21:14).
    - b. Fearing for his life David feigns madness and is removed from his presence (1 Samuel 21:15).
- B. At last, David makes a smart move: he leaves enemy territory and takes refuge in the caves of Adullam, which is half way between Gath and Bethlehem in Judah (1 Samuel 22:1).
  - 1. Here many outcasts and criminals have gathered and David becomes their leader (1 Samuel 22:2).
  - 2. It seems that David's family is also under some threat from Saul, as they to seek a sanctuary here (1 Samuel 22:1). For their own safety David leaves his family in Moab outside of Saul's territory.
- C. The prophet Gad makes a cameo appearance in this book telling David to go into Judah (1 Samuel 22:5).
  - 1. We were rather under the impression that David was already in Judea (see II, B).
  - 2. We can only assume that the stronghold of 1 Samuel 22:5 is outside of Judah and is not the same place as Adullam (The prophet Gad is seen again in 2 Samuel 24:11).

### III. THE PRIESTS OF NOB MURDERED (22:6-23)

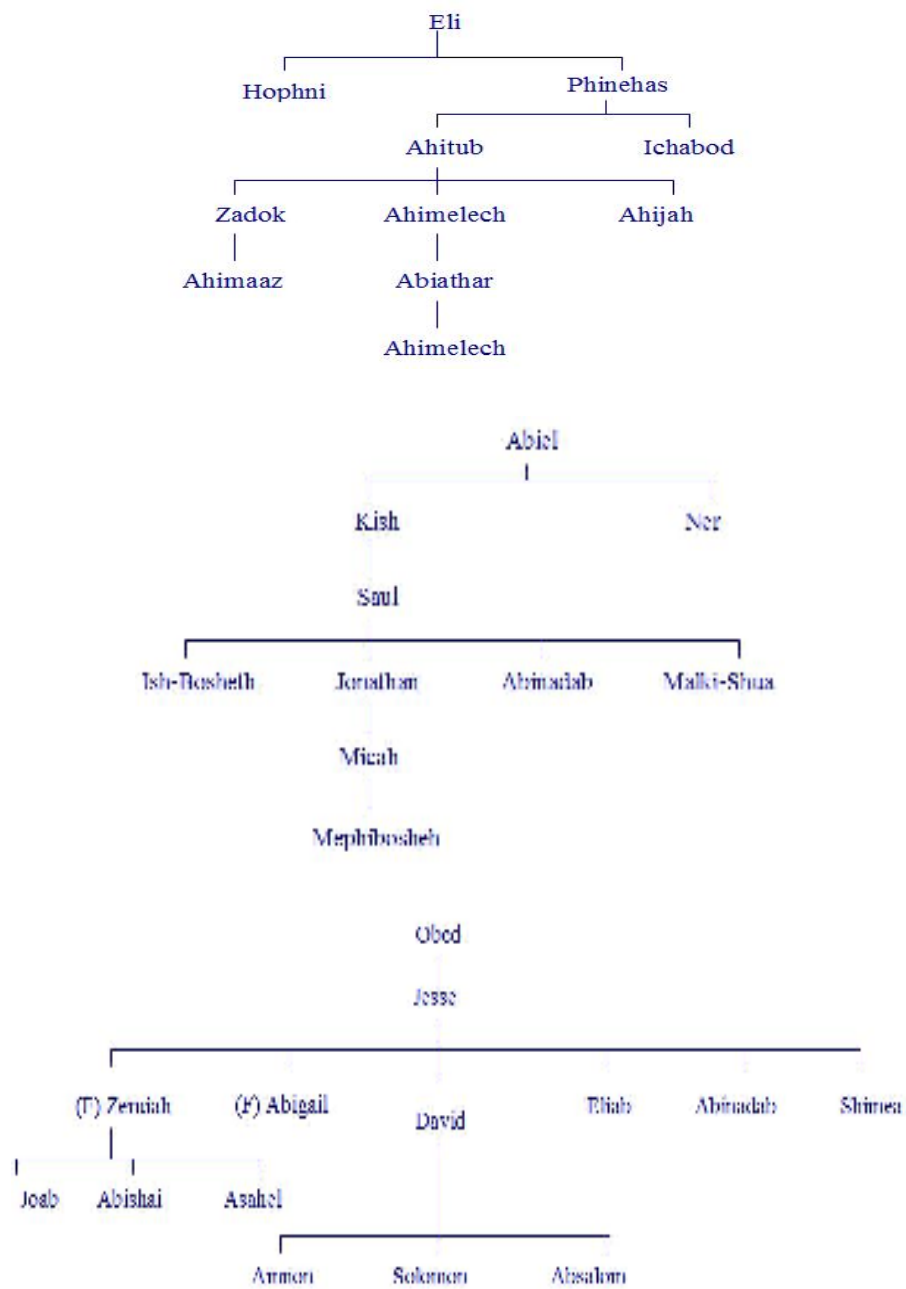
- A. Saul is at a low ebb, feeling sorry for himself and feeling isolated (1 Samuel 22:6-8).
  - 1. Doeg, Saul's chief shepherd, who was earlier at Nob, tells the king of all he had witnessed at Nob.
  - 2. But Doeg fails to mention that Ahimelech questioned David and he fails to mention that David lied to the priest (1 Samuel 22:9-10).
- B. Saul summons Ahimelech and his entire house and accuses him of conspiring against him (1 Samuel 22:13).
  - 1. Ahimelech tries to make a defence but to no avail (1 Samuel 22:14-15).
  - 2. Saul is full of madness and paranoia (1 Samuel 22:13b); he is not a man to reason with. Saul sinks to new depths of sin as he orders his men to kill the priests, but they refuse (Cp. Exodus 1:17).
- C. The king turns to Doeg who obliges by killing the priests, not only so, but he also destroys the whole city of Nob. Not a man, woman, or child is left alive except Abiathar son of Ahimelech who escapes and joins up with David (1 Samuel 22:20-23).

#### Questions

- 1. Compare 1 Samuel 21:1-2 > Matthew 12:3-4. Was David alone or did he have companions with him?
- 2. Ahimelech supplied David with consecrated loaves. Jesus sanctions this action in saying that, to show mercy is better than an insistence on keeping ceremonial law (Matthew 12:3-4). Does this mean we can use the treasury money to help needy non-Christians when the situation is desperate?
- 3. What does, "*detained before the Lord*", mean (1 Samuel 21:7)?
- 4. Why would David have taken his parents to Moab (1 Samuel 22:3-4)?
- 5. Who is this prophet Gad (1 Samuel 22:5)?

## FAMILY TREES

These genealogies identify some of the main characters in our study.





## LESSON 12

### Chapters 23-24

#### I. DAVID SAVES KEILAH (23:1-6)

- A. Abiathar, son of Amimelech, had alone escaped the destruction of Nob by Doeg the Edomite.
  - 1. We see the providence of God at work here, for Abiathar was not just a man but a priest of God, not just a priest but he also brought the Ephod with him!
  - 2. This meant that David was able to stay in close communion with God (1 Samuel 22:20; 23:6). The Ephod seems to have been more than a mere garment.
- B. Since Saul has been occupied with seeking David, it seems the Philistines had a free hand to continue their aggression unmolested (1 Samuel 23:1, 27). Keilah is presently under attack (1 Samuel 23:1).
  - 1. We assume that David and his men are still in the forest of Hereth (1 Samuel 22:5), in Judah. Although the location of Hereth is unknown, we might speculate and say it is North of Keilah, since God says, “*Go down*”.
  - 2. We might also suggest that it was very far since David and his men had been heading south. Keilah belonged to Judah but was behind enemy lines.
- C. Although David has enough troubles of his own, he is still concerned for his countrymen and is determined to help them, but he only does so at the direction of the Lord. Having defeated the Philistines and delivered Keilah you would think the people of that city would be grateful (1 Samuel 23:4-6).

#### II. SAUL'S PURSUIT OF DAVID (23:7-29)

- A. This battle has revealed David's whereabouts to Saul who is currently calling his troops together to go down and attack him (1 Samuel 23:7-8).
  - 1. Although David had done the people of Keilah a good deed, he is concerned about his safety in that city and enquires of the Lord concerning this (1 Samuel 23:9-12).
  - 2. David leaves that city moving from one place to the next.
- B. While at Horesh, David is visited by Jonathan. He must have been a sight for sore eyes and a medicine for his heavy heart.
  - 1. Jonathan does not disappoint and is optimistic concerning David's future (1 Samuel 23:17).
  - 2. We notice again that Jonathan, by an oath, secures his life and a position when David becomes king (1 Samuel 23:18; cp. 20:13-14).
- C. Saul was continuing his search for David on a daily basis until the Ziphites came to him and revealed his whereabouts.
  - 1. Maybe they had heard what happened to those who had previously aided him (1 Samuel 22:11-19).
  - 2. As Saul closes in on David he receives a message that the Philistines are invading the land, and so has to go and fight them (1 Samuel 23:26-27). By the providence of God the life of David is spared.

#### III. DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE (24:1-22)

- A. Having finished dealing with the Philistines, Saul now returns to the more serious matter of pursuing David.
  - 1. Having been told that David was in the desert of En Gedi, Saul comes with 3000 men (1 Samuel 24:1-2).

2. While searching near the Craggs of the wild goats, Saul steps into a cave to relieve himself. It is in this cave that David and his men are hiding.
  - a. This was the perfect opportunity for David to Kill Saul and his men urged him to do so. Instead, David creeps up behind Saul and tears off a piece of his robe (1 Samuel 24:4).
  - b. David's conscience was troubled by his actions and he knew he could not lift a hand against the Lord's anointed one (1 Samuel 24:6; cp. Romans 13:1-2; Acts 23:1-5).
- B. Holding the missing part of Saul's robe in his hand, David convinces Saul that he has no desire to kill him and that he is not guilty of rebellion. On the contrary, it is the king who seeks to take his life (1 Samuel 24:8-15).
  1. Yes, David is to be the next King. Yes, Saul has tried to kill David on many occasions. But David falls prostrate to the ground giving that honour due to a king. David is also by this action showing his love and respect for God. David calls Saul, "*my lord*", "*My master*", and, "*my father*" (1 Samuel 24:8, 10, 11).
  2. David insists that if there is to be any judging or vengeance then God will take care of that.
- C. Seeing the missing piece from his robe in David's hand and seeing his great humbleness, Saul is moved to tears.
  1. Saul knows he has done wrong and he also knows that David will be king (1 Samuel 24:16-20).
  2. Saul, like his son, secures an oath from David that he and his will be spared when David becomes king (Cp. 1 Samuel 20:13-15).
  3. Saul returns home and David returns to the stronghold.

### Questions

1. Why didn't Saul go down and defend Keilah (1 Samuel 23:1)?
2. What were the Philistine troops doing with livestock (1 Samuel 23:5)?
3. Why were the men of Keilah and Ziph so ready to betray David (1 Samuel 23:12, 19)?
4. How was Jonathan able to find David when Saul could not (1 Samuel 23:14-15)?
5. Why was David conscience stricken (1 Samuel 24:5)?
6. Why is David so humble before Saul (1 Samuel 24:8ff)?
7. Comment on Saul's repentance (1 Samuel 24:16-20 > 26:1-2).

### Comments

The Ephod was a sacred vestment originally worn by the high priest and made of "*gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work*" (Exodus 28:4ff; 39:2ff). It was held together front and back by two shoulder pieces at the top and a girdle band around the waist. On each shoulder piece was an onyx stone engraved with six names of the tribes of Israel. Attached to the Ephod by chains of pure gold was a breastplate containing twelve precious stones. Beneath the Ephod was worn the blue robe of the Ephod, having a hole for the head and extending to the feet with a hem alternating with gold bells and pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet (Exodus 28:31-35; 39:22-26).

Later, persons other than the high priest wore Ephods. Samuel wore a linen ephod while ministering before the Lord (1 Samuel 2:18), which was characteristic of the ordinary priests (1 Samuel 2:28; 14:3; 22:18). David wore a linen ephod while he danced before the Lord after bringing the ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:14). Abiathar carried off from Nob an ephod, which represented to David the divine presence, for of it he inquired the will of the Lord (1 Samuel 23:6, 9; 30:7, 8).

The ephod was misused as an object of idolatrous worship by Gideon (Judges 17:5; 18:14). (P.B.D. p.255).



## LESSON 13

### Chapters 25-26

#### I. DAVID AND NABAL (25:1-13)

- A. When a great man dies, many will mourn for him, much will be said of him, and many may write books on his life and works. Samuel is such a man and yet only one verse is taken to tell of his death.
- B. David and his men (600), perhaps desperate for a meal, enter the desert of Moan where Nabal<sup>3</sup> lives (1 Samuel 25:1-2).
  - 1. Nabal is described as a man of property and wealth but his downfall lies in the fact he is, as his name suggests, a fool (Wealth without brains and brains without wealth, both are undesirable).
  - 2. Nabal's wife, Abigail, on the other hand, has beauty and brains (1 Samuel 25:3). Clearly, the two are incompatible, much like David and Saul.
- C. *"Sheep were as much valued for their wool as their meat (Cp. 2 Kings 3:4) and shearing time was of such importance that it was celebrated as a festival"* (Peaks p.328). Compare 2 Samuel 13:23 > 28.
  - 1. While David and his men were at Carmel they could have killed the shepherds and plundered the livestock, but instead they protected them (1 Samuel 25:16). David appeals to this fact when making request to Nabal for supplies (1 Samuel 25:7).
  - 2. But Nabal treats David's name with contempt and refuses them any help. Nabal is a fool because David has already suggested that he could have taken what he wanted by force (1 Samuel 25:7), and now this contempt was sure to make David mad. Of his 600 men David had 400 prepare for vengeance (1 Samuel 25:22).

#### II. NO TIME TO LOSE (25:14-35)

- A. Nabal's servants are wiser than their master because they knew that disaster was imminent (1 Samuel 25:17).
  - 1. Since Nabal won't listen to his servants, the servants approach their mistress Abigail (1 Samuel 25:14).
  - 2. Abigail lost no time, she prepared a gift for David and his men. She was able to get these things ready so soon because much of it was prepared for the festival (1 Samuel 25:8). These supplies she sent on ahead.
- B. David had been ranting on about Nabal's contempt and the vengeance he would take upon him (1 Samuel 25:21-22).
  - 1. Maybe this ranting was in order to sear his conscience because he knew better than to take vengeance (see 1 Samuel 24:12).
  - 2. Servants came bearing gifts and then David saw a beautiful woman on a donkey. When Abigail saw David she alighted and bowed down to the ground at his feet (1 Samuel 25:18-23). David's weakness was a beautiful woman (Cp. 2 Samuel 11:1-4) and she was bound to succeed in averting disaster.
- C. Abigail has been tactful in her behaviour and she now shows skill in her speech.
  - 1. She first suggests that the Lord has sent her to keep him from needless bloodshed (1 Samuel 25:26).
  - 2. She then flatters David (1 Samuel 25:28).
  - 3. Finally, she suggests that such action would be a staggering burden on his conscience (1 Samuel 25:31).
  - 4. David is persuaded by her words.

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<sup>3</sup> Nabal means "fool".

### III. NABAL'S DEATH (25:36-44)

A. The news of all that nearly befell Nabal seems to have provoked a paralysing stroke from which he later died (1 Samuel 25:37-38).

1. David viewed this as the Lord's doing for the contempt he had shown of his name earlier (1 Samuel 25:10).
2. Vengeance belongs to the Lord and David knew this (1 Samuel 24:12). He acknowledges this again later (1 Samuel 26:10).
3. Although Abigail may have welcomed Nabal's death we may assume that there was a time of mourning before David asked for her hand in marriage (Cp. 1 Samuel 31:6-13).

B. David now marries Abigail.

1. David had originally married Michal, Saul's daughter (1 Samuel 18:27).
2. When David left his home to begin life as a fugitive he left his wife behind (1 Samuel 19:12), and at some later date Saul gave Michal to Paltiel for his wife (1 Samuel 25:44).
3. But David will soon get her back. While on the run David had married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Ahinoam was the name of Saul's wife (1 Samuel 14:50) and commentators are divided over whether this is Saul's wife or just someone of the same name.

### IV. A DANGEROUS MISSION (26:1-12)

A. The Ziphites have once more betrayed David's whereabouts to Saul (Cp. 1 Samuel 23:19), who is camped on the hill of Hakilah. David remained in the desert (1 Samuel 26:3).

B. David and Abishai are very daring chaps entering into the heart of the camp at night, and taking the royal spear and a water jug, which are at his head (1 Samuel 26:7).

C. Again, David does not lay a hand on the Lord's anointed, although Abishai encouraged it (1 Samuel 26:8). David knows that the avenger of evil is God (1 Samuel 26:10) and they leave the camp with the spear and jug.

### V. THE FINAL PARTING (26:13-25)

A. Being at a safe distance, David first humiliates Abner and his men who are supposed to be guarding Saul, saying that they deserved to die (1 Samuel 26:13-16). Abner has nothing to say.

B. David now reasons with Saul:

1. He first suggests that it was his men that had incited him against himself (Cp. 1 Samuel 22:6-17). But his hatred for David really came from within.
2. David now pleads his innocents and points to the futility of his pursuit of him (1 Samuel 26:18-20).

C. Considering all these things, Saul realizes his error and foolish behaviour (1 Samuel 26:21).

1. Saul asks David to come back with him but David's answer to that is to tell Saul to send a man to retrieve his spear (1 Samuel 26:22).
2. And so David and Saul part for the last time.

### Questions

1. What is the connection between sheep-shearing time (1 Samuel 25:7) and festival time (1 Samuel 25:8)?
2. In 1 Samuel 25:10 Nabal says, "*Who is this David?*" Does Nabal really not know?
3. How was Abigail able to prepare what she did so quickly (1 Samuel 25:18)?
4. What are the three main points of Abigail's speech to David (1 Samuel 25:26-31)?
5. "*And his heart failed him and he became like a stone*" (1 Samuel 25:37). What might this be describing?

6. Why are the Ziphites so loyal to Saul (1 Samuel 26:1>23:19)?
7. "*The Lord had put them into a deep sleep*" (1 Samuel 26:12). How was this done?
8. Why doesn't David go back with Saul (1 Samuel 26:21, 25)?



## LESSON 14

### Chapters 27-28

#### I. DAVID LIVES AMONG THE PHILISTINES (27:1-28:2)

A. We left the last chapter with David and Saul having resolved their differences.

1. But David knows Saul better by now and knows his life is always under threat by Saul (1 Samuel 27:1); and so David seeks safety among the Philistines (1 Samuel 27:2).
2. This is quite remarkable when you consider what happened the last time David tried to hide among them; He had tried to enter their territory incognito but was recognised and brought before Achish the king, and in order to escape David feigned madness (1 Samuel 21:10-15).
3. David now approaches Achish, not incognito, but with his men, wives and children. They are all allowed to stay in the royal city and we wonder how David managed to *'pull it off'*?

B. David would remain in Philistine territory for 14 months (1 Samuel 27:7).

1. After remaining with Achish in Gath (the royal city) for a short time, David, having now gained the king's trust, asks for a plot to be allotted to him and his men in which to settle.
2. Achish agrees and gives him Ziklag, and Ziklag belonged to the kings of Judah from that time on (1 Samuel 27:6).

C. David had already deceived Achish once before (1 Samuel 21:10-15) and now he does so again.

1. David and his men had been given Ziklag, and it was from here that David was able to carry out his own policy, which meant raids on the Geshorites, Gittites and the Amalekites; these all being enemies of Israel.
2. Lest Achish should find out, David took no prisoners (1 Samuel 27:8-12). This was a risky business and could surely not be kept up for too long a time.

D. After living in Philistine territory for about a year, operating his own independent policy, Achish prepared to war against Israel, and David and his men were expected to accompany the king (1 Samuel 28:1). David's reaction seems to be one of keenness but he could hardly react in any other way! (1 Samuel 28:2).

#### II. SAUL VISITS A MEDIUM (28:3-25)

A. While we are left wondering how David is going to get out of the sticky situation in which he finds himself, our attention is taken back to Saul.

1. The Philistines were gathering for war against Israel and Saul becomes fearful (1 Samuel 28:5). This reminds us of a similar occasion back in chapter thirteen, here also the Philistines come against Israel and Saul is afraid (1 Samuel 13:5-7).
2. This present fear leads Saul to inquire of the Lord, of which we learn there are three ways: dreams, Urim, and Prophets; but he receives no answer.
  - a. In an earlier incident when Saul inquired of the Lord and received no answer he assumed it was because of some sin (1 Samuel 14:37-38), but sin is not even mentioned as a possibility for the Lord's silence.
  - b. We might ask, "*What sin could Saul have committed that the Lord should not answer him?*" We might answer, "*take your pick!*" Disobedience, pride, rebellion, attempted murder, etc.

- B. In desperation for guidance, Saul finds a medium and speaks to Samuel. Saul knows what he is doing is wrong, as it was he who had expelled such mediums from the land (1 Samuel 28:3; cp. Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; Deuteronomy 18:10-11). Despite this they were still to be found practising their art.
- C. Saul and two men go to see a medium at Endor; Saul is in disguise (1 Samuel 28:8). We might make a few observations:
1. The medium was asked to bring up Samuel (1 Samuel 28:11). This may have aroused her suspicions as to who she was dealing with [that she was a cautious woman is seen in v.9] since Samuel and Saul went together.
  2. When this woman saw Samuel she was shocked, it was something that had never happened before.
  3. Seeing Samuel not only shocked her but confirmed her suspicion that it was Saul who she was dealing with, and so feared for her life supposing she had been caught out (1 Samuel 28:9>12).
  4. Saul is unable to see Samuel and has to rely on the medium. Saul knows it is Samuel from her description, "*An old man wearing a robe*". When Saul last saw Samuel he would have been an old man (Cp. 1 Samuel 12:2). The robe was the key to his identification (Cp. 1 Samuel 15:27).
- D. Samuel's message to Saul is the same as when he lived on Earth (1 Samuel 15:26-28), except the neighbour who would be put in Saul's place is now named as David (1 Samuel 28:17). He further declares that Israel will be handed over to the Philistines and that Saul and his sons would die on the morrow (1 Samuel 28:19). Saul was now even more fearful than before.

### Questions

1. How was David able to persuade Achish to let him and his men dwell in their land? Bearing in mind David had killed Goliath who even came from the royal city (1 Samuel 17:4>51), and had already attempted to enter philistine territory before but had to feign madness to escape.
2. Now that David was in Philistine territory, were his troubles over, could he now stop worrying about losing his life?
3. When Achish tells David he must accompany him in battle against Israel David seems to be quite keen (1 Samuel 28:1-2), how do we know he was not and that this was a very sticky situation for him?
4. Can mediums contact the dead?
5. Why does the Spirit come up out of the ground (1 Samuel 28:13)?
6. What do Samuel's words tell us about the state of man after death (1 Samuel 28:15, 19)?

## LESSON 15

### Chapters 29-31

#### I. ACHISH SENDS DAVID BACK TO ZIKLAG (29:1-11)

- A. We left David and his men in a sticky situation in chapter 28. The Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel and Achish insisted that David and his men fight by his side (1 Samuel 28:1). David had been deceiving Achish for nearly a year (See 1 Samuel 27:6-12) and now it seems he was about to be exposed.
- B. The Philistine rulers strongly objected to the presence of David and his men in their ranks, they suspected that he and his men might turn on them during the battle in an attempt to win favour with Saul (1 Samuel 29:4).
- C. Achish had really been taken in by David - see how Achish defends David (1 Samuel 29:3). In conversation with David, Achish describes him as reliable, having no fault, and being pleasing in his eyes (1 Samuel 29:6, 9).
  - 1. Reluctantly he sends him home.
  - 2. So David and his men return to the land of the Philistines. What a lucky escape for David! God is surely watching over David.

#### II. THE AMALEKITES RAID ZIKLAG (30:1-8)

- A. While David and his men had been away, the Amalekites took the opportunity to raid Ziklag. They took all the women and children captive as well as all the livestock (1 Samuel 30:1-2). This then is the scene to which David and his men returned - a burning empty town.
- B. The men are devastated and there is much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth (1 Samuel 30:3-4). The gnashing of teeth was on the part of the men against David; they were blaming him for all their present misfortunes and even spoke of stoning David.
- C. David does not try to blame God for letting this disaster happen but goes to God in prayer in his hour of bitterness and loneliness (1 Samuel 30:6).
  - 1. Finding strength in the Lord, David now seeks guidance and calls the priest to him.
  - 2. The priest is Abiathar who, we remember, was the only priest who escaped when Saul slew all the priests at Nob (1 Samuel 22:6-23).

#### III. DAVID PURSUES THE AMALEKITES (30:9-31)

- A. Having inquired of the Lord, David and his men begin their pursuit of the Amalekites.
  - 1. Reaching the Besor Ravine, 200 of his men find they are too exhausted to go any further (1 Samuel 30:10).
  - 2. We must remember that they had just returned from Aphek, which is about 75 miles. This they covered in three days - 25 miles a day! It's a wonder they had the strength to go on.
- B. There is no indication that David knows who raided Ziklag as it could have been a raiding party from the Amalekites, the Geshurites, who lived between southern Philistia and Egypt, or the Girzites (Cp. 1 Samuel 27:8-9). Further, David did not know where this raiding party might be.
  - 1. But by the providence of God they found an Egyptian in a field who was a slave of an Amalekite, he had been left for dead by his master when he became ill.
  - 2. The slave not only confirmed that it was an Amalekite raiding party but was also able to lead David to them (1 Samuel 30:13-15).

- C. Having found the Amalekites scattered over the countryside celebrating their successful raid, David and his men fought against them from dusk till evening, but 400 of them escaped on camels (1 Samuel 30:18). David recovered everything and plunder besides. David is a hero now where earlier the men had spoke of stoning him.
- D. When it came to sharing out the plunder, some of the men objected to those who stayed behind receiving a share, but David reminds them that but for the Lord they would have nothing (1 Samuel 30:23; cp. 1 Corinthians 4:7). David also sent some of the plunder to the elders of Israel who were his friends (1 Samuel 30:26-27). This was in an effort to show where his loyalties lay and maintain good relations.

#### IV. THE FINAL CONFLICT (31:1-13)

- A. Meanwhile, the Philistines were inflicting heavy casualties on Israel, who were fleeing before them. Saul's sons had been killed and now Saul was critically wounded by an archer's arrow (1 Samuel 31:1-3); the words of Samuel ringing in his ears (1 Samuel 28:18-19).
- B. Rather than fall into enemy hands and be tortured and abused, Saul chose to kill himself, and his loyal armour-bearer followed him (1 Samuel 31:5). This happened on Mount Gilbo. The news of Saul's death sent the Israelites fleeing (1 Samuel 31:8-10).
- C. The next day the Philistines found the bodies of Saul and his sons and they cut off their heads and put their armour in the temple of their goddess Ashtoreth. The bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened to the wall of Beth Shan (1 Samuel 31:8-10).
- D. On hearing of the shameful treatment of the bodies of Saul and his sons, the citizens of Jabesh Gilead secretly retrieved their bodies, burned them and buried the bones under a Tamarish tree. These bones were later dug up and buried in the family tomb by David (2 Samuel 21:12-14).

#### Questions

1. Why were the Philistines concerned about David being in their ranks (1 Samuel 29:3)?
2. Why was being sent back to Ziklag a 'lucky break' for David?
3. Explain David's reluctant reply in 1 Samuel 29:8?
4. Why were David's men talking of stoning him (1 Samuel 30:6)?
5. Why were 200 of David's men too exhausted to pursue the raiding party (1 Samuel 30:10)?
6. Why did David send some of the plunder to the elders of Israel (1 Samuel 30:26)?
7. Was Saul's death a surprise to us?

THE END