

# THE TALE OF THREE KINGS

A Study in Brokenness



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## THE TALE OF THREE KINGS

### Israel Asks for a New King

#### I Samuel 8:1-22

The books of Samuel were originally one book in the Hebrew Canon until it was divided into two by the translators of the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), who viewed Samuel and Kings together as the "*Books of the Kingdoms.*" The author of the two books is unknown, but according to Jewish tradition, Samuel, the priest, prophet and the last judge of Israel, wrote the first portion of the book, with support from the prophets Nathan and Gad in the remaining chapters after Samuel's death.

Samuel tells of Israel's cry for a king, the resultant selection of Saul as its first king, the failure of Saul and the growing contest between Saul and David. The central theme of the books centre on the appointment of a righteous king, David, which leads to the King of kings, Israel's Messiah and the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ coming.

The name "*Saul*" (pronounced "*shaw-ool*") comes from a Hebrew word meaning "*asked.*" His father's name was Kish and they were from the tribe of Benjamin. This pivotal reign began around 1010 BC. I Samuel covers about 115 years while II Samuel contains the reign of David which was about 40 years.

It's very important in life to put our right foot forward. It's sad to say that the nation of Israel started off on the wrong foot early in their journey. They chose to take a wrong pathway that led them into detrimental effects. What we think are simple decisions in life can quickly escalate to become overwhelmingly damaging to many, many others.

You wouldn't think that simply choosing a king would create such far reaching impacts. Well, lets see how this story begins to unfold before us. We must remember early in this story that even partial obedience is still disobedience. It's the "*little flies that spoil the ointment.*" When we pay close attention to the details of life, we often see the big picture unfolding with greater ease. Due to the fact that Saul didn't heed wisdom from Samuel we find him taking an arduous journey from the peaks of royal election to the gutter of ultimate rejection.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35

### A. Israel Demands a King (8)

**8:1 - “When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel.”**

Times of transition are often times of unstableness in the hearts and minds of people. God’s people never gave an opportunity to the LORD to allow His plan to unfold. I’ve often wondered what would have happened if Samuel’s sons were given opportunity to serve in his place or if the people never would have been given a king like Saul.

The name “*Samuel*” means “*heard of God.*” He was the one who heard the voice of God when Eli should have (I Samuel 3). Just because he was getting old did not mean that his hearing (for the voice of God) was going. The Jews would say that a man was old when he turned 60 and “grey-headed when he was seventy years of age. Some believe Samuel was prematurely old because of the constant demands placed upon him as judge, priest and prophet.

He had already seen what happened when ungodly sons tried to disregard the godly teachings (and unfortunately the example) of their father (I Samuel 2:12-25).

**8:2 - “The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba.”**

The name “*Joel*” means “*Jehovah (is his) God.*” In I Chronicles 6:28 he is called “*Vashni*” which means “*weak.*” The name “*Abijah*” or “*Abiah*” means “*his father (is a worshipper of) Jehovah.*”

The place called “*Beersheba*” which means “*well of an oath.*” It was in this desert that Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21:8-21). It was also the place that Abraham made an oath with Abimelech a king of the Philistines. It was to ensure that there be peace between them and that Abraham’s well would be safeguarded.

**8:3 - “But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.”**

They chose to live a life that was contrary to principles of their faith as taught by their father. This is not the first leader that had this as a problem (i.e. - Aaron, Eli, David).

They chose to allow their love for money to cloud their judgement (I Timothy 3:3; 6:10).

*“Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those  
who see and twists the words of the righteous.”*

*Exodus 23:8*

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### A. Israel Demands a King (8) (Contd.)

**8:4 - “So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.”**

This group of elders would comprise of the heads of the tribes and other key leaders that were highly respected in Israel. It was a common practise among God’s people (Exodus 3:16; 24:1; II Samuel 5:3).

Ramah was the birthplace of Samuel. It was part of the circuit of towns and cities that he would visit including Gilgal, Ophrah Bethel & Mizpah in the land of Benjamin and Ephraim (I Samuel 7:16-17).

**8:5 - “They said to him, ‘You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.’”**

Who was to say that the sons of the kings or even the kings themselves would not become corrupt in their ways as history proved them to be?

Their surrounding warlike nations of Edom, Moab and Ammon as well as Aran had their kings to lead them into war

“Now, although the desire to be ruled by a king, which had existed in the nation even from the time of Gideon, was not in itself at variance with the appointment of Israel as a kingdom of God, yet **the motive** which led the people to desire it was both wrong and hostile to God, since the source of all the evils and misfortunes from which Israel suffered was to be found in the apostasy of the nation from its God, and its coquetting with the gods of the heathen.

Consequently their self-willed obstinacy in demanding a king, notwithstanding the warnings of Samuel, was an actual rejection of the sovereignty of Jehovah, since He had always manifested himself to His people as their king by delivering them out of the power of their foes, as soon as they returned to Him with simple penitence of heart.”

Keil & Delitzsch  
“Commentary on the Old Testament”  
William Eerdmans Publishing Company  
Vol. 2, p. 78

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### A. Israel Demands a King (8) (Contd.)

**8:6** - *“But when they said, ‘Give us a king to lead us,’ this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD.”*

Samuel was not so upset that they felt that he was too old (some believe that he was only 54 yrs old) and could not continue to fulfill his duties. It was not even that they chose to criticise the actions of his sons.

His biggest concern was that the people had decided that they wanted another form of government. This meant that the **Theocracy** of their present system was to be replaced by **Democracy** or even worse by **Autocracy**. Monarchy has never prevented anarchy.

Oh that we would take the things that concern us to God first, instead of as a last resort. We need more of the mind and will of God when making difficult decisions.

**8:7** - *“And the LORD told him: ‘Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.’”*

Many people question the idea of God speaking to us today. God either spoke in a vision, dream or an articulate voice. We have no trouble hearing other voices so why should we not be open to hear the voice of God?

God was not telling Samuel to agree with their request but rather just to grant what they wanted. Sometimes it's better for God NOT to grant our requests than to grant it. His mercy sometimes saves us a heap of problems when He simply says, NO!

*“You are destroyed, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper.  
10. Where is your king, that he may save you?  
Where are your rulers in all your towns, of whom you said, ‘Give me a king and princes?  
11. So in my anger I gave you a king, and in my wrath I took him away.”*

*Hosea 13:9-11*

Rejection of God's chosen leadership on earth is one thing while it is quite another to outright reject God Himself. Samuel was not going to step down without once more reminding them of their big mistake (I Samuel 10:18-19).

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### A. Israel Demands a King (8) (Contd.)

**8:8** - *“As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.”*

In God’s eyes, this was simply a continuation of their ingratitude and constant rebellion. What leader had they treated with respect during their full term of office?

Idolatry is often at the foot of rebellion and it is very hard to change from (Deuteronomy 9:24). When God is removed from the throne of our lives, we will always find something or someone to replace Him. God knows both the **attitude** and the **aptitude** of our will. Once we begin by dethroning God we will continue to even dethrone those we once placed on a throne and even promised to obey or worship (Exodus 32:1).

**8:9** - *“Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.”*

God has often allowed people to go their way after warning them of the consequences of their actions by clearly pointing out their wrongful ways and ideas (Ezekiel 3:18).

The prerogative of the king was going to supercede the will and desire of the people. Reigning over people is always a dangerous position to take when it is founded upon boastful pride (Matthew 20:25-28). God has special instructions for kings (Deuteronomy 17:15-20)

**8:10** - *“Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king.”*

Samuel ( *lit* - *“heard of God”*) made sure he passed on exactly what God told Him to say to the people.

**8:11** - *“He said, ‘This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots.’”*

The word for *“take”* indicates a forcefulness therefore, they will not have a choice in the matter of where or how their children serve the king.

The New Testament teaching chose to change the pomp and power to that of recognizing the value in each other (Matthew 6:25,26; James 2:1-7).

What began in the life of Saul (I Samuel 14:52) continued in the time of Solomon (I Kings 9:22; 10:26) and became worse under the rulership of Rehoboam (I Kings 12:6-11).

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### A. Israel Demands a King (8) (Contd.)

**8:12** - *“Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.”*

Once again the word of the Lord came to pass as the history pages turned with time (I Kings 4:7; 9:23; II Chronicles 26:10-16)

**8:13** - *“He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.”*

Even the women will not be safe from the king’s draft to serve his every need and want. They would become makers of expensive perfumes. They would also be called upon to cook elaborate daily meals as well as the many feasts to entertain the king’s guests.

**8:14** - *“He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants.”*

The king would ensure that his fields became the best because he would take just what he wanted just like Ahab did with Naboth (I Kings 21:1-19).

When God sets up his final kingdom it will return to a just system (Ezekiel 46:18).

**8:15** - *“He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants.”*

A tithe of their grains and grapes would be given to the king’s officials (*lit* - “*eunuchs*”) and those attending to his daily business. This would be above the other 1/10’s regularly required.

**8:16** - *“Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use.”*

These would be needed for the construction of the temple and other palaces and royal buildings (I Kings 5:13-18).

**8:17** - *“He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves.”*

A tithe of the flocks will also be required. They will be deprived of the liberty they now have because of being used as common slaves.



## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### A. Israel Demands a King (8) (Contd.)

**8:18** - *“When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the LORD will not answer you in that day.”*

There are circumstances when God doesn't answer our prayers (Proverbs 1:25-28; Luke 13:25) because He knows that our hearts are not changed (Isaiah 1:15; 8:21; Micah 3:4).

**8:19** - *“But the people refused to listen to Samuel. ‘No!’ they said. ‘We want a king over us.’”*

You would think that after all the warnings from Samuel that the people would change their minds. It goes to show just how determined and hardened a heart can become (Psalm 81:11) that wishes to go against the known will of God.

**8:20** - *“Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”*

For years Israel had prided itself living in safety and prosperity among the nations surrounding them (Deuteronomy 33:28). Often the king would take up the position as general of the army. It was likely that Israel was getting concerned about Nahash, the king of the Ammonites who was beginning to exert his military muscles (I Samuel 12:13).

**8:21** - *“When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD.”*

There is no indication that Samuel ever interrupted them or tried to stop them from speaking. Instead, he listened attentively to their carefully chosen words. Then he went privately before the LORD and repeating what the leaders had said. In doing so, he would expect God to direct the words that he would answer them with.

**8:22** - *“The LORD answered, ‘Listen to them and give them a king.’ Then Samuel said to the men of Israel, ‘Everyone go back to his town.’”*

The LORD was clearly saying that He was no longer attempting to convince them to change their desires. Their minds were clearly made up. Their request was about to be granted. A king would be appointed in a short time. The stage was set for the new king to take his throne.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11)

**9:1** - *“There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin.”*

The tribe of Benjamin was formed from Jacob and Rachel’s last son who was named Benjamin. Before Rachel died giving birth, she named the son *“Ben-Oni”* which means *“son of my trouble.”* Jacob renamed him *“Benjamin”* which means *“son of my right hand.”*

He was known as *“a man of standing.”* Perhaps he would have been more successful if he had been *“a man of kneeling.”*

There were five (the number of God’s grace) men called *“Kish”* from Israel recorded in the Bible. The name *“Abiel”* means *“the father (or possessor) of God.”*

**9:2** - *“He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites—a head taller than any of the others.”*

We can be deceived by good looks and a tall stature. Some believe he was almost 7 feet tall. Perhaps this is the reason that Samuel was later told not to allow a man’s stature or good looks to determine whether he is chosen by God or not (I Samuel 16:7). The same mistake was made during the people’s choice of Absalom (II Samuel 14:25,26).

**9:3** - *“Now the donkeys belonging to Saul’s father Kish were lost, and Kish said to his son Saul, ‘Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys.’”*

Donkeys were valuable because they were used to carry supplies; rode upon by persons of quality and cared for by those with great wealth (Job 1:3). Horses were next to impossible to acquire at this time in Palestine.

According to Jewish tradition, the servant’s name was Doeg the Edmonite a high ranking servant (I Samuel 22:9) who later killed 45 unarmed priests at Nob by order of King Saul (I Samuel 22:18).

**9:4** - *“So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and through the area around Shalisha, but they did not find them. They went on into the district of Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there. Then he passed through the territory of Benjamin, but they did not find them.”*

This region was just north of *“Jebus”* later called *“Jerusalem.”*

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**9:5** - *“When they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, ‘Come, let’s go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us.’”*

“**Zuph**” is where Ramah was and therefore, the home of Samuel. Donkeys were never as important than a son and a high ranking servant. But this was never about donkeys anyway. It was simply God’s way of getting Saul into position to fulfill the next step.

**9:6** - *“But the servant replied, Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let’s go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take.”*

*“The LORD was with Samuel and he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground.”*

*I Samuel 3:19*

Samuel was very trusted among the people even in his later years of ministry. His prophetic word was often sought after because he was so accurate. The [Jewish Targum](#) said,

“And he is a man that prophesies truth.”

**9:7** - *“Saul said to his servant, ‘If we go, what can we give the man? The food in our sacks is gone. We have no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?’”*

“. . . the common custom in eastern countries, and which continues to this day with the Turks, who reckon it uncivil to visit any person, whether in authority, or an inferior person, without a present; and even the latter are seldom visited without presenting a flower, or an orange, and some token of respect to the person visited.”

A. Gell  
*“Maundrell’s Journey from Aleppo”*  
p. 26, 27

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**9:8** - *“The servant answered him again. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I have a quarter of a shekel of silver. I will give it to the man of God so that he will tell us what way to take.’”*

The servant had about 1/10 of an ounce (3 grams) of silver. Both silver and gold were weighed out before coins were introduced into the currency. We don't know the value of it at that time but it wasn't much money. Samuel didn't need their money. He would have given them their answer without being paid.

**9:9** - *“(Formerly in Israel, if a man went to inquire of God, he would say, ‘Come, let us go to the seer,’ because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.)”*

As time progressed, the term seer became summed up in the name **“prophet”** instead of being used separately as in II Kings 17:13. The seer was always a prophet but a prophet was not always a seer. Even though this is the first time the term **“seer”** was used in Scripture, they continued to be recognized for another 300 years (Amos 7:12; Micah 3:7).

“The recognized distinction in latter times was, that a seer was one who was favored with visions of God - a view of things invisible to mortal sight; and a prophet foretold future events.”

[Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary](#)

**9:10** - *“‘Good,’ Saul said to his servant. ‘Come, let's go.’ So they set out for the town where the man of God was.”*

The idea was favourable to Saul, so they set out for Ramah.

**9:11** - *“As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some girls coming out to draw water, and they asked them, ‘Is the seer here?’”*

They had to climb up a hill to reach the city wherefore, the name **“Ramah”** which means **“high and lifted up”** as a high place of sacrifice and prayer.

There was a common belief that if a man met some maidens coming out of the city to fetch water that before he entered it that it was a sign of prosperity. Indeed it was as he was anointed to be the king of Israel before leaving the city. Abraham's servant was blessed by the appearance of Rebekah (Genesis 24:10-21)

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**9:12 - *"'He is,' they answered. 'He's ahead of you. Hurry now; he has just come to our town today, for the people have a sacrifice at the high place.'"***

Their heart was to share the blessings of God (through Samuel) with others. It is likely that he had taken up residence in the area surrounding the city. He made a habit of coming out of his house to enter the city and especially the high place where sacrifices and feasting took place. These high places were allowed until the Temple was built by Solomon (I Kings 3:2-4).

**9:13 - *"As soon as you enter the town, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not begin eating until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward, those who are invited will eat. Go up now; you should find him about this time."***

Samuel was so respected that everyone would wait until he made his way to the place to bless the sacrifice before joining in the feast. We do know that there was a room adjacent to the altar that could house at least 30 people (I Samuel 9:22).

**9:14 - *"They went up to the town, and as they were entering it, there was Samuel, coming toward them on his way up to the high place."***

**9:15 - *"Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed this to Samuel:"***

**9:16 - *"About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me."***

**9:17 - *"When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the LORD said to him, "This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people."***

Once they got within the protection of the walls of the city we see God putting the final pieces of the puzzle together. God's timing was exact. There were no coincidences here. Samuel already knew what to expect as a seer.

God's guiding is precise. His very tribe is mentioned. Saul would become their captain over the Lord's hosts – which would be essentially their king. His initial purpose would be to lead his people into victory against the Philistines. It came in answer to a dedicated prayer from the people. Victory is always superceded by prayer.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**9:18** - *“Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, ‘Would you please tell me where the seer’s house is?’”*

**9:19** - *“‘I am the seer,’ Samuel replied. ‘Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart.’”*

Here we see how Samuel reigned over all these years. Saul lived fairly close to Samuel but never knew where he was born or lived in his later days. Samuel served as the chief magistrate who had a good reputation both in civil affairs (secular) and his sacred calling. This shows me how Samuel served in humility and simplicity in that some still had not known much about him.

It also goes on to indicate the heart of Samuel in that he felt no animosity toward Saul who was taking over a main part his ministry instead of Samuel’s sons. In sending Saul ahead he may have been beginning the process of honouring Saul as the new king of Israel.

Jewish tradition teaches that Saul had been given a vision of himself on top of a Palm Tree which was a symbol of royalty. Saul was already being prepared but didn’t fully understand until Samuel answered his questions.

**9:20** - *“As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found. And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father’s family?”*

**9:21** - *“Saul answered, ‘But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?’”*

This would have set Saul’s mind at ease so he could then accept the changes that were about to take place in his life. It would have assured Saul that Samuel was indeed still active as a Seer of Israel. God often prepares us one step at a time to accept the changes He will bring into our lives. How many people have set out life to find something that is missing in their lives only to find something that is much more meaningful to them and beneficial to others?

Israel was awaiting the announcement of their first king. It would affect not only Saul but also Abner and others who would serve under him.

The tribe of Benjamin had almost been reduced to extinction by having just 600 men left (Judges 20:46-48; Psalm 68:27) because of war between the tribes. They were reduced to having little influence in Israel. Would a king come from such a tribe?

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**9:22** - *“Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the hall and seated them at the head of those who were invited—about thirty in number.”*

**9:23** - *“Samuel said to the cook, ‘Bring the piece of meat I gave you, the one I told you to lay aside.’”*

**9:24** - *“So the cook took up the leg with what was on it and set it in front of Saul. Samuel said, ‘Here is what has been kept for you. Eat, because it was set aside for you for this occasion, from the time I said, ‘I have invited guests.’ And Saul dined with Samuel that day.’”*

This hall was adjacent to the high place where the elite leaders of the area (30 in number) would feast together. It was quite an honour for someone who was weary from travel and most likely not cleaned up and given a clean set of clothes. He was given the most important seat in the room (Luke 14:10; Matthew 23:6). It was similar to the honour given his forefather (Genesis 43:34).

The leg (most likely the right leg reserved for the priest - Leviticus 7:32) was the largest and best portion of the sacrificed animal.

**9:25** - *“After they came down from the high place to the town, Samuel talked with Saul on the roof of his house.”*

We do not know what was spoken about but it had to be preparing Saul for the announcement that he would become the king of Israel. Perhaps he . . .

“talked with Saul concerning the deep religious and political degradation of the people of God, the oppression of the heathen, the causes of the inability of the Israelites to stand against these foes, the necessity for a conversion of the people, and the want of a leader who was entirely devoted to the Lord.”

Keil & Delitzsch  
“Commentary on the Old Testament”  
William Eerdmans Publishing Company  
Vol. 2, p. 94

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**9:26** - *“They rose about daybreak and Samuel called to Saul on the roof, ‘Get ready, and I will send you on your way.’ When Saul got ready, he and Samuel went outside together.”*

**9:27** - *“As they were going down to the edge of the town, Samuel said to Saul, ‘Tell the servant to go on ahead of us’- and the servant did so -‘but you stay here awhile, so that I may give you a message from God.’”*

At the break of the dawn, Samuel called to Saul who had slept on the roof. It was not uncommon for a bed to be placed on top of the roof of the house (II Kings 4:10).

After getting ready for his trip back home to his father, they went outside where Samuel informed Saul of God’s plan for his life. It was a private moment so Saul’s servant was sent ahead of them. They stopped walking so Samuel’s words (from God) could be clearly heard. It also set the stage for Saul to be anointed with oil.

Sometimes we can be so taken up with the “thrill of the moment” that we forget the words that are spoken over our lives. Feelings past but the Word of the Lord remains forever (Matthew 24:35). Saul would do good to remember the message he was about to receive



## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**10:1 - “Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, ‘Has not the LORD anointed you leader over his inheritance?’”**

“ . . . as the Jews say, was not the anointing oil that was in the tabernacle, which was at another and distant place, and with which only the kings of the house of David were anointed; but common oil, or, as they say, oil of balsam; and this was not a horn, but a vial, which held a small quantity, and was brittle; and they observe that Saul and Jehu, who were anointed with a vial, their reigns were short, whereas David and Solomon, who were anointed with a horn, their reigns were long; and as oil is a symbol of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, it may denote a smaller measure conferred on Saul than on David and Solomon:”

John Gill  
*“Exposition of the Whole Bible”*

This was the first step of assurance that God gave to Saul. Three more were to follow.

There was sometimes both a private anointing (I Samuel 16:13) followed by a public one (II Samuel 2:4; 5:3) or just a public one (I Kings 1:39; II Kings 11:12; 23:30; II Chronicles 23:11).

To be given the position as the “leader or captain” was indeed showing that Saul was going to take the place of God before the people and lead the people into battle (Joshua 5:14).

The monarchy was now inaugurated (even though Saul was not titled king at this time) as a divine institution standing on par with the priesthood. It was a sad day for the nation.

**10:2 - “When you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb, at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you, ‘The donkeys you set out to look for have been found. And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you. He is asking, ‘What shall I do about my son?’”**

It is important to see that Saul was first directed to go to the tomb of one of his ancestors near Bethlehem (Genesis 35:19). It spoke to him of both his mortality as well as the legend that he would be leaving behind when we died.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

This was the first of three signs given to him. These two men were prophets of God.

His father could purchase another servant but not another son. How often has a father said, *"What shall I do about my son?"*

**10:3** - *"Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine."*

**10:4** - *"They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them."*

Here is the second sign given to Saul. The tree at Tabor is believed to be the same place where they buried Rebekah's nurse (Genesis 35:8). These men were going to the altar that Abraham had erected many years before (Genesis 12:8; 13:3,4). Giving him a portion of their sacrifice (Leviticus 2:4; Numbers 15:5) was another sign that God had chosen him for a special purpose.

**10:5** - *"After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying."*

**10:6** - *"The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person."*

Here is the third and final sign given to Saul. Saul was now at home (I Samuel 10:26).

" . . . here was a school or college of young prophets, where they were trained up . . . in the knowledge of the word of God, in psalmody, and other religious exercises; for though the word of the Lord was scarce and precious in the beginning of Samuel's time, yet through his industry, influence, and encouragement, divine knowledge was greatly promoted, and many were trained up and qualified to instruct the people; who, though they had not the gift of foretelling future events, or of the vision of prophecy, yet had gifts qualifying for the edification of the people; and out of these schools and colleges God sometimes raised up prophets in the highest sense, who foretold things to come, and to whom the Lord appeared in dreams and visions."

John Gill  
*"Exposition of the Whole Bible"*

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

The Philistines were allowed to have a garrison of forces within the borders of Israel at this time. Jonathan fought and won against one of them (I Samuel 13:3).

Several high places were allowed at this time of history until the temple was built. Music was often played especially in time of spiritual refreshing (I Chronicles 13:8; 25:1,7).

There is a big difference in becoming *“a different person or another man (KJV)”* and becoming a *“new man or one born of the spirit of God.”* One is temporary while the other is long lasting. We need to be changed not stirred by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God literally rushed upon him so he could lead the nation in courage and wisdom as long as he obeyed the voice of God.

**10:7 - “Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.”**

**10:8 - “Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do.”**

He was then told to do what would normally come with his office as king. This soon meant that he would have to lead his nation against the king of Ammon (I Samuel 11:1-15).

Gilgal was a place of consecration and renewing of the covenant between God and His people (Joshua 4:19-24). It was also a convenient place for both the tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan and the western tribe to gather. Seven days would give adequate time for the leaders to gather to wait upon God before entering into battle. Saul had to learn that God determined which battles to fight. Some conflicts are better left in the hands of God. He is best to determine which ones to involve us in.

### Saul Made King

**10:9 - “As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day.”**

**10:10 - “When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying.”**

**10:11 - “When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, ‘What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?’”**

**10:12 - “A man who lived there answered, ‘And who is their father?’ So it became a saying: ‘Is Saul also among the prophets?’”**

**10:13 - “After Saul stopped prophesying, he went to the high place.”**

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

The change of Saul's heart allowed him to begin to lead the civil affairs of the nation. He would have received courage to lead their armies and therefore protect and defend them against their enemies. He would also need wisdom to rule over the people. It was never said that his reign would remain forever.

When the Spirit of God came upon Saul, the people of his town were amazed at the changes that took place. Just prophesying was quite a difference than what they had seen in his life prior to meeting with Samuel. It was not common (yet not impossible) for one whose father was not a prophet to become one. The proverb was used when it was unusual for the event to happen.

After prophesying he went to "Bamah" which was the high place close to his home. There he would spend time with God most likely to thank God and ask for His strength and gifts to accomplish the work ahead of him.

**10:14** - *"Now Saul's uncle asked him and his servant, 'Where have you been?' 'Looking for the donkeys' he said. 'But when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel.'"*

**10:15** - *"Saul's uncle said, 'Tell me what Samuel said to you.'"*

**10:16** - *"Saul replied, 'He assured us that the donkeys had been found.' But he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship."*

Saul's uncle's name was "Ner" the father of "Abner" ( I Samuel 14:50). This uncle was very close to Saul and they had a deep love and respect for each other. Yet even in their close friendship, Saul chose to withhold the fact that he had been anointed as the king of Israel. It was neither the time nor the place to do so.

**10:17** - *"Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah"*

**10:18** - *"and said to them, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.'"*

**10:19** - *"But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses. And you have said, 'No, set a king over us.' So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."*

Samuel used this one last time to remind the people why he was about to anoint Saul as king. The people needed to remember that God was always faithful to them. The only reason why they were being defeated in battle was because they were not abiding to the Law that God had set before them. Their hardened hearts caused their defeat.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**10:20** - *“When Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen.”*

**10:21** - *“Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was chosen. Finally Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found.”*

This common procedure (Joshua 7:14-17) of involving all the tribes was a way of eliminating any grumbling that one tribe might be left out of the process. This was known as an election by (casting) lot(s). God had originally chosen Judah as the reigning tribe but now He selected Benjamin (the least of all the tribes) as an obscure tribe to bring forth their first king.

The clan of Matri is unknown. Some suggest that it refers to a mark that archers used to aim their arrows at. Some of the Benjamites were famous for their ability of hitting the target.

It is notable that Saul initially found himself unworthy or insufficient for the calling that had been placed upon him (I Samuel 15:17). Yet we also need to stand forth when God places His hand upon our lives.

**10:22** - *“So they inquired further of the LORD, ‘Has the man come here yet?’ And the LORD said, ‘Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage.’”*

**10:23** - *“They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others.”*

**10:24** - *“Samuel said to all the people, ‘Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.’ Then the people shouted, ‘Long live the king!’”*

Commentators believe that Samuel either used the Urim and the Thummin (Numbers 27:21) or was directed by God or a combination of the both since he was a Seer in the land.

They had to go amongst the carts and baggage to find him. Perhaps he felt he could hide from the Lord. He was soon to find out that God knew his every move and thoughts.

God selected a man whom He knew most of the people would accept to ascend to their first throne. Their applaud indicated their approval.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**10:25** - *“Samuel explained to the people the regulations of the kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD. Then Samuel dismissed the people, each to his own home.”*

**10:26** - *“Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched.”*

**10:27** - *“But some troublemakers said, ‘How can this fellow save us?’ They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.”*

Samuel took time to explain the laws and rules which the people were now going to be living under (cf. - Deuteronomy 14:17-20). He wrote it down on a scroll so the people could refer to it time and time again. This scroll was kept near to the ark of the Covenant where God’s presence was the strongest (Deuteronomy 31:26).

Saul went to his hometown. Those who followed him had been touched by the Spirit of God. They were Saul’s “escort of honour.”

Saul was wise in not making a scene about those who chose to reject and despise him even though most of the people had accepted him. There will always be dissenters in the Kingdom of God. These same ones eventually had to admit that they were wrong ( I Samuel 11:12-14). It became a common practise bringing gifts to the king (II Kings 4:21; II Chronicles 17:5; Matthew 2:11)

Saul chose to act as if he was deaf and speechless (Matthew 27: 12-14). Sometimes it is best to let God work out certain divisions.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**11:1** - *“Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to him, ‘Make a treaty with us, and we will be subject to you.’”*

**11:2** - *“But Nahash the Ammonite replied, ‘I will make a treaty with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israel.’”*

**11:3** - *“The elders of Jabesh said to him, ‘Give us seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you.’”*

Both the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate indicate that this took place a month after Saul was made king. What they had feared (the Ammonites) had come upon them (I Samuel 12:12).

The name *“Nahash”* means *“serpent”* and *“Jabesh”* means *“dry.”* There is no doubt that we have a *“serpent”* by the name of *“Satan”* who loves to attach us during our *“dry times.”* He does his best to strike fear into our hearts by putting us into cruel slavery and preventing us from seeing clearly (literally scooping out the eye”). He attempts to destroy our will to fight against him.

“the left eye being under the shield, as it usually was in war, and the right eye plucked out, they would be as blind men: he did not choose to have both their eyes thrust out, for then they could have been of no use and service to him as slaves or tributaries:”

Josephus

During the days of Jephthah, the Ammorites were subdued which lasted for 90 years (Judges 11:33). The day is coming when the enemy of our soul will be defeated forever.

The men of Jabesh Gilead may have felt that this was payback time and that the rest of the tribes of Israel would not stand with them in battle as they would not at Mizpah (Judges 21:8). There is a price to pay when we set up our homes too close to our enemy. They must have learned their lesson because the day came when courage rose up within their hearts (I Samuel 31:11-13).

Nahash probably thought that he had this city in the bag. Saul had just became king without experience in battle or able to muster up and equip an army in a week. He had a rude awakening coming to him when comforted by the Spirit of God in king Saul.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**11:4** - *“When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these terms to the people, they all wept aloud.”*

**11:5** - *“Just then Saul was returning from the fields, behind his oxen, and he asked, ‘What is wrong with the people? Why are they weeping?’ Then they repeated to him what the men of Jabesh had said.”*

Saul had been anointed but the kingly inauguration had not yet taken place. Most people would not have known that he was king at this time. It may be another one of those “divine coincidences” that these messengers ended up at Saul’s hometown.

**11:6** - *“When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger.”*

After plowing in the fields all day, Saul returned to his home to hear the depressing news. It takes the power of the Spirit of God to lift us out of our states of depression. Saul was angry because he heard of the cruel ultimatum that Nahash had given to the men of Jabesh Gilead.

**11:7** - *“He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, ‘This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel.’ Then the terror of the LORD fell on the people, and they turned out as one man.”*

Cutting his oxen into pieces may have been an indication that he was ready to leave behind the work of his earthly father to serve his Heavenly Father. Combining his name with Samuel’s indicated that he and the people still had a high for the prophet of Israel.

It’s unfortunate that Saul’s first act of leadership compelled the nation through fear. It is a poor way to excel in any area of appointment or anointment. Some suggest that it was more the working of the Lord to instill the fear than it was of Saul. That may be true, but we cannot overlook that fact that fear motivated the act of war to begin. The people moved from weeping to fear. Neither is a good testimony of a nation that has a strong faith in God.



## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

**11:8** - *“When Saul mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel numbered three hundred thousand and the men of Judah thirty thousand.”*

**11:9** - *“They told the messengers who had come, ‘Say to the men of Jabesh Gilead, By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be delivered.’ When the messengers went and reported this to the men of Jabesh, they were elated.”*

An army of 330,000 men is not that large especially knowing that a majority of them would be undertrained and ill-equipped for battle.

By noon time the next day the troops would be in place ready to battle Nahash and his army. Something happens to a nation, a family and a church when they choose to stand together and defeat their enemy. One of us may be able to put a thousand to flight but two can put ten thousand to flight (Deuteronomy 32:30). It’s amazing how they were elated just after being completely down in the dumps.

**11:10** - *“They said to the Ammonites, ‘Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever seems good to you.’”*

**11:11** - *“The next day Saul separated his men into three divisions; during the last watch of the night they broke into the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.”*

This was a strategy of war. They were not obliged in war to show their hand. It was used to make the enemy think that he had the battle already won. In doing so he would let down his guard. Their conclusion was dead wrong and walked them into a humiliating defeat. The tide was turned against them as they were caught unaware (cf. - Luke 21:34).

The three divisions were the same arrangement that Gideon chose in the battle against the Midianites (Judges 7:16). The battle began between 3:00 - 6:00 Am and finished around noontime. The Ammorites were totally scattered throughout the battlefield.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### B. Saul Is Appointed as Their King (9-11) (Contd.)

#### Saul Confirmed as King

**11:12** - *“The people then said to Samuel, ‘Who was it that asked, Shall Saul reign over us? Bring these men to us and we will put them to death.’”*

**11:13** - *“But Saul said, ‘No one shall be put to death today, for this day the LORD has rescued Israel.’”*

**11:14** - *“Then Samuel said to the people, ‘Come, let us go to Gilgal and there reaffirm the kingship.’”*

**11:15** - *“So all the people went to Gilgal and confirmed Saul as king in the presence of the LORD. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings before the LORD, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration.”*

These troublemakers were mentioned in I Samuel 10:27. After such a critical victory it would be foolish to take the lives of your fellow brothers even if they once had a bad attitude. It is always better to make a friend of one who was once an enemy (Matthew 5:38-47).

At this point the inauguration was ready to take place. Saul had won the respect and conceding of the people to his kingly leadership. Samuel used the impetus of the moment to direct the soldiers to go to Gilgal when they could invoke the reaffirmation of the kingly blessing of God upon Saul before this large gathering of people.

Many believe that Saul was anointed a second time as was king David (II Samuel 2:4; 5:3). The peace offering or thank offerings were always combined with a sacrificial meal. When shared during such a time of festive occasion you could be sure that it only added to the joy that was sensed by everyone.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### C. Samuel's Gives His Farewell (12)

**12:1** - *"Samuel said to all Israel, 'I have listened to everything you said to me and have set a king over you.'"*

**12:2** - *"Now you have a king as your leader. As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you. I have been your leader from my youth until this day."*

**12:3** - *"Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the LORD and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these, I will make it right."*

**12:4** - *"'You have not cheated or oppressed us,' they replied. 'You have not taken anything from anyone's hand.'"*

**12:5** - *"Samuel said to them, 'The LORD is witness against you, and also his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand.' 'He is witness,' they said."*

Most believe that this took place at Gikal upon the renewal of the monarchy. It was not the time to set doubt into the midst of the people when Saul's kingdom had not yet been established.

"Samuel not only cleared his own character, but set an example before Saul, while he showed the people their ingratitude to God and to himself."

[Matthew Henry Commentary](#)

Instead of finding wrong in king Saul, Samuel focussed the people's thoughts toward his own ministry and how he had served. There are a select group of leaders who can serve longtime and remain faithful and honourable in their words and actions (Job 31:35-40; Psalm 37:6; Daniel 6:4). He had not oppressed or defrauded any one of any of the Lord's money (i.e. - redemption money Exodus 21:30; Amos 5:12).

Samuel (being around 54 years) had now steadfastly served for 50 years. He was never shown to be ashamed of his legacy. When you call upon God as your witness, you had better have a pretty clean slate.

**12:6** - *"Then Samuel said to the people, 'It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your forefathers up out of Egypt.'"*

**12:7** - *"Now then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the LORD as to all the righteous acts performed by the LORD for you and your fathers."*

**12:8** - *"After Jacob entered Egypt, they cried to the LORD for help, and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your forefathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place."*

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### C. Samuel's Gives His Farewell (12) (Contd.)

After setting the record straight on his own integrity of ministry, Samuel now unfolds the way God had been faithful to the people despite their numerous failings. He begins by reminding the people of how God brought Moses from a low position in the land of Midian to become a great leader along with Aaron. Between the two of them the entire nation was led out of Egyptian bondage. It was accomplished through signs and wonders which included 10 plagues that finally convinced Pharaoh to let the people go.

It was to God alone that they owed their national existence. No one other than God could have protected the people and delivered them from the hands of their enemies (I Samuel 4:8; 6:6).

Samuel wanted the people to stand still until he was finished speaking. So often we also want to go ahead without listening to the voice of God. It creates a great deal of problems for us and others around us. Samuel focussed upon the **“righteous acts performed by the LORD.”** These would include God's many mercies and benefits toward the people.

It was God's mercy that led the people through the wilderness so they could inhabit the land of Canaan. This impossible task should prove forever that the LORD is able and willing to deliver His people from their trouble when they humble themselves before Him.

**12:9 - "But they forgot the LORD their God; so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against them."**

**12:10 - "They cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned; we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.'"**

**12:11 - "Then the LORD sent Jerub-Baal, Barak, Jephthah and Samuel, and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies on every side, so that you lived securely."**

**12:12 - "But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, 'No, we want a king to rule over us'-even though the LORD your God was your king."**

It doesn't take long for us to forget the many blessings of God when we enter a time of trouble. In the case of Israel, it happened when their enemies surrounding them began to attack.

The first enemy mentioned was Sisera, the captain of the army of Hazor. This battle is mentioned back in Judges 4. It was there that Deborah encouraged Barak to rise up against Sisera. In the proceeding battle, Sisera recognized his defeat and fled until he came to the tent of Heber where his wife, Jeber drove a tent peg into his temple as he slept.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### C. Samuel's Gives His Farewell (12) (Contd.)

The Moabites were continual enemies of the children of Israel. They came about through the incestuous act of Lot with his daughter (Genesis 19:36-38).

The Phoenician idol of Baal was their supreme male deity. The name means "*lord*." The name "*baal or Baalim or baals*" occurs 81 times in the KJV. The Israelites constantly fell back to serving both Baal and Ashtoreth (Judges 2:11-13; 3:7; 10:16; I Samuel 7:14).

God used *Jerub-Baal or Gideon*" to deliver the people from the Midianites (Judges 6 - 8); *Barak* (and Deborah) from the hand of the Canaanites (Judges 4), "*Jephthah*" from the hands of the Ammonites (Judges 10:4-12:7) and *Samuel* over the Philistines (I Samuel).

Before leaving this list of victories, Samuel once again reminds the people of the incredible victory over Nahash and the king of the Ammorites (I Samuel 11:1 ff). Even after all of these victories, the people cried out for a king to deliver them from their enemies. How soon we forget and are influenced by what we see around us.

**12:13 - "Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for; see, the LORD has set a king over you."**

**12:14 - "If you fear the LORD and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the LORD your God -- good!"**

**12:15 - "But if you do not obey the LORD, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers."**

Samuel makes it clear that they had been given this king because of their demand to have him. It was never God's will and definitely not Samuel's desire to set Saul in the place as their king (Hosea 13:11; Acts 13:21). God only chose this king at the people's request. Sometimes in life it's best not to get what we want.

The final warning was to both the people and their new king. Both had to follow the commands of God if they expected God to work on their behalf. Even though we may demand that God not rule over us does not mean that He will not judge over us. God has determined to either bless or curse His people depending upon their attitude and actions toward Him (Deuteronomy 28; Psalm 81:12-14). God used the judgements of famine, sword, pestilence, captivity and subjection to their enemies to get their attention and turn them around.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### C. Samuel's Gives His Farewell (12) (Contd.)

**12:16** - *"Now then, stand still and see this great thing the LORD is about to do before your eyes!"*

**12:17** - *"Is it not wheat harvest now? I will call upon the LORD to send thunder and rain. And you will realize what an evil thing you did in the eyes of the LORD when you asked for a king."*

**12:18** - *"Then Samuel called upon the LORD, and that same day the LORD sent thunder and rain. So all the people stood in awe of the LORD and of Samuel."*

Samuel once again used a miracle to get the attention of the people. It was a time of the year when these types of thunder storms were very scarce. The wheat harvest took place between the middle of May and the middle of June in Palestine. The storm came about simply because of the prayer of Samuel. Before his prayer there was no sign of a storm (cf. - Exodus 9:23-28; Revelation 11:6). He stood as the judge, priest and prophet (seer) who they felt was too old to lead them. It came as a reminder that no matter what our state is (strong or weak), we must remember that it is God who delivers us from our enemies.

**12:19** - *"The people all said to Samuel, 'Pray to the LORD your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king.'"*

**12:20** - *"Do not be afraid,' Samuel replied. 'You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.'"*

**12:21** - *"Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless."*

This must have been a very severe storm for the people to think that they were going to die as a result of it. Yet they did not say *"we no longer want a king."* They just wanted their lives to be spared as they continued in their act of rebellion against God. Men often cry out to God for deliverance of the punishment without confessing their sins and changing their actions for generation after generation (Exodus 9:28; Isaiah 26:16; Jeremiah 16:19; Acts 8:24).

As a seer, I believe that Samuel was well aware of the pattern the people were going to follow as the years advanced. It was a solemn warning to keep their hearts pure. One of the greatest sins the people ever entered into was idolatry. Idolatry has always made God angry (Deuteronomy 32:21; Habakkuk 2:18) because idols only offer a false hope of salvation (Psalm 115:4-8; Isaiah 45:20)

He uses the word *"useless"* to describe them which is the same word used to describe the world before God fashioned it (Genesis 1:2 - waste, formless, void).

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### C. Samuel's Gives His Farewell (12) (Contd.)

**12:22** - *“For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own.”*

**12:23** - *“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right.”*

**12:24** - *“But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.”*

**12:25** - *“Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away.”*

If this does not describe the love of God toward a wayward people then I don't know what it will take to convince people. When God chose this people to call by His name, He also set a plan into action. That plan will not be thwarted (Romans 11:25-32). It is the goodness of God that draws men to repentance (Romans 2:4).

Even though we have a host of people sinning around us, it gives us no reason NOT to pray for them. In fact, it should call us to a deeper time of prayer for their ever increasing needs (Romans 1:9; Colossians 1:9; I Thessalonians 3:10). We will do much more to turn people around by our **commendation** than by our **condemnation**.

The best way to counteract the sin of the nation is to teach and model what is right (Colossians 1:28). Samuel kept bringing the thoughts of the people back to God and His goodness to them.

There is always a two-sided coin in God's Word. If we obey His Word, we will receive His blessings. If we choose to go our own way, we can expect to be judged by God. In this case, they would not remain as a nation. Saul was killed in battle (I Samuel 31:1-6) while many other future kings were defeated in war and taken into captivity (Deuteronomy 28:36; Hosea 10:3). There is always a great danger in both **apostasy** and **disobedience** to God and His Word.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15)

**13:1** - *“Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty two years.”*

**13:2** - *“Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand were with him at Micmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes.”*

The first verse is one that is disputed among the translators. The KJV says *“Saul was forty years old when he began to reign; and when he had reigned two years over Israel . . .”* It would suggest that his first year of reign was fairly quiet with the exception of his first war against Nahash in chapter 11. Unfortunately the two years doesn't seem to make any sense that is why most commentators prefer the translations like that of the NIV.

Saul's new army was quite a bit smaller than the original 330,000 (I Samuel 11:8) he had when he defeated the Ammonites. Saul made up an army consisting of three companies of soldiers, each of which were 1000 men. They most likely consisted of his chosen men who became his bodyguard. He kept two companies with him (1,000 men) at Micmash (Heb.- *“hidden”*) located 9 miles north of what became Jerusalem and the other 1000 men to attack the stronghold in the hill country of Bethel (Heb. - *“the house of God”*) and ordered the other 1000 men to go with his son Jonathan to Gibeah (Heb.- *“the hill”*). They would no doubt be looking for swords and spears which they badly needed (I Samuel 13:22). The rest of the men were sent home until they were needed for another battle.

Gibeah was the hometown of Saul (I Samuel 10:26). It was at Gibeah that David later laid the bodies of seven of Saul's sons to appease the Gibeonites for the wrong Saul had done to their family (II Samuel 21:1). It was in Gibeah that the Philistines had set up an outpost or garrison (I Samuel 10:5).

**13:3** - *“Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, ‘Let the Hebrews hear!’”*

**13:4** - *“So all Israel heard the news: ‘Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become a stench to the Philistines.’ And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.”*

Saul himself would not have blown the trumpet (shofar) but would have given the order to alert the Israelites to prepare for the counterattack from the other Philistine garrisons. It also would bring faith instead of fear because they would begin to see that God was fighting on their behalf.



## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

It's suggested that the people may have been upset with Saul and Jonathan for creating a conflict that they would now have to be involved in. In other words, if your enemy is satisfied at living with you ( and gradually overtaking you), then leave things alone. Are we satisfied at letting the enemy of our soul continue to remove our rights and freedoms? Is it time to blow the trumpet in Zion (Joel 2:1)?

“This, a well-known sound, was the usual Hebrew war summons; the first blast was answered by the beacon fire in the neighboring places. A second blast was blown - then answered by a fire in a more distant locality, whence the proclamation was speedily diffused over the whole country. As the Philistines resented what Jonathan had done as an overt attempt to throw off their yoke, a levy (recruitment), en masse, of the people was immediately ordered, the rendezvous to be the old camping-ground at Gilgal.”

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary

**13:5 - “The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven.”**

**13:6 - “When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns.”**

**13:7 - “Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear.”**

I find it interesting that the Philistines gathered where Saul was waiting in fear and not where Jonathan had won the battle in faith. It was not the first time that their enemies had gathered in such numbers (Judges 7:12; Joshua 11:4). Some versions have 30,000 chariots but this number appears to be corrupted so the number is changed to a more reasonable 3,000 or 300 chariots as in many versions (cf. - II Samuel 8:4; I Chronicles 18:4).

Micmash was located in the southern part of Mount Ephraim in the steep hills of Benjamin the tribe of Saul. Beth-Aven (Heb. - “house of vanity”) was located just east of Bethel (Joshua 7:2).

The men lost heart when they saw the size and equipment of the Philistines. They chose to go into caves of which there were many large caves in the area to encamp in (Judges 6:2). Much the same is being done by the Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. They also chose to enter the uncomfortable thickets (thorns). They hid in every nook of cranny, low and high places.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

Some of the troops were so desperate that they even went East across the Jordan River into the land of Gad and Gilead.

You would think that in all this confusion that there wasn't the slightest chance that they could ever come out of this battle as victors. But there are many times when overwhelming confusion on our part can still turn into a crushing defeat for our enemies because God comes into the warfare.

Where did Saul's anointing disappear to? The anointing was replaced with fear that spread like a wildfire among the people. Saul should have been leading ("*and all the troops with him were quaking with fear*"). This fear instead of faith produced at least three major consequences.

1. Saul's kingdom did not endure (13:13,14)
2. God sought for a man after his own heart (13:14)
3. Loss of soldiers (from 3,000 to 600 which is an 80% loss)

**13:8** - "*He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter.*"

**13:9** - "*So he said, 'Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.' And Saul offered up the burnt offering.*"

**13:10** - "*Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.*"

This seven-day waiting period had nothing to do with the one previously mentioned in I Samuel 10:8. As the 7<sup>th</sup> day went ahead, Saul's men began to lose heart and were leaving the place appointed for the sacrifice. Have you ever left impatiently disappointed thinking that God was not going to meet with you as He promised He would, when He didn't arrive when you expected Him to?

Perhaps it's an indication that Samuel recognized this weakness of faith, obedience and patience in Saul and was testing him a second time. Samuel kept his word but came later on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

Saul foolishly tried to play the part of the Prophet, Priest and King. It was acceptable for the king to work in cooperation with the priests but not to do their work for them (II Samuel 24:25; I Kings 3:4; 8:63). Saul should have simply made provision but not proceed with the sacrifice without Samuel being present. This humble king was beginning to show his true colours.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

**13:11** - *“What have you done?” asked Samuel. Saul replied, ‘When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash,”*

**13:12** - *“I thought, Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's favor. So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.”*

When questioned by Samuel it showed that Saul tried to justify his actions and never showed any signs of repentance or wrongdoing.

“Men destitute of inward piety, often lay great stress on the outward performances of religion . . . Men see nothing but Saul's outward act, which seems small; but God saw that he did this with unbelief and distrust of his providence, with contempt of his authority and justice, and with rebellion against the light of his own conscience.”

[Matthew Henry Commentary](#)

It is often not easy to follow the leading of God especially when we begin to feel things crowding us in and ready to trounce on us. We often begin to question whether or not we have actually heard the voice of God especially when the winds and waves begin to buffet “our boats” (Matthew 14:22-36). This is what often happens when the anointing gives way to fear.

**13:13** - *“You acted foolishly,’ Samuel said. ‘You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time.”*

**13:14** - *“But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command.”*

**13:15** - *“Then Samuel left Gilgal and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred.”*

It’s sad to see the kingdom snatched from his hand because he couldn’t wait another 2-3 hours. From this point on it is downhill all the way. God did not remove him immediately Samuel simply stated God’s intent from that time on.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

But in what sense was David a man after God's own heart? Answer:

1. In his strict attention to the law and worship of God.
2. In his admitting, in the whole of his conduct, that God was King in Israel, and that he himself was but his viceregent (servant; under his authority).
3. In never attempting to alter any of those laws, or in the least change the Israelitish constitution.
4. In all his public official conduct he acted according to the Divine mind, and fulfilled the will of his Maker: thus was he a man after God's own heart. In reference to his private or personal moral conduct, the word is never used. This is the sense alone in which the word is used here and elsewhere; and it is unfair and wicked to put another meaning on it in order to ridicule the revelation of God, as certain infidels have done.

[Adam Clarke's Commentary  
on the Whole Bible](#)

There were only 600 men left from the original 2000 that went with Saul. It was still twice the number that Gideon went to battle with (Judges 7:7).

### Israel Without Weapons

**13:16** - *“Saul and his son Jonathan and the men with them were staying in Gibeah in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Micmash.”*

**13:17** - *“Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp in three detachments. One turned toward Ophrah in the vicinity of Shual,”*

**13:18** - *“another toward Beth Horon, and the third toward the borderland overlooking the Valley of Zeboim facing the desert.”*

The Philistines went to Saul's previous camp while Saul and Jonathan went back to their home at Gibeah.

The Philistines recognized that they had an upper hand against Israel so they decided to send out raiding parties to ravage and spoil the land. The area of Ophrah in the vicinity of Shual was an area just southwest of Micmash. Shual seems to have gotten its name from the many foxes that inhabited the area.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

Beth Horon was an area through a pass to the west of Micmash. The valley of Zeboim was heading east toward the Jordan plain. So they set out in three different directions. In doing so they left their stronghold at Micmash poorly fortified in which Jonathan took advantage of in chapter 14.

**13:19** - *“Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, ‘Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!’”*

**13:20** - *“So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plowshares, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened.”*

**13:21** - *“The price was two thirds of a shekel for sharpening plowshares and mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing goads.”*

**13:22** - *“So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.”*

**13:23** - *“Now a detachment of Philistines had gone out to the pass at Micmash.”*

It was a common practise during warfare to carry off the blacksmiths and others tradesmen to leave an area depleted of its skilled tradesmen (II Kings 24:14; Jeremiah 24:1; 29:2). This was a way of making their conquests more permanent.

It was not usual to either turn agricultural implements into weapons of war or vice versa (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3; Joel 3:10). The Philistine garrisons allowed the blacksmiths to work only on implements that were needed for agricultural use. This left so few weapons among them that only king Saul and Jonathan had access to a sword or spear until they could take from spoils of battle.

The Philistines recognized that Micmash was a strategic position to gain control over. It had steep passes carved out by the Wadi that often made the riders dismount and even the baggage mules found it difficult to keep their footing. There was a valley between Micmash and Gibeah. So the two armies were separated by the topography.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

#### Jonathan Attacks the Philistines

**14:1** - *“One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, ‘Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side.’ But he did not tell his father.”*

**14:2** - *“Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men,”*

**14:3** - *“among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left.”*

**14:4** - *“On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff; one was called Bozez, and the other Seneh.”*

**14:5** - *“One cliff stood to the north toward Micmash, the other to the south toward Geba.”*

The Philistines were located at the pass on the northern side while the Israelites were on the southern part of the pass. This was quite an usual action for Jonathan to take. Normally a general would give orders to his men before they set out on any escapade. The armour bearer would normally accompany leaders. Jonathan was not going to allow the Philistines to defy the army of God.

Saul, on the other hand, gathered with his 600 men (no one else joined him) at an area that was the furthest point from the Philistine in Gibeah. His number of men matched the same amount that David had later on in time (I Samuel 30:9). It was a place that Saul found shelter more than once when his leadership was being challenged (I Samuel 22:6). A pomegranate was symbolic of being fruitful, but unfortunately he wasn't showing much fruitfulness here. They were found both on the hem of the High Priest's garment (Exodus 28:33) and the pillars on Solomon's temple (I Kings 7:42).

Part of his men were Ahijah or Ahiah or Ahimelech (I Samuel 22:9) who served as the high priest. His lineage showed that he was the grandson of Eli. Eli died on the day the Ark of the Covenant was taken by the Philistines along with his two sons, Hophni and Phineas. Phineas' wife gave birth that same day to Ichabod (meaning - “no glory”). Ichabod's son became Saul's high priest. It was later that Saul had Ahimelech and the other priests at Nob put to death for “conspiring against him.”

Jonathan chose to go through an area of rock that appeared like teeth. One was called Bozez (*Heb. - “shining”*) most likely because of its chalky colour that glowed in the sunlight. The other side was called Seneh (*Heb. - “Acacia or the thorn”*) because of the single tree that grew on top of it. This pass ran east and west.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

**14:6** - *“Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, ‘Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few.’”*

**14:7** - *“Do all that you have in mind,’ his armor-bearer said. ‘Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul.’”*

**14:8** - *“Jonathan said, ‘Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us.’”*

**14:9** - *“If they say to us, ‘Wait there until we come to you,’ we will stay where we are and not go up to them.”*

**14:10** - *“But if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the LORD has given them into our hands.”*

The term of the “uncircumcised” was almost exclusively used as a derogatory remark to describe the Philistines (Judges 14:3; 15:8; I Samuel 17:26). It’s too bad that Saul (who should have walked in God’s anointing) was not willing to use his 600 men when his son was willing to go to battle with just himself and his armour bearer.

“This expression did not imply a doubt; it signified simply that the object he aimed at was not in his own power but it depended upon God - and that he expected success neither from his own strength nor his own merit.”

[Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary](#)

Whichever way he turned or whatever he planned to do, he could depend upon his amour-bearer to be at his side. Faith breeds faith. Fear breeds fear. Jonathan believed that he was serving the true and living God who would protect His people (Psalm 46:7).

It didn’t matter that the precipices were steep and jagged. They were also not going to try to hide under the cover of darkness. They chose to show their faces clearly to their enemy. The Philistines may even have thought that they were deserters and planned to teach them a lesson.

Jonathan set forth two possibilities. One would show that the Philistines were brave and confident while the other would indicate that they were unsure of themselves. If that were the case, it would have had to be God who had set the insecurity into their hearts and minds. The “fleece” was set forth and the answer was clear. There is nothing wrong with asking for a sign from God to confirm His word to you as Eliezar did while looking for a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:12). The answer came back clearly. It was time to attack.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

**14:11** - *“So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. ‘Look!’ said the Philistines. ‘The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in.’*

**14:12** - *“The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, ‘Come up to us and we’ll teach you a lesson.’” So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, ‘Climb up after me; the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel.’”*

**14:13** - *“Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him.”*

**14:14** - *“In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.”*

What began as a time of insult and mockery grew to a quick defeat. Pride often brings defeat (Proverbs 16:18). What the Philistines perceived as a sign of defeat quickly turned around to bring about their death. They probably thought that they had come in need to food. They weren’t about to teach a lesson as much as they were to learn a lesson.

The courage and faith of Jonathan soon led them to victory because he knew that the LORD was on their side. No wall is high enough; no river is wide enough; no valley is low enough to keep God’s people from winning the battles before them. Jonathan perhaps wounded them and his armour bearer made sure they were dead.

They killed at least twenty men in an area that a yoke of oxen would be able to plow in a morning.

### Israel Routs the Philistines

**14:15** - *“Then panic struck the whole army—those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties—and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.”*

**14:16** - *“Saul’s lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions.”*

**14:17** - *“Then Saul said to the men who were with him, ‘Muster the forces and see who has left us.’ When they did, it was Jonathan and his armor-bearer who were not there.”*

God sent an earthquake to the area just to add to their fear. It affected all those at the garrisons and other outposts. What brought fear to the Philistines turned to faith for the Israelites. Saul recognized the fear because he had experienced it for days, perhaps weeks. One who has gone through emotional upheavals senses it in others.

Saul once again needed to know how many were in his force. But he also needed to know whom God had used to bring about such a crushing victory. It was his own flesh and blood.



## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

**14:18** - *“Saul said to Ahijah, ‘Bring the ark of God.’ (At that time it was with the Israelites.)”*

**14:19** - *“While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, ‘Withdraw your hand.’”*

**14:20** - *“Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords.”*

The mention of the Ark of the Covenant is widely disputed. Many believe that it was rather the ephod of the high priest because it would also come with the Urim and Thummin. It was also common to ask for the ephod to be brought forth but not the Ark (I Samuel 23:9; 30:7). There is no other mention that the ark had been taken from Kijath-jearim. After losing it once to the Philistines, it would be foolish to bring it into another battle where the Israelites had been walking in fear.

Saul was once again impatient and didn't wait for the answer from God through Ahijah. He told Ahijah to *“withdraw your hand.”* Looking through his natural eyes he could see that an opportunity was awaiting him to be proclaimed victorious over his enemies. I'm sure it brought further assurance seeing the Philistines killing one another with their swords. It wasn't the first time and it wouldn't be the last time that God would cause His enemies to attack themselves (Judges 7:22; II Chronicles 20:23; Isaiah 19:2).

**14:21** - *“Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.”*

**14:22** - *“When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit.”*

**14:23** - *“So the LORD rescued Israel that day, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.”*

Isn't it interesting how quickly people change sides when victory is imminent? (I Kings 18:21,39). Defectors, who return when the pages get turned, make poor soldiers in both the army and the kingdom of God. To make matters worse for the Philistines, we find that the Israelites who were hiding all over Ephraim now joined in the battle with a new fervency of heart to destroy their enemies.

The Philistine stronghold in the area surrounding Micmash (I Samuel 13:2-5) was completely destroyed because of the heart of one brave soldier. You would think that Saul would be grateful. Not so when you have a man who has a heart like Saul. Once again we see dominance and control begin to take root in Saul's heart even to the point of wanting to kill his own son.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

#### Jonathan Eats Honey

**14:24** - *“Now the men of Israel were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, ‘Cursed be any man who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!’ So none of the troops tasted food.”*

**14:25** - *“The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground.”*

**14:26** - *“When they went into the woods, they saw the honey oozing out, yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath.”*

**14:27** - *“But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.”*

**14:28** - *“Then one of the soldiers told him, ‘Your father bound the army under a strict oath,’ saying, ‘Cursed be any man who eats food today!’ That is why the men are faint.”*

Saul made another rash statement because he wanted to destroy the Philistines to the greatest degree that he could. By doing so he was actually hindering a greater defeat if the battle had to go late into the evening. During hand to hand battle men become drained of their energy quite quickly.

Honey literally flows in the forests in the East. Honey is able to be eaten quickly and would give an instant burst of energy. In doing so they would be even more able to destroy their enemy. After all, wasn't the main goal supposed to be the total overthrow of the Philistine oppression? Maybe in Saul's mind there was another motive.

Jonathan had not been informed of his father's foolish oath. He was out destroying their enemies. Why should he remain under a curse? There's only one reason, because the word of a tyrannical king has its way of controlling an entire nation if you allow it to. There are times when we need to say that enough is enough.

**14:29** - *“Jonathan said, ‘My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey.’”*

**14:30** - *“How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?”*

What Saul would have gained in time would have been lost in strength. The word for “trouble” was also used of Achan (Joshua 7:25) and gave its name to the Valley of Achor. How foolish it is to make quick decisions that bring others into bondage! We need to realize that our words can become a snare to others as well as ourselves (Proverbs 12:13; 18:7; I Timothy 3:7).

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

**14:31** - *“That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Micmash to Aijalon, they were exhausted.”*

**14:32** - *“They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood.”*

**14:33** - *“Then someone said to Saul, ‘Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that has blood in it.’ ‘You have broken faith,’ he said. ‘Roll a large stone over here at once.’”*

**14:34** - *“Then he said, ‘Go out among the men and tell them, Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the LORD by eating meat with blood still in it.’ So everyone brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there.”*

The battle took these armies at least 12 miles from Micmash to Aijalon in land of the tribe of Judah (II Chronicles 11:10). This type of effort would truly exhaust the entire army.

When they saw the Philistine’s sheep and cattle they instantly pounced upon them and ate of their meat without properly draining the blood from the meat. This was totally forbidden in the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 17:10-12). Therefore, Saul had created a problem by having his men break God’s Law instead of standing against Saul’s oath. This is what power and control does to people whether it is political or religious or whatever.

Saul once again took the matter into his own hands. He decided to have a large stone rolled up so the men could slaughter their own sheep and cattle. By placing them on the large stone it would ensure that the blood would drain to the ground. It’s unfortunate what has had to be done in the name of religion to attempt to repair a man-made law (tradition of men (Acts 22:3).

**14:35** - *“Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had done this.”*

**14:36** - *“Saul said, ‘Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive.’ ‘Do whatever seems best to you,’ they replied. But the priest said, ‘Let us inquire of God here.’”*

**14:37** - *“So Saul asked God, ‘Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel’s hand?’ But God did not answer him that day.”*

Here we have a classic case of having a form of God but denying its power (II Timothy 3:5). This is the first altar begun to be built by a king. Up to this time they were built either by a priest or a prophet. Was he once again usurping his authority? This altar was built either for a Peace Offering as a way of thanking God for their victory or for a Sin Offering for breaking God’s law. I would think it would be more of the former.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

Once again Saul's impulsiveness attempted to speed up God to fit into his timetable. He thought he should continue to pursue the Philistines since God appeared to be on their side. Yet he hadn't inquired of God whether to continue or not (cf. - II Kings 22:7). Ahijah must have doubted that God wanted them to continue. A defeat would have been disastrous after such a glowing victory (cf - Jericho vs Ai - Joshua 6 & 7). It's not wise to go ahead when God doesn't answer.

**14:38** - *“Saul therefore said, ‘Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and let us find out what sin has been committed today.’”*

**14:39** - *“As surely as the LORD who rescues Israel lives, even if it lies with my son Jonathan, he must die.’ But not one of the men said a word.”*

Saul felt that the reason why God had not answered him was because sin had been committed in the camp. In fact, plenty of sin had been committed by the men eating the flocks and herds without properly draining the blood.

Saul seems to just dig a deeper pit for himself to fall into. This is what happens when we open our mouths without first engaging our minds. The reason the LORD had rescued Israel was because of the faith of Jonathan. Saul was even willing to kill his own son because of a foolish oath that he had made everyone agree to had been broken. It wasn't fair to expect Jonathan to die for something he didn't agree to or know anything about. It is at this time that the men of Israel should have spoken up but they were too afraid to say anything. Instead, they waited to see if the lot would fall on Jonathan.

**14:40** - *“Saul then said to all the Israelites, ‘You stand over there; I and Jonathan my son will stand over here.’ ‘Do what seems best to you,’ the men replied.”*

**14:41** - *“Then Saul prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Give me the right answer.’ And Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared.”*

**14:42** - *“Saul said, ‘Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son.’ And Jonathan was taken.”*

You may wonder why God allowed the lot to fall on Jonathan. I believe it was to expose the heart of Saul.

“Those most indulgent to their own sins are most severe upon others; those who most disregard God's authority, are most impatient when their own commands are slighted.”

[Matthew Henry Commentary](#)

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

**14:43** - *“Then Saul said to Jonathan, ‘Tell me what you have done.’ So Jonathan told him, ‘I merely tasted a little honey with the end of my staff. And now must I die?’”*

**14:44** - *“Saul said, ‘May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan.’”*

**14:45** - *“But the men said to Saul, ‘Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God’s help.’” So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.”*

God does not want the foolishness of man’s thoughts to continue to bring others into bondage and death. It was time to bring an end to such nonsense. He reminds me of another by the name of Jephthah who also made a foolish vow which cost him the life of his only daughter (Judges 11:31- 40; cf. - James 1:19-21). There was nothing in Scripture to back the oath of Saul. It was to be a lesson to the king not to make rash statements. But Saul was not willing to back down until the people rose up and confronted him with true justice. He had plenty of lessons to learn but his heart would have to make a turn in the right direction.

*“He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”*

*Micah 6:8*

Justice was served only because the **moral demands of the Law** needed to outweigh the **legal demands of the Law**. The **Letter of Law** brings death but the **Spirit of the Law** brings forth life (II Corinthians 3:6). This impartial jury brought forth a verdict based upon the clear evidence that no breach of the Law had taken place because he was never notified of the oath.

**14:46** - *“Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they withdrew to their own land.”*

**14:47** - *“After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought against their enemies on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment on them.”*

**14:48** - *“He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them.”*

The rest of the Philistines left to their homeland. As for the rest of the wars we have here listed it must be said that Saul fought against them but never fully subdued them. It’s one thing to inflict punishment while it is quite another to destroy them.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

“Josephus says, Saul killed about 60,000 of them. It seems to be the will of God that they should not now be utterly destroyed, that they might be a rod of correction in his hand, to chastise the people of Israel hereafter. “

John Gill  
*“Exposition of the Entire Bible”*

#### Saul's Family

**14:49** - *“Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi and Malki-Shua. The name of his older daughter was Merab, and that of the younger was Michal.”*

**14:50** - *“His wife's name was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of Saul's army was Abner son of Ner, and Ner was Saul's uncle.”*

**14:51** - *“Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner were sons of Abiel.”*

**14:52** - *“All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines, and whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him into his service.”*

In the list of Saul’s sons and daughters we find that Ishbosheth (also called Abinadad or Ishui) is not mentioned (II Samuel 2:8). This is the son that succeeded him as an antagonist against King David as set up by Abner. He never entered a battle or died in war. His sons born from his concubine were not mentioned here (II Samuel 21:8).

Abner was the first cousin of Saul. He became the captain of Saul’s army because he was a valiant man. He also gathered around him the bravest and strongest men that he could find to serve in his army.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

#### The LORD Rejects Saul as King

**15:1** - *“Samuel said to Saul, ‘I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD.’”*

**15:2** - *“This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt.’”*

**15:3** - *“Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.”*

Here we have the case of the God of the second chance (I Samuel 13:13,14). Saul was given one more opportunity to see if he would strictly obey the Word of the LORD. Saul was given the opportunity to wipe out the Amalekites and by so doing he would be used to fulfill a word of prophecy (Exodus 17:4; Deuteronomy 25:19). The Amalekites were a powerful nomadic people who occupied the region including the Eastern portion of the Sinai all the way to Rephidim which bordered on the land of the Cushites. God remembered what the Amalekites did in attacking His people at Rephidim and knew that they would keep on attacking until they were completely destroyed (Exodus 17:16).

The instructions for this battle were very clear. Nothing was to be taken and no one is to be left alive. They were to be devoted to destruction. It seems like quite a severe punishment because we are often so removed from the actual time period and circumstances.

**15:4** - *“So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men from Judah.”*

**15:5** - *“Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine.”*

**15:6** - *“Then he said to the Kenites, ‘Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt.’ So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.”*

The name “*Telaim*” means “*lambs*.” It was most likely named that because of the abundance of flocks of lambs in the area. It was located in the outermost area of Judah near the border of Edom (Joshua 15:21). The number of soldiers increased back to a large number (some versions even have 400,000) because the need was much greater. This was no enemy to underestimate.

Amalek was believed to be their capital city which meant it would also be the most populated and equipped for battle. It was common practice to lie in wait outside of the walls of a city until the signal was given to attack (Joshua 8:4).

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

Saul was both wise and kind to give the Kenites an opportunity to escape before the warfare began. The Kenites were ancestors of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law (Judges 1:16). They were nomadic when it came to finding pasture for their flocks. They even settled in caves in the rocks close to the area of the Amalekites (Numbers 24:21). They were now being shown kindness because they once had shown kindness to the children of Israel as they travelled in the wilderness.

**15:7 - “Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt.”**

**15:8 - “He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword.”**

**15:9 - “But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.”**

The area mentioned would include that land east of the Red Sea where the decedents of Ishmael settled (Genesis 13:18) all the way to Shur which was in the direction of Egypt.

The name of the king, Agag, was a common name to the Amalekites much like Pharaoh was to the Egyptians. Balaam made a parable that mentioned that Israel and Judah would have a king that would be higher than Agag (Numbers 24:7).

Saul only partially obeyed what he was told to do once again (I Samuel 15:3). He reminds me of the type of person who always feels that they are being treated harshly and never want to take responsibility for their repeated actions or lack of action. This became a “two strikes your out game.”

It appears that this was based upon pride and an outright unwillingness to obey despite the facts that there were going to be severe consequences. He could have paraded such a distinguished captive before the people to once again boost his wavering ego.

Saul would rather stand up against God than against his men. Notice that **“they were unwilling to destroy . . .”** Saul wanted to look good among the people and yet forgot that it was more important to look good before God.

The animals that were kept were believed to have shed their two long teeth which happen at two years old. These would be the prized animals of any flock or herd. Any animals that were poor or lean, lame or blind or having any other defect was destroyed. It's amazing how we try to justify our sinful and rebellious actions against God's clear Word.



## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

**15:10** - *“Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel:”*

**15:11** - *“I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.’ Samuel was troubled, and he cried out to the LORD all that night.”*

**15:12** - *“Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, ‘Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.’”*

The Word of the LORD that came to Samuel caused him to have a sleepless night spent in earnest prayer for this wayward king. It’s not that he thought he could change the mind of God (I Samuel 15:29). It’s even unlikely that he was now concerned what the people would think of him because he had anointed Saul as their first king.

Samuel went to find Saul and discovered that he had gone to Carmel (not where Elijah offered a sacrifice - I Kings 18) which was found in the southern part of Judah (Joshua 15:55). We see in Saul the same kind of attitude and heart as was later in Absalom by having a monument built in his honour (II Samuel 18:18). By the Hebrew word used (“*yad*” meaning “*hand*”), many believe that the monument was shaped like a hand on top of a pillar pointing to his place of victory which represented the emblem of Saul’s power or authority.

**15:13** - *“When Samuel reached him, Saul said, ‘The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD’s instructions.’”*

**15:14** - *“But Samuel said, ‘What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?’”*

**15:15** - *“Saul answered, ‘The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.’”*

**15:16** - *“‘Stop!’ Samuel said to Saul. ‘Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night.’ ‘Tell me,’ Saul replied.”*

Gilgal was only about fifteen miles from Ramah where Samuel lived. Saul now adds deception and hypocrisy to his list of sinful actions. He could not have been that naive. It seems that he was trying to shift the blame unto the people. They could not have done anything without his consent and he was within his rights to over rule or veto their decisions.

The more that Saul spoke, the more the decline of his moral standards were exposed. If Saul had completely followed the command of the LORD, there would have been no animals to hear. Once again Saul attempted to shift the blame unto his men. Samuel didn’t want to hear any more of Saul’s excuses. It would just get him into more trouble. It’s been said, *“If you want to lead the band you must first learn to face the music.”*

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

**15:17** - *“Samuel said, ‘Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel.’”*

**15:18** - *“And he sent you on a mission, saying, ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out.’”*

**15:19** - *“‘Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?’”*

**15:20** - *“‘But I did obey the LORD,’ Saul said. ‘I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king.’”*

**15:21** - *“The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal.”*

There was a time when Saul could not see himself as a leader (I Samuel 9:21). It’s often difficult for people to withstand the pressures of power, prosperity and prestige.

Samuel reminded him of the very words that were spoken to him before Saul went to war with the Amalekites. There was nothing admirable in Saul’s leadership skills. Yet he once again tried to validate his actions by the things he did right. It is often easy to neglect looking at our failures by attempting to promote our achievements. Saul had headed out in the right direction to destroy the Amalekites but failed to achieve the final goal that God had clearly set before him.

How “spiritual” it seemed to suggest that the animals could be used as a sacrifice unto the LORD at the altar at Gilgal. The seed of disobedience and rebellion was planted. Gilgal eventually became a place of disgrace instead of honour unto the LORD (Hosea 9:15; 12:11).

**15:22** - *“But Samuel replied: ‘Does the LhjZIUORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.’”*

**15:23** - *“For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king.”*

We can get so ceremonially caught up in our spiritual activities that we lose sight of their purposes. Is it the **action** or the **attitude** of the heart that God is looking for? If our sincere heart is not in our sacrifices then the LORD finds them repulsive (Isaiah 1:11).

For years the children of Israel continued in this pattern of going through the motions and keeping the outward appearance from displaying their inward spiritual condition. They never fooled God. There will always come a time of judgement for hidden sin (Psalm 32:3-5).

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

“Carnal, deceitful hearts, like Saul, think to excuse themselves from God's commandments by what pleases themselves. It is hard to convince the children of disobedience. But humble, sincere, and conscientious obedience to the will of God, is more pleasing and acceptable to him than all burnt-offering and sacrifices. God is more glorified and self more denied, by obedience than by sacrifice. It is much easier to bring a bullock or lamb to be burned upon the altar, than to bring every high thought into obedience to God, and to make our will subject to his will. Those are unfit and unworthy to rule over men, who are not willing that God should rule over them.”

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary](#)

**15:24** - *“Then Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned. I violated the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them.’”*

**15:25** - *“Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD.”*

**15:26** - *“But Samuel said to him, ‘I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel!’”*

It is a terrible thing to be cut off from the presence of God because of unrepentive sin. Just because we admit to our sinful actions does not mean that we have turned from that sin and chose to not repeat it. Saul's sinful nature just continued. He was not a man of his word.

“How was it that these repeated confessions were unavailing to obtain forgiveness, when David's was? Because Saul only shrank from the punishment of his sin. David shrank in abhorrence from the sin itself.”

[Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible](#)

It is one thing to be forgiven of our past sin it is quite another to break the power of that sin over our lives. Many a person attempts to worship God while their hearts are separated. Praise can be done from distance while worship must be done close to the heart of our LORD. We can never reject God's Word and find acceptance in His sight. To reject His Word is to place ourselves in a position that consistently separates us.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

**15:27** - *“As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore.”*

**15:28** - *“Samuel said to him, ‘The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you.’”*

**15:29** - *“He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.”*

The “*moil*” or upper tunic or lappet or official robe was what distinguished Samuel as their prophet. The accidental tearing of the robe became a spiritual sign of the kingdom that was to be torn away from Saul. Saul may have continued to sit on the throne but his sovereignty was taken away from him. It appears that everything Saul became involved in was a farce.

Saul was not aware who his “neighbour” was. David was from the tribe of Judah which was the land bordering Benjamin to the South. This was not the first time Saul had heard such disheartening words (I Samuel 13:14). David proved to be a much better king (Acts 13:22).

There was going to be no place for compromise. The damage had been done. The pattern had been set. Saul had done a great deal of damage to Israel by setting such a poor example for others to follow. In contrast to Saul’s failing was the “*Glory of Israel*” Who stood unwavering in His decision making. What God says, He does (Number 23:19).

**15:30** - *“Saul replied, ‘I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD your God.’”*

**15:31** - *“So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.”*

It’s amazing to see how Saul could see the value in Samuel of one who remained a man of high integrity and yet could not seem to break away from his own repetitive and damaging habits. A hypocrite is always more concerned about how they appear before others than they are with how God sees them.

This shows that even those who have turned away from God find it hard to stay away. Salvation has a way of making poor sinners out of us. Our hearts will never rest in sinful actions or altitudes but we must also be aware of attempting to overcome sin by our desire to change.

## II. THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL - I Samuel 8:1-15:35 (Contd.)

### D. Saul Is Rejected as King (13-15) (Contd.)

**15:32** - *“Then Samuel said, ‘Bring me Agag king of the Amalekites’ Agag came to him confidently, thinking, ‘Surely the bitterness of death is past.’”*

**15:33** - *“But Samuel said, ‘As your sword has made women childless, so will your mother be childless among women.’ And Samuel put Agag to death before the LORD at Gilgal.”*

**15:34** - *“Then Samuel left for Ramah, but Saul went up to his home in Gibeah of Saul.*

**15:35** - *“Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again, though Samuel mourned for him. And the LORD was grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel.”*

Agag came to Samuel and Saul in his pomp and power. The Latin Vulgate describes him as fat and plump and yet trembling, dressed in his kingly robe.

“Many think the bitterness of death is past when it is not gone by; they put that evil day far from them, which is very near.”

[Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary](#)

Samuel would have nothing to do with his arrogance. God had made it clear that he was suppose to be dead. It was past the time but not past the opportunity to fulfill the word of God. His fierce and warlike ways had finally met up with him. There are many in our time that will also witness this same truth (I Thessalonians 5:3; Revelation 18:7).

Samuel followed the Jewish Law of Retaliation. It was also known as “measure for measure” (Exodus 21:4; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21). He literally cleaved him as wood is cleaved.- most likely divided in four parts. He had made other women childless. Now it was time for his own mother to receive the same treatment.

This ended the relationship of Samuel with Saul. Samuel went to his home at Ramah and Saul left for his home at Gibeah. It is noteworthy that Samuel mourned and the Lord grieved yet Saul simply went to his home lived as he did before. It’s not unusual for God’s people to mourn over the wayward lives of others (Romans 9:2,3; Philippians 3:18).

It’s too bad that this was not the end of Saul’s escapades. The remaining chapters of I Samuel only come to prove that the heart of Saul had not changed.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10

#### A. The Anointing of David (16:1-13)

**16:1** - *“The LORD said to Samuel, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.’”*

**16:2** - *“But Samuel said, ‘How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me.’*

*The LORD said, ‘Take a heifer with you and say,’ ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’ “*

**16:3** - *“Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.”*

There are times when even the prophets of God find it difficult to reconcile with the will of God. Samuel was concerned for most likely the future Israel as well as for the welfare of Saul. Yet when God determines to take a king from his throne, He has the right to do.

Horns were used in ancient times much like we use cups today. Anyone who travelled would bring their horn/cup with them. In this case Samuel is told to fill it with oil. One of the sons of Jesse, a Bethlehemite, from the tribe of Judah was to be God’s choice for the king. Samuel was told which of his eight sons would be given the privilege.

It’s a sad fact that Saul had become so corrupt that he would even consider killing Samuel. Why should it be different to a Saul whether he was killing a prophet or a priest (I Samuel 22:11-22)?

A sacrifice was required for such an important event. The effects of this new king was to have both long term and widespread implications.

**16:4** - *“Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, ‘Do you come in peace?’”*

**16:5** - *“Samuel replied, ‘Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.’ Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.”*

Samuel was the closest the people had to the living Word of God. It caused them to tremble. How often do we tremble when we approach God’s Word? It would be quite a privilege to have a personal visit from their prophet. We could learn well from the attitude of these elders. Since Samuel was old and seldom ventured away from home they must have thought that he was visiting them to reprove them and denounce judgment upon them for some past sin.

Samuel arrived to offer a Peace Offering to the LORD. In doing so, he could invite others to join in partaking of the parts that hadn’t been offered unto the LORD. A consecration of the elders, Jesse and all his sons (Exodus 19:14,15) was to ensure that all past sin was atoned.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### A. The Anointing of David (16:1-13) (Contd.)

**16:6** - *“When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the LORD’s anointed stands here before the LORD.’”*

**16:7** - *“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’”*

Samuel would have been invited into Jesse’s home. Early in the conversation Samuel would have explained the purpose of his visit. It would make sense to consider the eldest son (I Chronicles 2:13) as the custom would dictate for such a prestigious position as a king..

Why would Samuel choose the son with the greatest looks and height? Wouldn’t Samuel be falling into the same mistake as before (I Samuel 10:24). It takes a while to get the bold influence of Saul out of the minds of those he affects. Samuel thought that Eliab (*Heb. - “God is father”*) being the firstborn and good looking and tall like Saul would be a good successor. Too often we are guided by the visual over the spiritual.

Our eyes can often deceive us into foolish decisions. It is never wise to attempt to go ahead of God. Listen carefully to His voice so you are not deceived into wrong conclusions that will affect not just you but perhaps many others.

**16:8** - *“Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, ‘The LORD has not chosen this one either.’”*

**16:9** - *“Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, ‘Nor has the LORD chosen this one.’”*

**16:10** - *“Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, ‘The LORD has not chosen these.’”*

Abinadab (2<sup>nd</sup> born) (*Heb. - father of generosity*) and Shammah (3<sup>rd</sup> born) (*Heb - astonishment*) were the next in line (I Samuel 17:3; I Chronicles 2:13). Abinadab was slain alongside with Jonathan in a later battle (I Samuel 31:2). God choice was still to come. In fact, none of the first 7 sons were God’s choice. God is never hurried in the selection of those He chooses to serve Him. Jesus spent a night in prayer and even 40 days in the wilderness (cf. Luke 4 & 5) before selecting His 12 apostles.

Most scholars believe that Jesse only had 7 seven sons that lived (I Chronicles 2:13-15). It could also have been that he had one more obscure son from another wife. The eighth son signifies the beginning of a new era of the monarchy. Whichever way you look at it, David had to have been the eighth son of Jesse (I Samuel 17:12).

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### A. The Anointing of David (16:1-13) (Contd.)

**16:11** - *“So he asked Jesse, ‘Are these all the sons you have?’ ‘There is still the youngest,’ Jesse answered, ‘but he is tending the sheep.’ Samuel said, ‘Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.’”*

**16:12** - *“So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, ‘Rise and anoint him; he is the one.’”*

**16:13** - *“So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.”*

Samuel would not rest or partake in the Peace Offering (cf. 16:5) until he saw the one whom God had chosen to lead this chosen nation.

The name *“David”* means *“beloved.”* He may have been overlooked by his father and brothers but not to God who loved him. Some are overlooked in their time of preparation. No one but God understands the grooming of a heart. God knew the sheepfold that David was tending (Psalm 78:70). As soon as he appeared the voice of God spoke to Samuel to *“rise and anoint him.”*

The oil was poured forth in the sight of the entire family. No one could dispute the fact that David was God’s anointed. No one but Saul who would refuse to relinquish the throne and especially its power and authority. Yet from that day on *“the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power.”*

David was still in his later teenage years. He waited until he was 30 years of age (II Samuel 5:4 after Saul was dead) to be crowned as king. It’s one thing to receive the anointing while it is quite another to be adorned with the crown. It was Samuel’s time to decrease back to his hometown of Ramah so David could increase (cf. - John 3:30). Too bad Saul didn’t have the same heart and mind.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42)

**16:14** - *“Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.”*

**16:15** - *“Saul's attendants said to him, ‘See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you.’”*

**16:16** - *“Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the harp. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes upon you, and you will feel better.”*

**16:17** - *“So Saul said to his attendants, ‘Find someone who plays well and bring him to me.’”*

There is argument as to whether the Lord “sent” the evil spirit or simply “allowed or permitted it” to torment Saul. The old proverb came true that “Satan loves to fish in troubled waters.” The anointing that was once upon Saul was now given to David.

The results upon Saul were multiple as he was . . .

“. . . distracted in his counsels, and became weak and foolish; lost all courage and greatness of mind, was timorous and fearful, and alarmed by everything, and was full of envy, suspicion, rage, and despair.”

John Gill  
*“Exposition of the Whole Bible”*

There was no middle of the road for Saul.

“If God and his grace do not rule us, sin and Satan will have possession of us.”

Matthew Henry  
*“Concise Commentary”*

It may not make sense to us that God will allow or even use evil and lying spirits to bring judgement upon those who choose to spurn His known will time and time again (I Kings 22:19-22).

They chose to select someone to play on a harp and soothe the heart of Saul just like it did for Elisha, the prophet (II Kings 3:15). They say that *“Music hath charms to soothe the savage beast.”* David had no doubt already composed a number of songs including Psalm 23. Saul had entered a state where this evil spirit had not possessed him but rather only tormented his mind and toyed with his emotions. Saul sent for the command to have this musician sought out.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**16:18** - *“One of the servants answered, ‘I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him.’”*

**16:19** - *“Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, ‘Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.’”*

Isn't it interesting how God's prepares the way for his chosen one(s) to serve. We will never know how our previous talents can be used to open the door to serve the Lord (ie. - music, technology, public speaking). It is unlikely that David had fought any human wars up to this point, but he had fought against a lion and bear (I Samuel 17:34-35).

Notice that Jesse was involved in giving his permission to allow David to leave his duty of caring for the sheep. This also takes on new meaning because Jesse had just witnessed his son David being anointed as the king. By this time, Saul was told of his name and that David was a shepherd.

**16:20** - *“So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul.”*

**16:21** - *“David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers.”*

**16:22** - *“Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, ‘Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.’”*

**16:23** - *“Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.”*

Jesse carried out a simple gesture of kindness toward king Saul. He knew that Saul had been dethroned. Here stands the influence of a godly father. I'm sure this played a very significant role in the “spirit of David.” As time went on the gifts to their king were required to increase as Samuel had warned them about (I Samuel 8:10-18).

Saul called David to serve by his side for **military service** as well as **musical service**. David would be brought before armies whose intent was to overthrow and defeat his people. He would witness the consistent opposition directed toward the nation of Israel. It was part of his **school of preparation**.

On the other hand, he was brought first hand into the battle of the mind and emotions of kings. It could be called the **school of affliction**. It was a school that he would take many courses in and in some cases repeat the training of. This is a place of learning that we all must graduate from in order to effectively serve the Lord. David was given insight into the life of a poor king.

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)**

It takes many an experience and changing of a heart to become a man after God's own heart. Saul unfortunately failed in this class and many other classes as well. His forcefulness could not bring his victory over the battles within his soul. This is one place that we all must surrender to the will of God and find peace through the Holy Spirit.

The spirit that came from God was most likely an "evil spirit" not the Holy Spirit. This is why Saul needed to have David play and sing before him. It may bring temporary relief but never has exorcism ever been successful with music alone. Music, as good as it is, cannot fully overcome unholy influences permanently whether the problem is oppression or possession of an evil spirit. The future of Saul proves this to be sadly true.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

##### David and Goliath

**17:1** - *“Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Socoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Socoh and Azekah.”*

**17:2** - *“Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines.”*

**17:3** - *“The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.”*

**17:4** - *“A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall.”*

**17:5** - *“He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels;”*

**17:6** - *“on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back.”*

**17:7** - *“His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.”*

There are differences of opinion as to when this war took place. Some put it about eight years after David was anointed as king (I Samuel 16). It would also make it about ten to twelve years after the battle with the Amalekites (I Samuel 15). Some believe that twenty seven years passed since the Philistines were conquered at Micmash (I Samuel 14).

Socoh (see Joshua 15:35 which today is called Shuweikeh) is located in a hilly area between the mountain of Judah and the plains of Philistia. It is located south of Jerusalem and west of Bethlehem.

The Valley of Elah was located within 4 miles of the hometown of Samuel. The armies would have taken up position on the sides of the mountains that lined this valley. They would use the valley as their battlefield.

The word used for **“champion”** was **“a middle person or a man between two.”** He was used to settle disputes between two factions by having only one other person fight against him.

Goliath came from Gath where the remainder of the Anakims (giants) settled (Joshua 11:22). Depending upon how the scholars calculate a cubit we can find suggestions anywhere from 11 ft 10 inches down to 9 ft 6 inches for the common 17 ½ inches per cubit and a span was the distance of the thumb to the little finger of an outstretched hand (or 6-9 inches).

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

Some of the helmets were made of skins of animals while others were made of either plates of iron or brass or even shaped out of one piece of these metals. The famous coat of scale bronze that reached from the neck to the middle of the stomach would be like the scales of a fish and weighed about 157 pounds. It would protect both his back and his chest.

The protection over the legs was from the knee down to the ankle and strapped around the leg. They were made of either a single piece of fashioned metal or in plates or layers. Many warriors only went to battle with their right leg protected.

We are not sure what was slung behind his back. Many believe it was a javelin; others think it was some kind of covering for their shoulders; some believe it may have been a club or a sword. I believe it was a javelin.

The shaft of his spear was equally as heavy weighing about seventeen pounds. He had someone go ahead of him carrying his shield. Most soldiers carried about sixty pounds of armour. Goliath would have had about two hundred and seventy pounds of armour to carry.

**17:8 - “Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, ‘Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me.’”**

**17:9 - “If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.”**

**17:10 - “ Then the Philistine said, ‘This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.’”**

**17:11 - “On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.”**

Goliath not only defied those serving in Saul’s army, but also ridiculed them for not having someone brave enough to fight against him. This would also be a mockery to their God because it would be saying that their God was not powerful to fight on their behalf.

It was common to have one man from each army decide the fate of the rest of them. If their champion lost then they would succumb to serving their enemies or be destroyed because those defeated would lose their heart to fight.

Our Lord gave His life for us in the most supreme battle for our souls. Mockery increased from the Romans and even the Jews. Jesus went forth bravely without a sword or shield because He was robed in the garment of God’s righteousness. The devil stood like Goliath until the Lord crushed his head (Genesis 3:15). Jesus spared us having to fight the main battle.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

“The Targum adds much to this speech. This is the substance: *“I am Goliath the Philistine of Gath, who killed the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas the priests; and led into captivity the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and placed it in the temple of Dagon my god; and it remained in the cities of the Philistines seven months. Also, in all our battles I have gone at the head of the army, and we conquered and cut down men, and laid them as low as the dust of the earth; and to this day the Philistines have not granted me the honor of being chief of a thousand men. And ye, men of Israel, what noble exploit has Saul, the son of Kish, of Gibeah, done, that ye should have made him king over you? If he be a hero, let him come down himself and fight with me; but if he be a weak or cowardly man, then choose you out a man that he may come down to me.”*

Adam Clarke  
“Commentary on the Whole Bible”

Saul and his army were terrified because Saul led them into fear instead of faith.

**17:12** - *“Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's time he was old and well advanced in years.”*

**17:13** - *“Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah.”*

**17:14** - *“David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul,”*

**17:15** - *“but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.”*

**17:16** - *“For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.”*

The Septuagint version located in the Vatican omits 17:12-31, 55-58. It seemed to object with the fact that David had already made acquaintance with king Saul in I Samuel 16:21. All these verses are included in the Codex Alexandrinus from which the Septuagint was translated.

As I mentioned earlier in my notes *“Most scholars believe that Jesse only had 7 seven sons that lived (I Chronicles 2:13-15). It could also have been that he had one more obscure son from another wife.”* By this time Jesse was too old to go to war and fight for his country.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

These three sons were the same ones mentioned as passing before Samuel when he was sent to anoint the king to replace Saul (I Samuel 16:6; I Chronicles 2:13). These sons would go with the consent of their father and fight on his behalf and their family name for their country.

David was the youngest of all his brothers (I Samuel 16:11). Seldom did the armour bearers leave the side of their king but in this case David did. It is believed that he was called upon when Saul had his bad days and he would play his harp and sing for him. During those times he would also serve as his armour bearer if required (I Samuel 16:21). In doing so, David was still able to care for his father's sheep.

This continual mocking and defying Israel and their God continued for forty days during both the morning and evening prayer times. Something had to be done. God had already set His plan into motion. God was about to have the last word as He always does.

**17:17 - "Now Jesse said to his son David, 'Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp.'"**

**17:18 - "Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them."**

**17:19 - "They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines."**

The ephah of grain was sent to the front lines which could feed about ten men for one day. The ten loaves of bread would be sent for his brothers. The cheese (which was much like our curds) was given to the commander who would have one thousand men under him. Some believe this would have been given to Jonathan (I Samuel 13:2).

David's visit would serve as a dual purpose of also seeing how his brothers were fairing out under the increasing stress. The KJV gives us a different thought in verse 18 when it says **"and take their pledge."** Soldiers at this time were not supported by the king but rather by their families. Some had to pawn their clothes for food until support came from home. The Jews believe that it was making mention of their "bill of divorcement" that was sent back to their wives to allow them to remarry after three years if they were killed in battle. Others believe it represented some token like a piece of the hair or even a piece of the finger nail to say that they were safe and healthy.

To say that they were fighting is actually better stated as really preparing for battle. No combat had taken place up to this time. There may have been some smaller skirmishes in the outskirts of each camp.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**17:20** - *“Early in the morning David left the flock with a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry.”*

**17:21** - *“Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other.”*

**17:22** - *“David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and greeted his brothers.”*

David made sure that his father’s sheep were properly cared for by arranging for another shepherd to take his place. He left early which showed his enthusiasm to do what his father had asked of him.

When David reached the camp he left the supplies with the one who was given duty over them and headed toward the front lines. Some suggest that there was a trench between them. Others believe they were separated by wagons which formed like a fence between them. The day for the battle had finally arrived. David was in the right place at the right time.

**17:23** - *“As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it.”*

**17:24** - *“When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear.”*

**17:25** - *“Now the Israelites had been saying, ‘Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his father's family from taxes in Israel.’”*

**17:26** - *“David asked the men standing near him, ‘What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?’”*

**17:27** - *“They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, ‘This is what will be done for the man who kills him.’”*

As David was speaking with his brothers, Goliath stepped forward once again proclaimed his mocking defiance to the Israelites. This time David was within hearing distance. It once again brought fear to Saul and his army. Many ran back from the front lines.

It was common knowledge among the soldiers that anyone who stood against Goliath and killed him would receive great wealth; have king Saul’s daughter to marry and his family would be exempt from paying taxes. When David asked about the reward, he was told about the three blessings.



### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)**

The Spirit of the Lord began to rise up in David as he began to stand against this uncircumcised Philistine. No champion (middle man) was going to get in the way of God's victory. Just as Jonathan stood against these enemies, now David was about to take his stand. They both had the same heart. Their heart was much different from Saul's. We still need men and women who stand for the living God.

God's Word was not to be turned around (Psalm 91:7). Surely the words of the prophet were not to take place prior to their time (Isaiah 30:17).

**17:28** - *“When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, ‘Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.’”*

**17:29** - *“Now what have I done?” said David. ‘Can't I even speak?’”*

**17:30** - *“He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before.”*

**17:31** - *“What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him.”*

We don't know what was fully in the heart of Eliab when he heard David questioning the men. Was he concerned for David's life? Perhaps he sensed a reproach against the full army because no one had been willing to stand up against Goliath for forty days (the Biblical number of testing). What if David won against the Philistine's mighty man? Would David then begin to take a place of priority over his older brothers and begin to serve as their king? After all he had been anointed by Samuel to lead the nation, which also meant he would lead them into war.

David had made sure his father's sheep were cared for. Eliab was definitely wrong in his judgment of David. After all, David had returned to keeping his father's sheep instead of taking the throne from Saul. He was being accused of being curious.

As the Spirit of the Lord began to rise up within him, he stood his ground against even his eldest brother's accusations. As he continued to speak to the other men his conversations were overheard. Someone reported his words of hope and faith to Saul who seriously needed to hear these words.

Why would Saul have to send for David if Saul had been on the front lines? It seems to indicate that Saul was still back at his tent. He would see himself as being too valuable to be defeated in battle. He would rather send his men to do what he needed to do. He was given forty days to muster up his faith and hope and pass it onto his men. Once again he missed a great opportunity to give honour to God. Sauls prefer to take all the glory while others do the work.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**17:32** - *“David said to Saul, ‘Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.’”*

**17:33** - *Saul replied, ‘You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.’”*

**17:34** - *“But David said to Saul, ‘Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock,”*

**17:35** - *“I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.”*

**17:36** - *“Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God.”*

**17:37** - *““The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’ Saul said to David, ‘Go, and the LORD be with you.’”*

Once again we see God using the *“foolish things of this world to confound the wise”* (I Corinthians 1:27). Saul couldn't see the wisdom in sending out a boy to do a man's job. What he couldn't see was what was inside of the boy (Psalm 11:1).

David offered some examples of the two key animals of prey in their area that he had fought against and overcame to protect his sheep. The bear would have been a Syrian bear much like our brown bear. The lion's hair indicates that it was a male lion. He most likely did it with very primitive weapons as well as his hands. Jesus, as our Good Shepherd was willing to lay down His life for His sheep by using just what was in His hands and heart (John 10:11).

David felt assured that God would also make him a victor over this Philistine giant. No one who had defied God's armies had the right to stand before this man of faith. Just as the bear and lion were animals of prey who met their mate, so Goliath who had killed many met his fate. Those who live by the sword also die by the sword (Matthew 26:52).

**17:38** - *“Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head.”*

**17:39** - *“David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. ‘I cannot go in these,’ he said to Saul, ‘because I am not used to them.’ So he took them off.”*

It is unwise to enter battles without being familiar with the weapons you will be fighting with. The same applies to spiritual warfare. We need to put on the armour of God to fight the battles that God has set before us (Ephesians 6:10-18). It's best to take off the weapons, shields and armour that are given by men of fear and control. They accomplish nothing for God.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**17:40** - *“Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.”*

**17:41** - *“Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David.”*

**17:42** - *“He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him.”*

**17:43** - *“He said to David, ‘Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?’ And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.”*

**17:44** - *“‘Come here,’ he said, ‘and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!’”*

David was familiar with his staff and his sling. All he needed were smooth stones in order to get an accurate shot (Judges 20:16). The Balearians kept three slings of different lengths for different distances and forces. David chose five stones from the brook (wadi), put them in his shepherd’s bag and made his way swiftly to his enemy. This gave a final incentive to Goliath to come forward as well but he came with an attitude of superiority.

He saw as Samuel did (I Samuel 16:12) that David was a ruddy boy. He looked at him with contempt and disdain probably because the Israelites wouldn’t send a better competitor for him to fight. He thought he had the upper hand and would finish off this young boy in no time.

His pride was about to be the reason for his fall (Proverbs 16:18; 18:12). He saw David’s shepherd staff as a stick. Big Mistake! Moses also had a shepherd’s staff which was used to divide the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21); bring water from a rock in a dry place (Exodus 17:6) as well as being the principle tool to conquer his enemies (Exodus 17:8-11).

There was only one type of flesh that was going to be given to the birds and beasts. They were going to have Philistines to taste not Israelies.

**17:45** - *“David said to the Philistine, ‘You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.’”*

**17:46** - *“This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.”*

The name of the Lord is a strong and mighty tower that we can run to in times of trouble (Psalm 20:7; 118:11; Proverbs 18:10). Goliath was about to be decapitated to end his speech.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**17:47** - *“All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands.”*

**17:48** - *“As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.”*

**17:49** - *“Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.”*

**17:50** - *“So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.”*

David had already learned that he was winning most of his battles without the use of the normal human weapons (Psalm 44:6). If God is not in the battle, we need to be careful about entering it (Exodus 14:14; I Samuel 14:6).

I love reading that David ran toward Goliath. It only took one stone to accomplish the victory. Some suggest that Goliath had four more brothers that David had his eye on and that is why he brought five stones. The number five is the Biblical number of grace. A single stone sank deep into Goliath's forehead and he fell on his face to the ground.

David was victorious over this Philistine giant with a simple sling and stone. The sword was never used to kill Goliath. He was killed before David removed his head.

**17:51** - *“David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.”*

**17:52** - *“Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron.”*

**17:53** - *“When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp.”*

Goliath did not even have time to take his sword from its sheath before he fell dead to the ground. Goliath's head became a trophy or token of victory to be given to king Saul. It was a feat that they never forgot and they eventually did the same to Saul at his death (I Samuel 31:8,9).

It gave such assurance to the men of Israel and Judah that they pursued the Philistines into two of their five fortified cities of **“Gath”** (Goliath's home meaning **“winepress”**) and **“Ekron”** (meaning **“torn up by the roots”**). They wisely waited to plunder the money, armour, weapons, food, and other provisions until after they had fully defeated the Philistines.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**17:54** - *“David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, and he put the Philistine's weapons in his own tent.”*

**17:55** - *“As Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, ‘Abner, whose son is that young man?’ Abner replied, ‘As surely as you live, O king, I don't know.’”*

**17:56** - *“The king said, ‘Find out whose son this young man is.’”*

**17:57** - *“As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with David still holding the Philistine's head.”*

**17:58** - *‘Whose son are you, young man?’ Saul asked him. David said, ‘I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem.’”*

It's interesting that David would go to Jerusalem at a time when that city was not controlled by his people but rather by the Jebusites whom David still had to defeat (II Samuel 5:6-10). His tent was either his home tent in Bethlehem which some believe he never owned or it was the Tent or Tabernacle of David.

Saul kept a keen eye on David and wondered who he may be. David made it clear that his father was Jesse and he came from Bethlehem just a short distance away. Some find it strange that Saul wouldn't know David. But consider these words,

“Saul, having laboured under a disorder of body and mind, might easily forget David, and his serving him in the above capacity; and to which the multiplicity of business, and of persons in a court, might greatly contribute; and what with the distance of time, and the different habits in which David appeared, sometimes as a musician, and sometimes as a shepherd, and at other times as a soldier, and always as a servant, it is no wonder the king should not know him again; though after all it is not about his person that he inquires, but whose son he was, what was his father's name, and from what family he sprung.”

John Gill  
*“Exposition of the Whole Bible”*

We must all stand against our enemy and he will flee from us as we submit to God (James 4:7). We must not allow unbelief to overtake our mind and emotions. There are too many Goliaths that need to be destroyed and too many Saul's that have lost their nerve to fight the right enemy. May God raise up many more with the spirit of David.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

##### Saul's Jealousy of David

**18:1** - *“After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.”*

**18:2** - *“From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house.”*

**18:3** - *“And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.”*

**18:4** - *“Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.”*

This brotherly love and admiration for each other was based upon their faith in God. They became kindred in spirit. This was a stark contrast to the spirit that began to surface from king Saul.

“Neither the word for love here, **ahav** (Heb.), nor the relationship of the two men suggests any abnormality.”

#### [The Believer's Study Guide](#)

A similar friendship was seen with Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:8; 2:20; 3:10). There was also a kindred spirit that developed between Mary and Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56). The Hebrew word describing their bond (*“chesed”*) speaks of those who will faithfully carry out the promises they have made.

David remained in the court of king Saul from that day on. This was exactly what Samuel had tried to warn the people about (I Samuel 8:11,12). This does not mean that he never visited with his family but rather that his residence was now at Saul's palace (cf. - I Samuel 17:15).

The covenant between David and Jonathan would have been mutual and indicative that they were going to look out for each other (I Samuel 20:42). You always need someone covering your back when you live in Saul's courtyard. Saul wanted his kingdom to be passed on to his son (I Samuel 20:31).

By giving David his robe, tunic, sword, bow and belt, Jonathan was handing over his succession to the throne of his father, Saul. This was all he knew because he was raised by Saul who chose to keep a spear nearby so he could attack others. David had to become accustomed to the change because he was more used of having a shepherd's staff, rod and a sling. David love to save those who were being attacked while Saul chose to attack.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**18:5** - *“Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well.”*

**18:6** - *“When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes.”*

**18:7** - *“As they danced, they sang: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.’”*

**18:8** - *“Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. ‘They have credited David with tens of thousands,’ he thought, ‘but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?’”*

**18:9** - *“And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.”*

David’s military success continued to set him apart from all others. After all, how many have ever slain a giant with a sling and stone? David was appointed as a commander in Saul’s army. David had not only won the heart of Saul but also gained the respect of the rest of Saul’s officers. But unfortunately, Saul’s heart began a cycle of restoration followed by rejection of David (cf. - 16:21 with 18:8,11,21,25; 19:1). It’s always a struggle to deal with a paranoid king.

“First he was envious of David, then suspicious and afraid, then angry, and finally so hateful that he wanted to kill him.”

[With the Word Bible Commentary](#)

What would you do if you were David? This is where our true nature begins to express itself.

\*\*\* There’s an old story of a holy man who, while meditating in the countryside, noticed a scorpion struggling to get out of the swirling water of a rapid brook. Its efforts to climb onto a rock were futile, for the water was too strong. The holy man, taking pity on the creature, tried to help it, but the scorpion kept striking back at him.

A friend, passing by, said to the holy man, *“Don’t you realize that it is the nature of a scorpion to attack and sting?”*

*“Yes,”* said the holy man, *“but it is my nature to save and rescue. Why should I change my nature just because the scorpion doesn’t change his?”* \*\*\*

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

One of the duties of the women was to come out to celebrate victories in battle (Exodus 15:20,21) and to mourn during funerals. They play on a sistrum.

“This instrument is well known as being used among the ancient Egyptians: it was made of brass, and had three, sometimes more, brass rods across; which, being loose in their holes, made a jingling noise when the instrument was shaken.”

Adam Clarke  
*“Commentary on the Bible”*

The women were celebrating the victory over Goliath and the Philistines. This was a battle that Saul allowed David to fight but Saul wanted the credit. Saul’s always want the credit whether they have done the work or not. They constantly need to be recognized and appreciated. Their name must be above all names (cf. - Philippians 2:9,10).

It is unlikely that Saul had ever killed 1000 of his enemies or that David killed 10,000 at this time. It would be true that they had fought against that many and led the army to overthrow that many. It was common in Hebrew writing to increase the second half of a verse (cf. - Deuteronomy 32:30; Psalm 91:7).

By this time Saul was no doubt reminded of the words of Samuel when Saul was told his kingdom was now removed and given to a better man (I Samuel 15:28; 20:31).

“Instead of looking pleasantly, and with a smile, upon him, as a courtier and favourite, he was justly entitled to by his gallant behaviour, he looked at him with a sour, ill-natured look; he looked at him with an evil, spiteful, malicious, and envious eye; or he diligently watched and observed all his motions and actions, whether they tended to disloyalty and treason, to dethrone him, and take the kingdom to himself, which he was suspicious of; he laid wait for him . . . and laid snares too, as the following history shows.”

John Gill  
*“Exposition of the Whole Bible”*

What kind of man would stay in the midst of such opposition and danger? Only a man with the heart of David would. A David with a heart after God.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**18:10** - *“The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand”*

**18:11** - *“and he hurled it, saying to himself, ‘I’ll pin David to the wall.’ But David eluded him twice.”*

The Hebrew writings indicate that Saul was pretending to prophesy or prophesied under the influence of evil spirits (I Kings 18:29). One cannot prophesy in the name of the Lord and be driven by an evil spirit at the same time. It was Saul’s way of concealing his murderous thoughts and keeping David unsuspecting and vulnerable. Here stood Saul with his spear as his sceptre. Saul’s love to rule with a spear.

“Compare David, with his harp in his hand, aiming to serve Saul,  
and Saul, with his javelin in his hand, aiming to slay David”

Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary

God once again protected David against his enemy. What do you do when a person with the nature of Saul tries to pin you to the wall? Perhaps we need to learn a bit more about how they view important areas of life especially that effect others – especially us.

“Saul did what all mad kings do. He threw spears at David. He could. He was king. Kings do things like that. They almost always do. Kings claim the right to throw spears. Everyone knows that kings have the right. Everyone knows very, very well. How do they know? Because the king has told them so – many, many times.”

Gene Edwards  
“The Tale of Three Kings”  
Tyndale House Publishers  
1992, p. 13

Can anything be learned during this time? Does God allow these kind of things to take place in our lives for a reason? Is He perhaps enrolling us in His School of Brokenness and Submission? One of the hardest lessons we have to learn in life is to deal with those who throw spears at us. Our initial response is to pick up the spear and throw it back. That is the spirit of Saul that seems to reside in all of us. What God wants is for us to develop a spirit more like that of David. It may mean that you are not going to graduate for a while.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**18:12** - *“Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left Saul.”*

**18:13** - *“So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns.”*

**18:14** - *“In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him.”*

**18:15** - *“When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him.”*

**18:16** - *“But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns.”*

It must have been an awful feeling to have the Spirit of God leave from Saul and abide with David. It made Saul return to his habit of fear (18:15; cf. - I Samuel 23:17) which he also continued to pass on to his army (13:6-7; 16:11).

Since Saul couldn't pin David to the wall, he decided to deceptively give David charge over a large contingency of his army. It was not so much an elevation as it was trap hoping that he would be destroyed in battle. Unfortunately this deceptive part of Saul entered the heart of David and he also used it against Uriah when he became king (II Samuel 11:14-27) to try to cover his sinful actions. We must all keep up our guard lest this deceptive nature creeps into our heart. We need to learn to endure under this type of pressure (Hebrews 12:3). We must learn to maintain our credibility in both the king's court and the army camp.

Saul did not get what he intended. Instead of David being wounded or killed, he gained victory after victory over his enemies because the LORD was with him. The more victories he gained the higher the prominence he had with the people over Saul. This created even a greater fear in the heart of Saul. It became apparent that he was losing his grip over the people. Fear is never a permanent way of ensuring power over others. Eventually someone comes forward to break that strangle hold. That does not mean that Saul was about to relinquish his throne.

**18:17** - *“Saul said to David, ‘Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD.’ For Saul said to himself, ‘I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!’”*

**18:18** - *“But David said to Saul, ‘Who am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel, that I should become the king's son-in-law?’”*

**18:19** - *“So when the time came for Merab, Saul's daughter, to be given to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.”*

Deception never ceases when Saul is on the throne. David had already met the requirements of becoming Saul's son-in-law by killing Goliath (I Samuel 17:25). But as we see there is always something more added to the pot in an attempt to regain control. Saul was hoping that the Philistines would kill David and reestablish his throne. His cowardly act was not working – again!!

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)**

As David maintained a humble attitude, it simply added to the fire in Saul's soul. Out of spite and another way of attempting to humiliate David, Saul gives his promised oldest daughter to another man to marry. The man she married was called "*Adriel*" which means "*flock of God*." Was this another attack against David, who was once a shepherd? If so, it also backfired because of the five sons she bore for Adriel, they all died at the hands of the Gibeonites (II Samuel 21:8) after being raised by their aunt Michal.

**18:20** - *"Now Saul's daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased."*

**18:21** - *"'I will give her to him,' he thought, 'so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.' So Saul said to David, 'Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law.'"*

We all realize that love can come in many different ways. The word used here simply means that she had an affection toward David. Eventually her bitter heart was exposed and God made her barren (II Samuel 6:16-23).

Saul once again returned to the leading of his deceptive heart thinking that he could still bring an end to David's life through offering his daughter's hand in marriage. He makes it sound like he is having a change in heart. We must always be careful when Saul's try to give us the pitch of a changed heart. It comes few and far between just like changes in a leopard's skin (Jeremiah 13:23).

**18:22** - *"Then Saul ordered his attendants: 'Speak to David privately and say, Look, the king is pleased with you, and his attendants all like you; now become his son-in-law.'"*

**18:23** - *"They repeated these words to David. But David said, 'Do you think it is a small matter to become the king's son-in-law? I'm only a poor man and little known.'"*

**18:24** - *"When Saul's servants told him what David had said,"*

**18:25** - *"Saul replied, 'Say to David, The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.' Saul's plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines."*

It seems like Saul once again tried to use the back door to gain entrance into David's acceptance of his offer. Perhaps he realized that David may question his sincerity and truthfulness. Some of Saul's attendants were used to bringing the message in order to entice David to accept his offer.

David kept to his humble attitude in thinking that he didn't deserve such honour and recognition from the king. Oh that we could maintain such a pure attitude during these trials.

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)**

Saul reverted back to his devilish ways. He asked for the foreskins of 100 Philistines thinking that it would put David once again in danger. After all what bride in her right mind would ask for such a dowery?

The people of Carmania had a practise that required the head of their enemy brought to their king before they could marry. The kings with the most heads were honoured. The Arabians, Midianites and Edomites still followed the practice of circumcision from the ancestors. Therefore, Saul made sure that it was the Philistines that David attacked by not requesting them to be decapitated.

**18:26 - “When the attendants told David these things, he was pleased to become the king's son-in-law. So before the allotted time elapsed,”**

**18:27 - “David and his men went out and killed two hundred Philistines. He brought their foreskins and presented the full number to the king so that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal in marriage.”**

Saul was caught once again at his own game. God protected David and his men and gave them victory not just over one hundred of their enemies but double that amount. This same principle was encouraged by Jesus later when the Jews were asked to carry a Roman load for one mile. They were to carry it two miles instead (Matthew 5:41).

Saul had no choice but to give his youngest daughter Michal, to David as his bride. Some this as a symbol that when the Jewish people choose not to accept Jesus that the Christian Church was given the privilege. It would be a poor analogy because Michal became barren because she despised David for celebrating the return of the Ark of Covenant.

**18:28 - “When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David,”**

**18:29 - “Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.”**

**18:30 - “The Philistine commanders continued to go out to battle, and as often as they did, David met with more success than the rest of Saul's officers, and his name became well known.”**

Saul's ploys continued to backfire on him. This is the case when God is on our side and He chooses to begin to raise us up. Notice that it increased the fear in Saul's heart. This was a time in the history of David's life when he couldn't seem to do anything wrong. He won many a battle during this time. Too bad he couldn't have won all his upcoming battles.

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)**

##### **Saul Tries to Kill David**

**19:1** - *“Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan was very fond of David.”*

**19:2** - *“and warned him, ‘My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there.’”*

**19:3** - *“I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I’ll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out.”*

The deceptive nature of Saul was not about to remain stagnant. Instead of just Saul wanting to kill David, he now spread the news to get others involved in his schemes. He could have used his influence for good purposes but instead chose to increase his murderous strategy. Those attending to Saul’s every need (including his soldiers) were given orders to kill David. Those with a spirit of Saul just expect others to agree with their devious ways.

Jonathan had a different spirit. His spirit was in kinship with David’s. He was not about to switch allegiances. Therefore, he decided to warn David of his father’s intent on killing him. He had to do it in such a way that it would not bring about any suspicion on the part of Saul. Those with the spirit of Saul seem to know when they are losing their control over others.

It was clear that David had to keep out of the sight of Saul. To come into his sight would mean that his life was placed in danger. David couldn’t even remain in his own home or sleep in his own bed that night. Jonathan chose to stand beside his father only to inform David of any impending danger. It was becoming clear that Saul had allowed his heart to harden toward David and others were beginning to see what God was exposing (Jeremiah 17:9).

**19:4** - *“Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, ‘Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly.’”*

**19:5** - *“He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The LORD won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?”*

It takes great courage to stand against one like Saul. Yet someone had to speak words of wisdom into his heart. Jonathan was a true friend and a man of valor. He spoke of David’s valuable service and devotion in spite of the hatred that was brewing in the heart of Saul. It took a simple question to cause Saul to reevaluate his thoughts and intents. Saul was not able to resist the wisdom found in his son’s words. At least until the spirit of envy, bitterness and strife once again took root. At least it brought a temporary relief and time for David to plan his escape.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**19:6** - *“Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: ‘As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be put to death.’”*

**19:7** - *“So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before.”*

Impulsive minds can be changed – temporarily more than permanently. This time of reconciliation was to be short lived. It’s hard to change the heart of someone like Saul. David’s life was spared for the moment but not forever. There was a conditional truce put in place. It was like many today that is not worth the paper it is written on.

**19:8** - *“Once more war broke out, and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him.”*

**19:9** - *“But an evil spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the harp,”*

**19:10** - *“Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape.”*

It’s interesting how war seems to follow Saul everywhere he goes and even when he stays at home. Even though war broke about against Saul’s kingdom, he sent David out to fight his wars for him. Just think of the effect this must have been having upon Saul’s attendants. He was dividing his kingdom from within. Indeed his kingdom was being torn from his hands (I Samuel 15:28-29). David was gaining the ground of acceptance before the people that Saul was losing.

Once again Saul allowed his heart to harden and God did not refrain the evil spirit from influencing his thoughts and actions (cf. - I Samuel 16:15; 18:10). Saul’s actions became even more fiendish so that even the melodies produce by David playing his harp could not appease the evil spirit.

Saul loved to have a javelin in his hands. It kept everyone at a distance even though he portrayed the thought that he wanted to build a close relationship with David. Swords are used in close contact as well as spears but a javelin is the chosen weapon of cowards.

So began David’s life as a fugitive. He had not done anything wrong but had to be on his guard from that day on (cf. - Psalm 34:19; 59:3; 124:7). David’s life was in peril. Saul had removed his mask of deception for all to see the true intent of his heart. It wasn’t a pretty picture. Saul had let the sun go down upon his wrath (Ephesians 4:26,27) and by doing so gave a foothold to the devil into his life. We all have to wrestle with our thoughts and actions but God has offered us a way of overcoming these deceitful and damaging ways (I Corinthians 10:13; II Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-18).

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**19:11** - *“Saul sent men to David's house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him, ‘If you don't run for your life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed.’”*

**19:12** - *“So Michal let David down through a window, and he fled and escaped.”*

**19:13** - *“Then Michal took an idol and laid it on the bed, covering it with a garment and putting some goats' hair at the head.”*

**19:14** - *“When Saul sent the men to capture David, Michal said, ‘He is ill.’”*

**19:15** - *“Then Saul sent the men back to see David and told them, ‘Bring him up to me in his bed so that I may kill him.’”*

**19:16** - *“But when the men entered, there was the idol in the bed, and at the head was some goats' hair.”*

Saul thought that Michal would be a snare to David by maintaining allegiance to her father (I Samuel 18:20-27). Saul was wrong once again. He had a bitter spirit like that of king Asa whom God also judged (II Chronicles 16:9,10). His cunning plan was to catch David while he was at home in the early morning.

It would have put Michal's life in danger if they would have attempted to kill David in his bed during the night. It would also offer an easier escape for David under the cover of the darkness. Saul did not want any mistaken identity to also take place. The morning light would expose everything. Michal was made aware of the trap so she warned David and helped him escape during the night. This event helped David to write Psalm 59.

David escaped through a window with the help of Michal. It was similar to the help given by Rahab to the spies (Joshua 2:15) as well as the escape of Saul who was later named Paul (Acts 9:24,25).

Michal placed a **“teraphim”** in the bed. This was a family idol. It was an idol that the women of Israel were addicted to. Why would David allow it in his home? Perhaps he didn't know it was there.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

“Aben Ezra supposes they were images made in the form of men under such a constellation, a sort of talismans, to receive the heavenly influences, and which being consulted, foretold things to come; . . . Abarbinel makes mention of several sorts of teraphim, some for idolatry, some to draw down the heavenly influences, some to know the time of the day, a sort of dial; some were made after the form of a man known, and like him in his form and features; and women, he says, used to have the forms or statues of their husbands, that they might have them continually before them, because of the great love they had to them; and of this sort he supposes was the teraphim of Michal, . . . and that this image had the likeness of a human face is very probable, or it could not have so well answered her purpose.”

John Gill  
“*Exposition of the Whole Bible*”

**19:17 - “Saul said to Michal, ‘Why did you deceive me like this and send my enemy away so that he escaped?’ Michal told him, ‘He said to me, ‘Let me get away. Why should I kill you?’”**  
**19:18 - “When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there.”**

This incident does not speak well for Michal. Michal intimates that David had forced her to deceive her father. It was Michal that had advised David to leave before they attempted to kill him.

This lie would perhaps relieve her from the anger that was once again venting up in Saul. But it would also give a further reason for Saul to attack David. Notice she never tried to vindicate her husband and support him as a man of honour and valour.

David returned to Samuel – the one who had anointed him to serve as king (I Samuel 16:12,13). Samuel was also the one who had told Saul that his kingdom had been torn from him and given to one who was better than him (I Samuel 13:14; 15:28).

Samuel and David left Ramah (the hometown of Samuel) and went to Naioth which was the location of the school of the prophets. It was located in Palestine close to Ramah. It would be considered a place of safety because of these godly men taking up habitation there.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**19:19** - *“Word came to Saul: ‘David is in Naioth at Ramah;’”*

**19:20** - *“so he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came upon Saul's men and they also prophesied.”*

**19:21** - *“Saul was told about it, and he sent more men, and they prophesied too. Saul sent men a third time, and they also prophesied.”*

The area that became known as the home of the school of the prophets became permeated with the presence of God. These men continued to call upon the LORD and He in turn continued to abide in their presence.

As Saul's men approached them, they found them prophesying. The Spirit of God did not stop just upon the prophets but He also came upon the men that were pursuing David. What a wonderful and glorious way of dealing with those who intend on harming us. Just call upon the presence of God to be poured out upon our enemies (cf. - Numbers 11:29). At least they were not consumed with fire from heaven as they were in the days of Elijah (II Kings 1:9-13).

**19:22** - *“Finally, he himself left for Ramah and went to the great cistern at Secu. And he asked, ‘Where are Samuel and David?’ ‘Over in Naioth at Ramah,’ they said.”*

**19:23** - *“So Saul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Spirit of God came even upon him, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth.”*

**19:24** - *“He stripped off his robes and also prophesied in Samuel's presence. He lay that way all that day and night. This is why people say, ‘Is Saul also among the prophets?’”*

Saul thought that he had better do the job himself after having sent three different groups to capture David or even kill him. Saul travelled the same road and experienced the same outpouring of God's Holy Spirit upon him. Saul removed his royal robe and any military garments and approached them only with his tunic on. He began prophesying as well which would include singing and dancing before the LORD. He used up so much of his strength that ended up laying upon the ground before God.

Those who witnessed the phenomenal change in Saul began to wonder whether he was now a prophet of God. It was just God's way of turning wrath into praise and preserving the life of David who had been anointed to serve as king.

“Many have great gifts, yet no grace; they may prophesy in Christ's name, yet are disowned by him.”

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

##### David and Jonathan

**20:1** - *“Then David fled from Naioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, ‘What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to take my life?’”*

**20:2** - *“‘Never!’ Jonathan replied. ‘You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn't do anything, great or small, without confiding in me. Why would he hide this from me? It's not so!’”*

**20:3** - *“But David took an oath and said, ‘Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.’ Yet as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death.”*

**20:4** - *“Jonathan said to David, ‘Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you.’”*

It was important for David to have a friend like Jonathan especially when someone like Saul was seated on the throne. Yet Saul had not confided in Jonathan his true intent to kill David because Saul knew that they had joined their hearts in a kindred spirit (cf. - Proverbs 17:17). It is very likely that Jonathan did not know what had taken place as recorded in 19:8-24. He may have placed a greater deal of trust in Saul's oath (I Samuel 19:6) then he should have. Friendship should never negate the need to use wisdom.

I have heard it said that faith is living without scheming. When we truly place our faith in God, we don't need to keep attempting to work everything out for ourselves. God has promised to be involved in our lives as we place our trust in Him (Romans 8:28). This was a very hard lesson for David (and for us) to not only learn but continually apply. Trials are often sent to prepare us and develop us for future ministry.

**20:5** - *“So David said, ‘Look, tomorrow is the New Moon festival, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow.’”*

**20:6** - *“If your father misses me at all, tell him, 'David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.’”*

The first day of the lunar month marked a festive occasion where all family members were expected to attend. It was normally a single day of rejoicing when trumpets were sounded and special sacrifices took place (Numbers 10:10; 28:11-15; Psalm 81:3). Saul lengthened it to three days. During Samuel's childhood this feast was held at Shiloh (I Samuel 1:3) but after Shiloh was destroyed and the tabernacle was removed, each one held this feast in their homes.

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)**

Depending upon which family gathering that David would attend he could be either with Saul or with his family in Bethlehem. David decided to hide away from Saul until he knew for sure whether he was safe or not. It is unlikely that he went to Bethlehem. The bible doesn't condone the lie but rather just explains the agreement that David and Jonathan came to.

**20:7 - *"If he says, 'Very well,' then your servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me."***

**20:8 - *As for you, show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the LORD. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?"***

**20:9 - *"Never!" Jonathan said. 'If I had the least inkling that my father was determined to harm you, wouldn't I tell you?'"***

I find it interesting that David describes himself as Jonathan's servant. It's important to remain truly humbled before the LORD as well as before each other (I Samuel 3:10; 17:32; 23:10). A person with a heart of a servant looks toward difficulties much different than one who acts like a king. The one thing we must be careful about is taking on a nature of a servant who feels like a victim.

David was hurting. It's never easy to be on the run from your enemy. Fear and trepidation easily find their place in our soul and begin to tear at us. It was a battle that David had to win. Jonathan reassured David that he would do everything in his power to keep Saul from harming him. It was a time of insecurity that had to leave from David's thought pattern for him to serve his nation as king. Otherwise, he would take on the spirit of Saul.

**20:10 - *"David asked, 'Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?'"***

**20:11 - *"'Come,' Jonathan said, 'let's go out into the field.' So they went there together."***

**20:12 - *"Then Jonathan said to David: 'By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know?"***

**20:13 - *"But if my father is inclined to harm you, may the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away safely. May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father."***

I love the way that Jonathan reassures his friend David by coming along his side. A true friend walks with us through our fears and assures us so we don't have to continue walking in fear. Jonathan renewed his covenant with David by offering allegiance over and above that of his father. It makes a big difference in our lives when God also comes alongside us and reassures us that His covenant still remains.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**20:14** - *“But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed,”*

**20:15** - *“and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth.”*

**20:16** - *“So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, ‘May the LORD call David's enemies to account.’”*

**20:17** - *“And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.”*

Jonathan believed that David would someday serve as the king of his people. He also was aware that kings of his time period would often kill off any who survived from the previous king's family (I Kings 15:29; 16:11; II Kings 10:7). David kept his covenant with Jonathan by caring for his crippled son, Mephibosheth (II Samuel 9; 21:7).

This is the way that true love expresses itself. In return for Jonathan's oath to David, David was also required to reestablish his oath to Jonathan and his family. This is how friendships are molded and mended.

**20:18** - *“Then Jonathan said to David: ‘Tomorrow is the New Moon festival. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty.’”*

**20:19** - *“The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel.”*

**20:20** - *“I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target.”*

**20:21** - *“Then I will send a boy and say, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to him, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,’ then come, because, as surely as the LORD lives, you are safe; there is no danger.*

**20:22** - *“But if I say to the boy, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you,’ then you must go, because the LORD has sent you away.”*

**20:23** - *“And about the matter you and I discussed—remember, the LORD is witness between you and me forever.”*

It was clear that David would be missed if he did not attend the festive meal at Saul's table. It was expected of everyone in the family to be there at the beginning of every month. I wonder if this simple standard could be used today to bring families together or if they would be like David and find some reason not to attend? I'm not suggesting that David was unwise at this time but many families come apart simply because they don't find time to be together.

The stone named *“Ezel”* meant *“departure.”* It was known as a milestone to guide those journeying in that area. He most likely stayed in a cave near the stone.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

The sign that David would look for would be how far the three arrows traveled. If they close to where he was staying, he would know that he was safe. If they went well beyond the rock, he would know that his life was in danger.

When he spoke about the matter that they had discussed, he was referring to the oath they had just made to each other. It's not so much that Jonathan doubted the words of David but he did want to make sure that it was taken seriously.

**20:24** - *“So David hid in the field, and when the New Moon festival came, the king sat down to eat.*

**20:25** - *“He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan, and Abner sat next to Saul, but David's place was empty.”*

**20:26** - *“Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, ‘Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean—surely he is unclean.’”*

It was believed that this table only had seating for four people. Therefore, anyone who was not in their seat would be noticed. Saul most likely took the position that would place his seat against the wall which was the most honorable position. Abner being the son of Saul's uncle and the commander of his army was also invited to this prestigious table. Josephus believed that Jonathan sat on the right hand of his father while Abner was on his left-hand side. The seats were more like couches where they would recline to eat (I Samuel 28:23).

The Jewish Law was very strict in its allowances for those partaking in the feasts (Leviticus 7:20; 11:24; 15:5,16; Numbers 19:16). They took ceremonial cleansing very seriously.

**20:27** - *“But the next day, the second day of the month, David's place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, ‘Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?’”*

**20:28** - *“Jonathan answered, ‘David earnestly asked me for permission to go to Bethlehem.’”*

**20:29** - *“He said, ‘Let me go, because our family is observing a sacrifice in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away to see my brothers.’ That is why he has not come to the king's table.’”*

Saul became irritated once again when David did not show up on the second day of the feast. He indicated his anger by calling David *“the son of Jesse.”* Jonathan spoke up for David's defense declaring that David's eldest brother (who would now be seen as the head of his family) requested him to be at their feasting table. It would normally be the custom to receive permission from the king not the king's son.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**20:30 - "Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, 'You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you?'"**

**20:31 - "As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!"**

Saul was more upset at missing an opportunity to bring harm to David than he was that a custom had been broken. Saul redirected his fierce anger toward Jonathan. His abusive tone simply reinforced his own weakness. This form of Oriental abuse would bring more harm than if Saul would have directed his words directly toward Jonathan. It is the same today. It's one thing to have someone speak against us while it is another to speak against our mother.

Saul couldn't have cared less whether Jonathan would take his throne or not at this juncture of time. It was just another way of attempting to bring a division between their friendship. It also would make Saul look bad if his kingdom was not passed on to his son. Saul had plenty to learn but his hardened heart kept him from maturing (Proverbs 15:2; Matthew 5:22; Ephesians 4:31).

If Saul's intentions were vague before this time, they were no longer. He made it very clear that he wanted David dead. He would even have him removed from his home and brought back just to kill him.

**20:32 - "'Why should he be put to death? What has he done?' Jonathan asked his father."**

**20:33 - "But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David."**

**20:34 - "Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger; on that second day of the month he did not eat, because he was grieved at his father's shameful treatment of David."**

Jonathan's desire to see his friend protected was falling on deaf ears. David stood like Jesus. He had done nothing wrong but the leadership of the day wanted to have Him killed (Matthew 27:23; Luke 23:22). Saul was showing how foolish he had become (Ecclesiastes 7:9).

Saul now picked up his javelin and directed it toward his son. It became even clearer that Saul was going to do everything in his power to destroy David. Jonathan never even began to partake in the meal before leaving in an intense anger toward his father. His heart ached that his father would act in such a way.

He may also have been upset at himself for not seeing what David could clearly see. It's always difficult to face up to the fact of what our Family of Origin represents to others.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### B. David Servicing in the Court of Saul (16:14-20:42) (Contd.)

**20:35** - *“In the morning Jonathan went out to the field for his meeting with David. He had a small boy with him,”*

**20:36** - *“and he said to the boy, ‘Run and find the arrows I shoot.’ As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.”*

**20:37** - *“When the boy came to the place where Jonathan's arrow had fallen, Jonathan called out after him, ‘Isn't the arrow beyond you?’”*

**20:38** - *“Then he shouted, ‘Hurry! Go quickly! Don't stop!’ The boy picked up the arrow and returned to his master.”*

**20:39** - *“(The boy knew nothing of all this; only Jonathan and David knew.)”*

**20:40** - *“Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy and said, ‘Go, carry them back to town.’”*

Some writers believe there was time when nobles would go out and take walk, hunt and cast arrows. In going at this time Jonathan would not be suspected of doing anything wrong. A servant would accompany them to pick up the arrows after they landed. As the servant boy went to fetch the arrows, Jonathan launched one beyond his reach. He was told to pick up the arrow that was within reach and return without collecting the third arrow.

The servant boy was not informed what the sign was. He was simply told to return back home with the weapons.

**20:41** - *“After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.”*

**20:42** - *“Jonathan said to David, ‘Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’ Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.”*

During this private moment, David maintained the heart of a servant and bowed before Jonathan three times. It was an emotional moment for both of them. The kissing would just be the customary kiss of friendship and nothing more.

It would be harder on David than upon Jonathan. Jonathan still had the pleasure of the king's supply to eat from in Gibeah even though king Saul was full of anger. David now would have to make the wilderness his home and always be on the lookout to escape the plans of this mad king.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)

**21:1** - *“David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he met him, and asked, ‘Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?’”*

**21:2** - *“David answered Ahimelech the priest, ‘The king charged me with a certain matter and said to me, ‘No one is to know anything about your mission and your instructions.’ As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place.’”*

The town of Nob was a priest’s city at this time located between Anathoth and Jerusalem (Isaiah 10:30). It was believed to have the Tabernacle of Moses located in it and was therefore recognized as the legal place of worship for that time period. It is believed that you could see Jerusalem from Nob.

Ahimelech trembled at David’s arrival because (the son-in-law of king Saul) did not give him any notice and showed up without his men. Normally these visits would be preplanned. David told an outright lie about the purpose of his visit. There was no charge of the king and David’s men were not meeting him. Some believe he referred to this deception in Psalm 119:29. This deception eventually brought about the death of 85 priests in Nob including Ahimelech (I Samuel 22:9-19).

This was a time in David’s life when his faith was weak. This story was placed in scripture not to offer us an example to follow but rather to teach us the destructive results that come about through a lying tongue.

**21:3** - *“Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find.”*

**21:4** - *“But the priest answered David, ‘I don’t have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here—provided the men have kept themselves from women.’”*

**21:5** - *“David replied, ‘Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever I set out. The men’s things are holy even on missions that are not holy. How much more so today!’”*

**21:6** - *“So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the LORD and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.”*

David may have asked for five loaves to provide for his needs for several days. It wouldn’t be enough to feed his men as well. Jesus alluded to this event (Mark 2:25). The Bread of His Presence was to always be kept in the Tabernacle before the Lord (Exodus 25:23-29). The bread had to be unleavened. Leaven is used (for the most part in Scripture) to symbolize sin. Therefore, the bread became a beautiful symbol of the sinless life of Christ. It’s believed that David arrived on the Sabbath when the twelve loaves were replaced. Therefore, David received half of the loaves that would have been given to the priests to eat (Leviticus 24:6-9).



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25) (Contd.)

The Jews still maintain an ancient tradition based upon the Table of Shewbread.

"The bread is called 'challah' (kallah) and after it is baked on Friday (The Preparation Day), it is covered over with a white cloth which signifies its purity. On the Sabbath (Saturday), it is uncovered, cut, and blessed with these words in Hebrew: 'Baruch attah Adonai, Elohenu, Melech ha olam, ha moitzeh lehem min ha eretz.'

'Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who bringeth forth bread from the earth.'

The first piece of this 'kallah' is presented to the head of the house who is the priest and lord of his household; the remainder of it is distributed among the family."

Since the bread was considered holy, only those who were holy were allowed to eat of the seven day old bread. One way of determining a man's holiness was whether he had refrained from sexual intercourse (Exodus 19:15; Leviticus 15:18). Today we recognize our holiness by the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 4:7).

**21:7 - "Now one of Saul's servants was there that day, detained before the LORD; he was Doeg the Edomite, Saul's head shepherd."**

**21:8 - "David asked Ahimelech, 'Don't you have a spear or a sword here? I haven't brought my sword or any other weapon, because the king's business was urgent.'"**

**21:9 - "The priest replied, 'The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one.' David said, 'There is none like it; give it to me.'"**

It's interesting the type of shepherd that Saul took into his service as David was expelled. These kinds of people influence even the best of God's shepherds. Doeg later exposed his heart by killing every priest he could get his hands upon in the town of Nob.

Under an evil influence, David searched for a spear and a sword. There was a time in his life when he would not wear Saul's armour. He chose a sling over a sword. Did he think he could use such a heavy sword? Scriptures never indicate that he ever used the sword. David fled so quickly from his home that his sword and shield was left behind. David should have left Goliath's sword wrapped in the ephod. There is nothing like a sling when God directs the stone.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25) (Contd.)

It would have changed the outcome of history if David had more of an effect on Doeg than Doeg and Saul were having on him. David left in fear and Doeg left in a bravery which would be used in the hands of Israel's evil king.

“The Son of David taught from it, that mercy is to be preferred to sacrifice; that ritual observances must give way to moral duties. Doeg set his foot as far within the tabernacle as David did. We little know with what hearts people come to the house of God, nor what use they will make of pretended devotion. If many come in simplicity of heart to serve their God, others come to observe their teachers and to prove accusers. Only God and the event can distinguish between a David and a Doeg, when both are in the tabernacle.”

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary](#)

#### David at Gath

**21:10** - *“That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath.”*

**21:11** - *“But the servants of Achish said to him, ‘Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one they sing about in their dances: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?’”*

**21:12** - *“David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath.”*

**21:13** - *“So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.”*

**21:14** - *“Achish said to his servants, ‘Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me?’”*

**21:15** - *“‘Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?’”*

Achish (or Abimelech) was the Philistine king that David took refuge with for many years (I Samuel 27:1-12; 29:1-11). It is believed that many years passed by so he may not have been recognized as the one who slew Goliath. One thing is for sure that he didn't parade Goliath's sword before the people of Gath which was Goliath's home town. If David thought he could hide out in Philistine country without being noticed, he was in for a rude awakening. He was quickly recognized as the 'king of the land.' The Philistines recognized his kingship while the Israelites didn't set him in his rightful place. Gath was one of their five chief cities.

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25) (Contd.)**

Even the Philistines knew of the accolades directed toward David (I Samuel 18:6,7; I Samuel 29:5). It was from this time that David acted insane that he wrote Psalm 34. This is what happens when faith is replaced by fear. It is the result of taking on a heart of Saul instead of the heart of David. We all can make this mistake. Perhaps we all have made the mistake at one time or another. It's unfortunately easy to do, especially when we are surrounded by kings like Saul and leaders like Doeg.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

##### David at Adullam and Mizpah

**22:1** - *“David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there.”*

**22:2** - *“All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.”*

The “*cave at Adullam*” is believed to be about 10 miles southeast of Gath and sixteen miles southwest of Jerusalem in the lowland country of the tribal land of Judah. Numerous caves have been found in the area. One cave is more than 100 feet long. Some believe the name means “*refuge*.” Both Psalm 142 and Psalm 57 were believed to have been written during this time. It was just prior to this time that he also wrote Psalm 34 & 56.

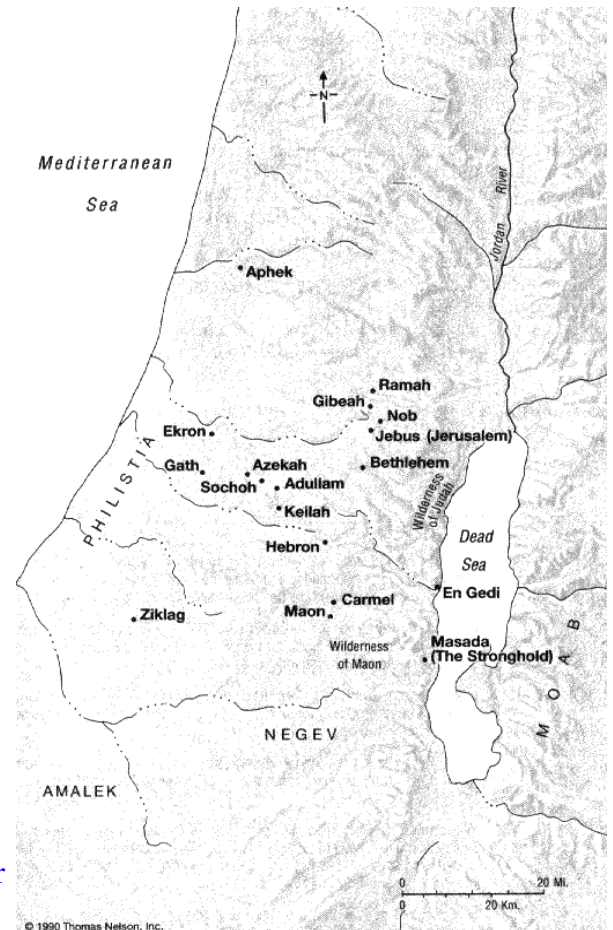
David’s family felt insecure since Saul became vicious against his own son and household so they joined David in the cave.

“Don’t follow any leader until you see the mark of oil on his forehead.”

A. W. Tozer

Even though he faltered along the way, he was still God’s anointed leader for the time. There are times in our lives when God takes us a shining light and brings us into an eclipse where darkness seems to overtake our soul. What we do during these times may affect more than just ourselves.

This became a time of much more than “*misery loves company*.” There arose a hope and faith in God that related to many others who had lost hope under the leadership of Saul. The time had arrived to begin building an army made up of those who were in distress, debt and discontented. How would you like 400 (which grew to 600 in 23:13) of this kind looking to you for leadership especially when your spirit is also down? He also was bearing the weight of his family’s needs as well as their previous attitude toward him.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**22:3** - *“From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, ‘Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?’”*

**22:4** - *“So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold.”*

**22:5** - *“But the prophet Gad said to David, ‘Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah.’ So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.”*

*Mizpah* means “*watchtower*” which probably pointed to a stronghold in the land of Moab. There was also a Mizpah in the land of the tribe of Benjamin (I Samuel 7:5). David, even though born in Bethlehem, could trace his decedents from Moab (Ruth 1:1-2; 4:17). His father was Jesse who would be the grandson of Ruth. David was Ruth’s great-grandson. Saul was also an enemy of the Moabites (I Samuel 14:47) which would make a common denominator for David to enter the land by crossing the Jordan River at the point where it entered the Dead Sea..

David knew at this juncture of his life not to attempt to go ahead of God. He felt responsible for his parents and wanted to make sure that they were out of the hands of king Saul. He truly honoured his parents through this single act of love. David stayed at a stronghold in Moab until God directed him through the seer Gad who became his personal prophet (I Chronicles 21:9; 29:29; II Samuel 24:11). David was later joined by a priest as well (I Samuel 22:20-23)

The main stronghold that David had to learn to put his trust into was that of God Himself and not the fortresses of man (Psalm 28:8; 31:4; 37:39). The forest area was likely in a wooded area southwest of Jerusalem.

#### Saul Kills the Priests of Nob

**22:6** - *“Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul, spear in hand, was seated under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing around him.”*

**22:7** - *“Saul said to them, ‘Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?’”*

**22:8** - *“Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today.”*

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

As soon as Saul knew that David had returned to an area close by him he once again took up the notion to have David killed. Saul called a meeting (perhaps council meeting) under the famous Tamarisk tree (soft wooded known to survive in dry climates; seldom found in mountainous areas) near his hometown of Gibeah. It was a higher point of the land which added to his feelings of superiority.

A spear was often used early in the time of the kings as a sceptre. For Saul it was just another way of identifying his type of leadership style. Saul surrounded himself with men from his tribe of Benjamin.

He then used the opportunity to buy his men. David didn't have the resources at that time to offer his men anything other than a cave to live in. There was no feasible way of making his men commanders over thousands because he only had 400 men with him. David would give positions of authority to men of his own tribe over men from the tribe of Benjamin.

Saul was once again paranoid and irrational about the lack of trust between him and his men. These men were loyal to him but his thirst for the blood of David was blinding his vision. Notice that Saul wouldn't even use David's name but rather called him "*the son of Jesse.*"

He used a false conspiracy theory to have these men want to maintain the power in their tribe and not surrender it to the men of Judah under David's leadership. David was not lying in wait of Saul to kill him. It was the pot trying to call the kettle black. It was Saul that was abusing his power as forewarned by Samuel (I Samuel 8:10-18). Saul had it down to a fine art. It began in the Garden of Eden and now another of the serpent's seed continued to propagate it. It is said that "*the best defence is a good offense.*" Saul practised it well.

Jonathan's previous covenant with David was not to destroy his father but rather to protect David from his father's evil schemes (I Samuel 18:3,4). Saul was able to destroy himself all on his own. He didn't need David. He was being eaten up from the inside out.

"Here is a tragic illustration of how twisted our view becomes when we give in to jealousy and rage. Saul invents his own reality, uses this myth to condemn his own servants, and orders the slaughter of the priests of God and their families."

[Spirit Filled Life Study Bible](#)

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**22:9** - *“But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, ‘I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob.’”*

**22:10** - *“Ahimelech inquired of the LORD for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”*

Doeg is believed to be the chief herdsman who oversaw Saul’s mules (I Samuel 21:7). Doeg was looking for the favour of Saul. There is always a high cost to gain the favour of a Saul. It requires that you attack someone else. That is what causes one to gain ground in a kingdom of dominance. Nothing is sacred in Saul’s kingdom except Saul himself.

Ahimelech served as the priest at Nob. When David visited with him, he first of all sought the Lord on his behalf (22:14). According to the detail given in I Samuel 21:1-9 we know that David was given the consecrated bread as well as the sword of Goliath.

**22:11** - *“Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub and his father's whole family, who were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the king.”*

**22:12** - *“Saul said, ‘Listen now, son of Ahitub.’ ‘Yes, my lord,’ he answered.”*

**22:13** - *“Saul said to him, ‘Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me, as he does today?’”*

**22:14** - *“Ahimelech answered the king, ‘Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household?’”*

**22:15** - *“Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father's family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair.”*

**22:16** - *“But the king said, ‘You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and your father's whole family.’”*

It was in anger that Saul sent for Ahimelech to question his behaviour. Notice that once again Saul chose not to address the priest by his name but rather he called him the *“son of Ahitub.”* It was another of Saul’s ways of demeaning those who stood before him.

Once again Saul used his false accusations to build his defence for his devious ways. There was no conspiracy going on. It was simply another assumption that played upon his heart and mind to increase his anger.

King Solomon later in history offered some great wisdom on how to deal with anger. One who cannot control his temper should not attempt to rule a nation.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

*“A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.”*

*Proverbs 15:18*

*“Better is a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.”*

*Proverbs 16:32*

*“A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offence.”*

*Proverbs 19:11*

Ahimelech began by giving support for David because he had served honourably for Saul. Everyone knew that in the kingdom. Everyone but Saul! The kingdom of Saul was being blessed because of the faithfulness of David. David had been faithful as a son-in-law and captain of his guard and respected among everyone in the Saul’s household. It was not something that Saul wanted to hear. Envy and strife were feeding his evil thoughts.

This wasn’t the first time that Ahimelech had inquired of the Lord for David. This would have happened a number of times because there were many wars that David had fought in. Men like David asked the Lord before entering into battle. I wonder if Ahimelech inquired about whether David should fight against Goliath?

Ahimelech was innocent of conspiring against king Saul. He has simply fulfilled his duty as a priest serving the people. All priests went before God on behalf of those they served. We as N.T. priests should be careful about taking on the spirit of Saul and choosing who can be prayed for. Sometimes our eyes cannot see what is being revealed because of the hardness of our own heart. Let God decide who is worthy to receive His mercy.

*“The tongue has the power of life and death and those who love it will eat its fruit.”*

*Proverbs 18:21*

Saul chose to bring death from his tongue. His fruit was rotten. Yet he continued to produce more and more of it. No wonder God took the kingdom from him.

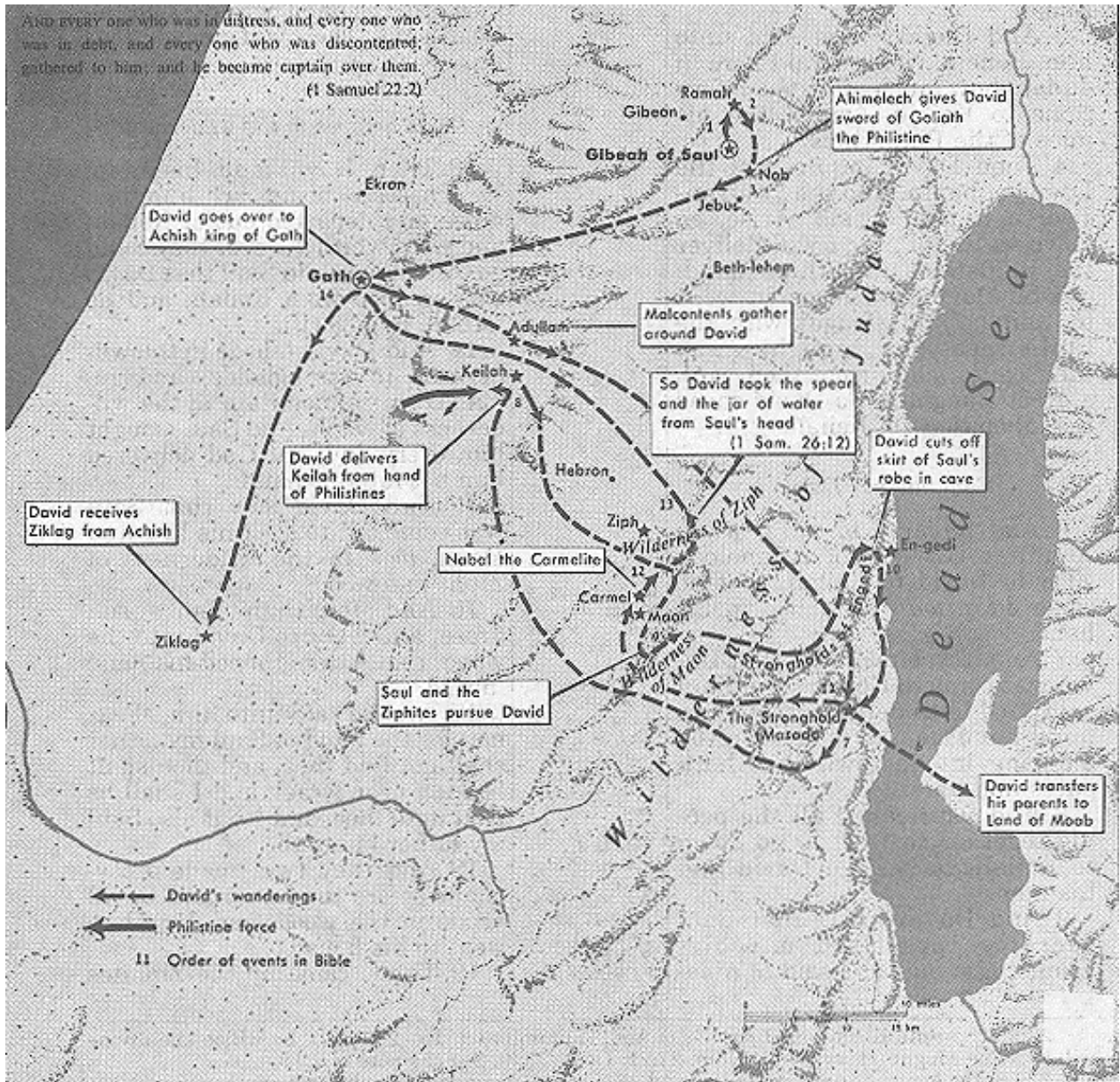


### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**22:17** - "Then the king ordered the guards at his side: 'Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me.' But the king's officials were not willing to raise a hand to strike the priests of the LORD."

**22:18** - "The king then ordered Doeg, 'You turn and strike down the priests.' So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod."



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

Saul's royal bodyguard would not carry out this act of sacrilege. These were the priests of Jehovah. No king had the authority to put them to death on such feeble accusations. This was bordering on madness. That shouldn't surprise any of us.

Doeg, as a Gentile, had no trouble destroying the priest's of God. He came from Edom, from a Bedouin background, which made him used of bloodshed. The Edomites were decedents of Esau and became long-standing enemies of Israel. That day alone, Doeg and his band of ruthless men killed eighty-five priests. These were the men who wore a linen ephod to distinguish them for the work of Jehovah. It appears that this is where we got our expression "men of the cloth."

In an ironical manner he fulfilled the prophecy against the household of Eli (I Samuel 3:12-14).

**22:19** - *"He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep."*

**22:20** - *"But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech son of Ahitub, escaped and fled to join David."*

**22:21** - *"He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD."*

**22:22** - *"Then David said to Abiathar: 'That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your father's whole family.'"*

**22:23** - *"Stay with me; don't be afraid; the man who is seeking your life is seeking mine also. You will be safe with me."*

The town of Nob contained the Tabernacle. It was a holy place unto the Lord. Josephus, the Jewish historian wrote that three hundred and eighty-five were killed in the town of Nob. Some believe that eighty-five were the priests and the three hundred were from their families. Saul wouldn't carry out the same act against the Amalekites as told by the Lord through Samuel to do earlier but he would do it to God's priests (I Samuel 15:3). Saul's act of self-preservation had now begun to turn against him.

In one act of God's grace we find David ending up with the last priest of the area and the linen ephod that would come with the Urim and Thummin. This would help David to discern God's will for the future. This Abiathar was the grandfather to the high priest who later served under David with the same name.

Once again we see the heart of David in contrast to that of Saul's. Saul had no problem commanding the death of the priests. David, on the other hand, felt responsible for their deaths. Compare the confessions of Saul with that of David's (I Samuel 15:24,25,30). David gave refuge to this last standing priest of the area. Saul sought to kill him.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

##### David Saves Keilah

**23:1** - *“When David was told, ‘Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors,’”*

**23:2** - *“he inquired of the LORD, saying, ‘Shall I go and attack these Philistines?’ The LORD answered him, ‘Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah.’”*

**23:3** - *“But David's men said to him, ‘Here in Judah we are afraid. How much more, then, if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces!’”*

**23:4** - *“Once again David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him, ‘Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand.’”*

**23:5** - *“So David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah.”*

**23:6** - *“(Now Abiathar son of Ahimelech had brought the ephod down with him when he fled to David at Keilah.)”*

It didn't take long to see why God had guided David back into the region where Saul had stationed himself. Reports soon arrived that the Philistines were making raids against the border towns to plunder their grain. It was a common practice among the Philistines and Midianites (Judges 6:4). One of these fortified towns (23:7) was called Keilah which was on the road to Hebron. It is believed that the prophet Habakkuk's tomb was there.

The harvest had past and it was the time to thresh the grain. The threshing floors were located in the open fields (Ruth 3:2). They were outside the protection of the walled town so they were open targets for the Philistines.

David's men initially were afraid. They had picked up the spirit of Saul. That's why they came to David so distressed, in debt and discontented (22:2). David now had the opportunity to instill faith into their lives. I wasn't doing to happen overnight. Faith builds upon faith. They would have to leave their comfort zone to see God give the Philistines into their hands. Saul wasn't about to do it, so this became David's fight.

As David responded to God's direction he was able to defeat the Philistines and plunder their livestock. He received direction from God through the Urim and Thummin that came to him earlier through Abiathar and the ephod that he brought from the town of Nob (23:6). It takes faith in God to lead us into many victories. I love the fact though, that David sought God's direction before going forward. Godly assurance is a vital part of winning spiritual battles.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

##### Saul Pursues David

**23:7** - *“Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, ‘God has handed him over to me, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars.’”*

**23:8** - *“And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.”*

**23:9** - *“When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, ‘Bring the ephod.’”*

**23:10** - *“David said, ‘O LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me.’”*

**23:11** - *“Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant.” And the LORD said, ‘He will.’”*

**23:12** - *“Again David asked, ‘Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?’ And the LORD said, ‘They will.’”*

**23:13** - *“So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there.”*

It is not long before Saul got wind that David has gone to Keilah to save them from the hands of the Philistines. Saul felt he now had David captured behind the walls of the city. As if God had allowed David to conquer the Philistines in order to place him into captivity so Saul could complete his evil scheme. This is how insane Saul had become. Notice that Saul called up all his forces without calling upon the Lord. I wonder how these men felt when Saul had to call off the assault?

David inquired of the LORD and was told that Saul was planning not just to capture David but also to destroy the town because David had rescued them. Saul believed that the townspeople would work with David. So Saul once again used his force to bring fear into the hearts of those in Keilah. They succumbed to it because they had not yet picked up the spirit of David. It's not that they didn't appreciate what David had done for them. It was just that they were looking out for their own interests.

David's men had now grown to 600. He knew that they would have to keep changing their positions or Saul would eventually find them again. Saul decided not to continue because he had no intelligence as to where David had gone to.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**23:14** - *“David stayed in the desert strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands.”*

**23:15** - *“While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life.”*

**23:16** - *“And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.”*

**23:17** - *“‘Don't be afraid,’ he said. ‘My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this.’”*

**23:18** - *“The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.”*

I love the way that God gives times of refreshment when we feel overwhelmed by the situations that are trying to overcome us. We much like David are being pursued by those with worldly intentions. We have not been awarded our place of preeminence yet. Our time to serve as kings and priest is still to come (Revelation 1:6). It will not happen until God's appointed time. We must use wisdom and keep our hearts in order while we await that day of our full redemption. Sometimes we find strength in others while at other times we can only turn to God (30:6).

Ziph was a city located in the southern part of Judah in the mountainous area close to Carmel between Hebron and En Gedi. There were many ravines and caves to hide in. It is the same today with Osama bin Laden hiding in the hills of Afghanistan or Pakistan. The winds would easily cover over any footprints left behind. It was an arid location with little vegetation.

Jonathan was able to find David because their hearts were joined as one. Notice that Jonathan once again initiated the visit. He came to warn David of his father's evil intentions. But at the same time to add faith to his faith. Jonathan instilled the truth that David was one day to be crowned as king. Jonathan was willing to take a lesser position so David could reign as the rightful king of Israel.

After renewing the covenant they had once made, David stayed in Horesh while Jonathan returned to Gibeah with his father. They never saw each other again before Jonathan was killed in battle with his father against the Philistines at Mount Gilboa (31:2).

Once again God guided the steps of David because he chose to live a righteous life in spite of what Saul chose to do to him. Our steps will also be guided as we chose to do God's will. We may stumble along the way but we will not be utterly cast down. (Psalm 37:23,24).

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**23:19** - *“The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, ‘Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon?’”*

**23:20** - *“Now, O king, come down whenever it pleases you to do so, and we will be responsible for handing him over to the king.”*

**23:21** - *“Saul replied, ‘The LORD bless you for your concern for me.’”*

**23:22** - *“Go and make further preparation. Find out where David usually goes and who has seen him there. They tell me he is very crafty.”*

**23:23** - *“Find out about all the hiding places he uses and come back to me with definite information. Then I will go with you; if he is in the area, I will track him down among all the clans of Judah.”*

The Ziphites were given a panoramic view of the wanderings of David and his men throughout the Judean wilderness. They used it to reveal to Saul where David and his men were. They were looking for a reward. They may have thought that they would also go down in the history books as the ones who were able to bring about the defeat of David. These were David’s fellow tribesmen of Judah. Yet David calls them strangers (Psalm 54:3).

How would Saul ever think that he could pass on the Lord’s blessing to anyone. God was so near to his mouth and yet so far from his heart like many today. In one moment he is blessing the Ziphites for their craftiness and in the next moment he is accusing David of the craftiness that he continued to walk in. He was living in a delusion.

Saul didn’t want to be left looking like a fool again. Yet he wanted to be given the credit for tracking David down. So he asked for detailed information about where David and his band of men were hiding out.

It is important to note that David’s intents were being totally misconstrued by Saul. It is a warning to us not to misread the intentions of others. Not everything is as it appears. We can become judgmental of an individual or group of people simply because of what we have heard from another individual. Saul put his men and himself in a precarious situation. The words of Jesus should come as a wake up call to all of us. Watch out lest we take on the spirit of Saul.

*“Do not judge, or you too will be judged.  
2. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

*Matthew 7:1,2*

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**23:24** - *“So they set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the Arabah south of Jeshimon.”*

**23:25** - *“Saul and his men began the search, and when David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Desert of Maon. When Saul heard this, he went into the Desert of Maon in pursuit of David.”*

**23:26** - *“Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them,”*

**23:27** - *“a messenger came to Saul, saying, ‘Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land.’”*

**23:28** - *“Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth.”*

**23:29** - *“And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.”*

The desert of Maon is located about five miles south of the location inhabited by the Ziphites. It was during this time that David penned the 54<sup>th</sup> Psalm. It was in this location that later in time Jonathan Maccabees, the high priest, built his famous castle and called it Masada.

Saul thought he now had the opportunity to capture David and his men. He forgot to talk to God. God has a way of placing a mountain between us and our enemies when they are falsely accusing us and attempting to assault us.

As Saul was traveling on one side of the mountain to capture David, David and his men were escaping on the other side. In order to add the final blow to Saul’s endeavors, a message arrived to say that the Philistines were once again raiding the land.

If Saul had been where he should have been (protecting his people) the enemy would not likely have attacked. Saul left his homeland unprotected in his zeal to kill David.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

##### David Spares Saul's Life

**24:1** - *“After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, ‘David is in the Desert of En Gedi.’”*

**24:2** - *“So Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats.”*

**24:3** - *“He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave.”*

Saul left to pursue the Philistines which most likely was a small band of them so he could return quickly to find David and his men. In the meantime, David left for En Gedi. It would be approximately six to seven hours travel time on foot from Moan. En Gedi was an oasis on the barren west side of the Dead Sea. It is watered by hot springs that burst 300-400 feet in the air creating a semitropical vegetation.

Saul set out with 3,000 chosen men in order to capture and kill David. Saul’s blind rage was the only incentive that caused him to undertake such a dangerous undertaking. The area was only fit for wild goats to find proper footing. There were many dangerous precipices in the area.

The soil in the area was limestone while the rocks were a mixture of chalk and flint. The area contains mountains that are about 200-400 feet in height. They were filled with many caverns for David and his to take up refuge in. Many of the sheep pens in this area were actually caves in the side of the mountains. According to a writer by the name of Strabo there was a cave that could hold up to 4,000 men at one time in this area.

Saul entered a cave not thinking that David and his men were in the area. A number of the older versions speak of Saul going into the cave *“to cover his feet.”* It is an English euphemism which means *“to go to the bathroom.”* Newer versions speak of him going *“to relieve himself.”* Saul may have laid his robe aside which made it accessible for David to cut the corner off of it. That piece of cloth would prove that David had the opportunity to kill Saul and chose not to.

Saul entered the cave unsuspecting of the danger that could have awaited him. It was a danger only if David had a spirit like that of Saul. One Jewish tradition teaches that God had a spider spin a web at the mouth of the cave in order to have Saul believe that no one else was in there. He laid down to sleep after exhausting himself from battle with the Philistines and then relentlessly pursuing after David. It takes plenty of energy to pursue the life of another. A restless mind produces an exhausted body.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**24:4** - *“The men said, ‘This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.’ Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.”*

**24:5** - *“Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe.”*

**24:6** - *“He said to his men, ‘The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD.’”*

**24:7** - *“With these words David rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.”*

There is nowhere in scripture indicating that the LORD spoke these words to David. It is most likely a mistaken conclusion of his men. We must be careful not to read certain things into situations. David was not about to take the kingdom by force. We interpret certain events by what is in our heart. Saul believed he was safe so he laid aside his robe and sword. David's men saw this as an opportunity to destroy their enemy and bring peace to the land. David recognized it as an opportunity to show mercy to his enemy (Matthew 5:3-12; Romans 12:17-21).

Cutting a piece off of Saul's robe would normally be a sign of insubordination. In this case it was a sign of his loyalty (24:10-12). Yet David's heart was so pliable in the hands of God that his conscience told him he had done wrong.

David's words to his men clearly showed that he had never received a word from the LORD to deal with him as he wished to. There needed to be a high respect for the LORD's anointed (I Samuel 2:10; 26:9). It often takes a great deal of restraint to do the LORD's will.

Once again we see how life and death are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). David restrained his men from killing Saul simply with his unwavering word as guided by God. He knew enough to trust his life to God (I Samuel 24:12,15; Deuteronomy 32:35).

**24:8** - *“Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, ‘My lord the king!’ When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.”*

**24:9** - *“He said to Saul, ‘Why do you listen when men say, David is bent on harming you?’”*

**24:10** - *“This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lift my hand against my master, because he is the LORD's anointed.’”*

**24:11** - *“See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. Now understand and recognize that I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life.”*

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

Even though Saul was disrespectful in addressing David, we do not see a retaliatory spirit arising. In fact we see the exact opposite. David uses words of respect to address king Saul. Not only were his words respectful, David also bowed to the ground to show his respect. This does not mean that he approved of Saul's actions or attitude.

This was an important meeting for the two to have. David was able to challenge Saul's thinking and made it clear that he meant no harm for the king. He was not looking for revenge. He had the opportunity to not just harm the king but rather kill him and put an end to this senseless pursuit.

The evidence made it clear that David had spared Saul's life. It was also clear that Saul was in the wrong to continue to seek after David's life. It was time to put an end to this foolish search. It was within Saul's power to bring an end to this needless hunt.

**24:12 - "May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you."**

**24:13 - "As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you."**

**24:14 - "Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea?"**

**24:15 - "May the LORD be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand."**

We can turn to God for judgement when we know our conscience is clear (Judges 11:27; Psalm 7:8). David was willing to respect a morally devoid king who was insanely driven by hatred. It is only evil men who wish to avenge themselves.

David showed forth his righteous character by not repaying evil for evil. Saul needed to make the same decision. Unfortunately it would only be temporary.

Why would a king with such power chase after one who is so weak and contemptible? It didn't make sense. David was not a challenge to Saul. Saul was his own worst enemy. He would bring himself down. He didn't need David's help. Saul stood with thousands of men equipped and trained for battle while David had 400 men who were in debt, distressed and discontented. He was perfectly harmless and insignificant. Saul had nothing to fear.

In the end, it is God who judges the motives and sincerity of our hearts. It is good to leave these types of matters in the hands of God. We are never capable of handling such matters.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**24:16** - *“When David finished saying this, Saul asked, ‘Is that your voice, David my son?’ And he wept aloud.”*

**24:17** - *“‘You are more righteous than I,’” he said. “‘You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly.’”*

**24:18** - *“You have just now told me of the good you did to me; the LORD delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me.”*

**24:19** - *“When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the LORD reward you well for the way you treated me today.”*

Saul in his temporarily forgiving state of mind chose to use a close knit name “my son” to address David. It was a big change from before when he only would call him *“the son of Jesse.”* Tears do not necessarily show repentance (Genesis 27:34, 41; Matthew 27:1-5).

There are many people in this world that recognize someone who is more righteous than themselves. This does not mean that they are willing to do something about it. It does more than knowing we’ve done wrong to make the necessary changes in our lives.

Saul was touched by David’s kindness but he was not changed. We need more than a touch from God. Our heart must be willing to surrender to God’s will.

**24:20** - *“I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands.”*

**24:21** - *“Now swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father’s family.”*

**24:22** - *“So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.”*

According to the Jewish Midrash, the one who cut off a piece from Saul’s robe would be the next one to rule the kingdom. It would also probably bring Saul’s memory back to the time that he tore Samuel’s robe (I Samuel 15:27,28).

Saul was concerned about not having his father’s family name exterminated from the history books. This continual pride was a main part of his downfall. David had no reason to take part in eliminating the heritage that Saul had struggled to build.

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)**

“Saul went home convinced, but not converted; ashamed of his envy to David, yet retaining in his breast that root of bitterness; vexed that when at last he had found David, he could not find in his heart to destroy him, as he had designed.

Malice often seems dead when it is only asleep, and will revive with double force. Yet, whether the Lord bind men's hands, or affect their hearts, so that they do not hurt us, the deliverance is equally from him; it is an evidence of his love, and an earnest of our salvation, and should make us thankful.”

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary](#)

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

##### David, Nabal and Abigail

**25:1 - “Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon.”**

Writers differ at when exactly Samuel died. Some believe it was four months before Saul’s death, others say it was seven months while there are some that believe it was more like two years. He would have been mourned by those who were part of the school of the prophets of which he presided over. The common people would also gather because he served in many roles that were greatly appreciated by so many. His wisdom and consistent godly leadership were appreciated by many.

Samuel was not buried in his home but rather something like a mausoleum. It would not have either a door or a window. This would be a place of respect to an honoured servant of the LORD. It was often placed in a garden adjacent to the family home.

After the death, David repositioned himself into the southern area of Judah known as the Desert of Maon (or Paran). He would be on the edge of the wilderness where he could flee from Saul if need be. It was an area inhabited by the Arabs known as Kedarenes.

**25:2 - “A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel.”**

**25:3 - “His name was Nabal and his wife’s name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.”**

Carmel that is located in the hill country of Judah (which is south of Hebron) is not to be confused with Mount Carmel which is located north of this location in the land of Issachar. This man from Maon might have been great in worldly possession but he wasn’t wealthy in human wisdom. Sheep were originally plucked of their wool but as time went on they began to shear the sheep. This normally would take place in June or July.

The name “*Nabal*” means “*foolish or a fool*” while his wife “*Abigail*” means “*My Father is rejoicing.*” The natures of Abigail and her husband were complete opposites.

Being “*a Calebite*” made him from the tribe of Judah as David also was. It has been said that he was a degenerate branch of a noble stock. The word “Caleb” has close ties in the Hebrew to the word “dog.” Some believe he was dog-like or shameless in his ways. His ways were evil and he was hard and oppressive and would use fraud or violence to gain anything he wanted.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**25:4** - *“While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep.”*

**25:5** - *“So he sent ten young men and said to them, ‘Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name.’”*

**25:6** - *“Say to him: ‘Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!’”*

**25:7** - *“Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing.”*

**25:8** - *“Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.”*

**25:9** - *“When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name. Then they waited.”*

There was normally a time of feasting held during the time of shearing sheep. It was customary to give gifts/rewards to those who live close by and kept the peace. It was for the nobleman's advantage to be surrounded by those who didn't steal their sheep or other livestock. This was quite an accomplishment for David especially because he was surrounded by hundreds of men who were in distress, debt and discontented (I Samuel 22:2). It would be interesting to know where they would be getting their daily food.

It was not out of the ordinary to expect to be reimbursed so David sent his ten young men with a positive attitude and a heart of gratitude to Nabal. They were to pass on a message containing a wish of health and happiness toward Nabal.

David's men would have expected a positive response from Nabal. It would be foolish to stir up the anger of David since he had so many fighting men who could easily attack and take over the inheritance of Nabal.

**25:10** - *“Nabal answered David's servants, ‘Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days.’”*

**25:11** - *“Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?”*

It was not only unjust but also insulting in the way Nabal responded to David's reasonable request. His wickedness (I Samuel 25:17 - Son of Belial) was sure being witnessed by everyone

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

It appears that Nabal knew of David. He even used the same phrase that Saul had been using (I Samuel 20:27) to address David, ***“Who is this son of Jesse?”*** He was insinuating that David had improperly broke away from Saul. Both Nabal and Saul had the same type of spirit. No wonder Nabal treated David’s men with such disrespect.

Nabal had not yet learned that he was simply a steward of what God had entrusted into his care. He was blessed not because of his own ingenuity and labour but because God had been faithful to him. This was a violation of the customs of the day. He was justifying his covetousness by trying to make David look like a rebellious slave along with his men.

**25:12 - *“David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word.”***

**25:13 - *“David said to his men, ‘Put on your swords!’ So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.”***

It doesn’t appear that David’s men even responded to Nabal’s crude remarks. They simply left showing their silent contempt. It didn’t take long for David to respond to this crude report. There are times when even meek men must stand up for what is right (cf. - Numbers 12 & 16). But we must also recognize that these times need to be led by the LORD. There is no indication that David sought the LORD on what to do. He acted in haste. We need to be careful about taking in the spirit of Saul when we are mistreated and hurt!

David prepared for battle along with his men by putting on their swords. He took 400 of his men and left the other 200 behind to guard their supplies.

**25:14 - *“One of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail: ‘David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them.’”***

**25:15 - *“Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing.”***

**25:16 - *“Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them.”***

**25:17 - *“Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.”***

It didn’t take long for word to get around to Abigail of what had happened. She was told how David’s men were mistreated by her husband. It was clear that David would not take these insults without retaliating. Whatever was going to be done would have to be done quickly to ward off the assault that was forthcoming by David and his men.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

Abigail was told how David and his men had actually encamped around them and never took even a single animal for their food. They also protected them from others like the roaming bedouins who would often steal from others.

They called upon her to act quickly to avoid being attacked by David and his army of men. They thought the only one who may be able to speak common sense into his thought patterns would be his wife. If she didn't succeed, they would probably all suffer because of his arrogant response to David and his men.

**25:18** - *“Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys.”*

**25:19** - *“Then she told her servants, ‘Go on ahead; I’ll follow you.’ But she did not tell her husband Nabal.”*

**25:20** - *“As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them.”*

**25:21** - *“David had just said, ‘It’s been useless—all my watching over this fellow’s property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good.’”*

**25:22** - *““May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!””*

Abigail's gift was quickly assembled and placed on some donkeys which were to go before her. In this way they would appear as a gift to appease David's anger. The bread would be small and thin much like our pizza crust. The wine would be in skins of animals. The five dressed sheep would unlikely be missed from three thousand. It would be just less than a sheep for each group of one hundred men although she probably didn't know that. There was also a bushel of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins that had been dried in the sun and two hundred cakes of figs that would have been cured and pressed together.

Abigail sent her servants ahead with the gift that should have been offered in the first place. This would have eliminated the problem to begin with. Everything was concealed from her husband.

It didn't take long to have David and his men overtake them on the road. David was not in good humour when they met. He had just been talking about how he had been mistreated. He felt he should have just let the marauding bedouins steal from Nabal because it would have cost Nabal a lot more than David had expected to receive for his kindness.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

Yet we must see that David's heart was turning to be like Saul's heart. He was preparing to attack his fellow countryman without seeking the LORD's will.

“Nothing can justify this part of David's conduct. Whatever his provocation might have been, he had suffered, properly speaking, no wrongs; and his resolution to cut off a whole innocent family, because Nabal had acted ungenerously toward him, was abominable and cruel, not to say diabolic. He who attempts to vindicate this conduct of David is, at least constructively, a foe to God and truth. David himself condemns this most rash and unwarrantable conduct, and thanks God for having prevented him from doing this evil.”

[Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible](#)

**25:23 - “When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground.”**

**25:24 - “She fell at his feet and said: ‘My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say.’”**

Abigail in dismounting from her donkey was showing the greatest amount of respect she could. It was an act of homage to one considered greater. Her attitude, actions and articulate speech proved that she was sincere. She projected herself as David's servant not as Nabal's wife. She was a bridge-builder instead of creating chasms. She tried to take the blame upon herself believing that her proper response would stop the advancement of David and his men.

**25:25 - ““May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent.””**

**25:26 - ““Now since the LORD has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal.””**

**25:27 - ““And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you.””**

**25:28 - ““Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD's battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live.””**

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

Abigail quickly turned David's attention off of Nabal's foolish acts by stating that he was acting just like his name says – like a fool. She had no idea that David's men had come to their property until they had come and gone. Therefore, by her taking the place of her husband, David could not find her guilty of doing wrong.

She wisely used spiritual wisdom to guide David away from a destructive end. She was essentially leading David away from taking on the spirit of Saul. It actually offered David a good escape which he may have been looking for as she began to reason with him. How often have we acted quickly and made a mistake that has caused a great deal of problems for us and others?

The gifts were not just for David but also for his men which would add to the bridge of friendship that she was attempting to build.

She ended by proclaiming a blessing of the LORD upon David and his endeavours. It appears that Abigail was quite knowledgeable of David's accomplishments in battle and that God had chosen him to be king. She knew that a good king would need to stand on his record which would be spread throughout the land to all the people. It was important for David to keep on the right track.

**25:29 - “Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling.”**

**25:30 - “When the LORD has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel,”**

**25:31 - “my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD has brought my master success, remember your servant.”**

She concluded by encouraging David that his life was in the hands of God. But that was not the case for his enemies. In fact they would be hurled much like the rocks that had left his sling over the years. It was a great illustration to use. Gary Smalley calls this a word picture. It would truly have reached the heart of David. Many of his victories revolved around his sling.

Even more important was the fact that David would not have his conscience burdened in the future with the thought that he had killed innocent family members and servants because of one man's foolishness. The sweetness of revenge can quickly turn into bitterness. Sometimes it is better to indulge our peace than it is to indulge our passion.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

She seemed to sense that it was only a matter of time before God was going to totally vindicate David from his enemies. It's important to be in good standing with the king in more ways than one. David was kept from breaking God's law (Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 32:35).

**25:32** - *“David said to Abigail, ‘Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me.’”*

**25:33** - *“‘May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands.’”*

**25:34** - *“‘Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.’”*

**25:35** - *“Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, ‘Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.’”*

We may think we are good just for taking time to hear someone out. But it is even more important to receive it thankfully and commend those who were brave enough to speak the truth in love. David came to quickly see that Abigail was sent by God to avoid a terrible act of violence and revenge.

David would have been held guilty before God for this ruthless killing. The blood of the innocent would have cried out from the earth.

In accepting the gift, David was also accepting her wise counsel. Both could now go home in peace.

**25:36** - *“When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak.”*

**25:37** - *“Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone.”*

**25:38** - *“About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.”*

She returned to her home only to find Nabal very drunk. He was unable to reason or have his conscience affected in the state he was in. He was living in a false world. There was no use in attempting to explain at that time what she had done.

“Sinners are often most secure when most in danger.”

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary](#)

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

When she finally told Nabal all of what she had done his heart failed him (he most likely had a heart attack and went into a coma). He only lasted for ten more days until God saw fit to take his life.

**25:39** - *“When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, ‘Praise be to the LORD, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head.’ Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife.”*

**25:40** - *“His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, ‘David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife.’”*

**25:41** - *“She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, ‘Here is your maidservant, ready to serve you and wash the feet of my master's servants.’”*

**25:42** - *“Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David's messengers and became his wife.”*

**25:43** - *“David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives.”*

**25:44** - *“But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Paltiel son of Laish, who was from Gallim.”*

It appears that David rejoiced at the word that Nabal was dead because it kept David from ever attempting to vindicate himself. It also spared all the innocent members of Nabal's family including his servants. It also once again showed how God was on David's side.

By this time David had most likely heard that king Saul had given David's wife (and Saul's daughter) Michal to Phalti to be his wife after they had committed adultery. Later on David asked Ish-bosheth for Michal to be back as his wife (II Samuel 3:14,15).

Abigail was staying at their home in Carmel instead of being at Maon where Nabal had died. It is supposed that she had already completed the normal seven days of grieving for a spouse (II Samuel 11:26). There was no need to rush into another marriage.

David sent a contingency of his men to ask Abigail to marry him. This was also customary and seen as an honourable way of asking for a woman of distinction's hand in marriage. Not only did Abigail agree to become David's wife, she also was willing to humbly wash the feet of those who were delivering the request. She quickly got on a donkey (which was a common means of travel for the rich) while her five maidservants followed on foot. Becoming one's wife was simply done at this time through the act of consummation.

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)**

It is a beautiful illustration of us marrying Christ. We must come to him humbly. We must also be willing to suffer with him, knowing full well that someday we will rule and reign with Him as His bride.

By marrying Abigail, David would have inherited all that Nabal owned in Carmel and Maon. It was also within the custom of the day for a man to have more than one wife so he also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. This Jezreel was not the well-known city in the plains of Esdraelon in the land of the tribe of Issachar but a city near Carmel in the land given to the tribe of Judah.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

##### David Again Spares Saul's Life

**26:1** - *“The Ziphites went to Saul at Gibeah and said, ‘Is not David hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which faces Jeshimon?’”*

**26:2** - *“So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand chosen men of Israel, to search there for David.”*

**26:3** - *“Saul made his camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah facing Jeshimon, but David stayed in the desert. When he saw that Saul had followed him there,”*

**26:4** - *“he sent out scouts and learned that Saul had definitely arrived.”*

This is a great chapter to teach us what to do with someone who is relentless at their attacks toward us. What do we do when someone won't back off? We must be very careful not to let our guard down. We must learn to be also relentless in our godly attitude toward them. Nothing is more damaging to our faith than someone who fails to act in a manner that is expected of them. We should be wanting others to follow our example (I Corinthians 11:1).

Here is a point in Scripture where there are differences of opinion of interpretation. Some believe this is a further explanation of what happened in chapter 24. Others believe it is a totally separate occurrence. I tend to believe the latter. There seems to be a number of differences between the two accounts which I will explain in the following commentary of this chapter.

Why would David return to the same area that Saul had once pursued him at the hill of Hakilah? It is most likely because this was the area where Abigail had her husband's possessions. He may have also believed that Saul would now leave him alone. Unfortunately, Saul once again returned to his old ways of pursuing David.

The similarities of the two accounts are based upon the fact that the Ziphites informed Saul on both occasions. It is also common in both stories that Saul left with three thousand men. This would be the number of his standing force which he would call upon for help at any given time.

When David heard that Saul was out to kill him once again, he sent his men to see if Saul had arrived. He had and was in close vicinity. It was during one of these times that David composed Psalm 140.

We may wonder why God allowed Saul to once again seek after David's life. The life of anyone who chooses to serve God must always be one that maintains a guard.. This world is not our home. It contains many whom we need to be aware of (Matthew 10:16).

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**26:5** - *“Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the camp, with the army encamped around him.”*

**26:6** - *“David then asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, ‘Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?’ ‘I'll go with you,’ said Abishai.”*

**26:7** - *“So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him.”*

Some versions speak of Saul lying in a trench. The word used speaks of a *“wagon way or a pathway for a chariot.”* It is unlikely that Saul would have set out with either wagons or a chariot. Both would be difficult to manoeuvre in the area and would slow down his progress considerably. It is better to understand it as a round formation that the army would settle into at night and have Saul and his key men in the middle.

David called upon two of his men to follow him into Saul’s camp at night. One was named Ahimelech the Hittite. Later in time David had Uriah a Hittite killed in battle. The Hittites were powerful and had a strong, well-equipped military. They ruled central Asia minor in the second millennium BC. Abishai became one of David’s top three men (II Samuel 23:18). In fact, he was the best of the three. He was David’s nephew born to his sister Zeruiah (II Samuel 2:18).

Remains of the King Gate in the city wall of Hattusa, ancient capital of the Hittite Empire



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

It would take great skill to enter the camp of king Saul even though they were hidden by the cover of darkness. They had to make their way into the middle of the camp where they would become surrounded by their enemy if anyone woke up. You may wonder why no scouts were awake through the night. God put everyone in the camp into a deep sleep (I Samuel 26:12; cf. - Genesis 2:21; 15:12; Judges 4:21; Psalm 76:6).

Some suggest that Saul also had his sceptre placed into the ground where he slept. We do know that his sword was stuck into the ground indicating his royal authority (I Samuel 18:10; 19:9). This would make it easier to identify him at night.

Abner was Saul's chief soldier and the ultimate one who was responsible for Saul's safety. Abner was Saul's cousin born to Saul's uncle (I Samuel 14:50). Both David and Saul kept close relatives in their inner circle. The old saying was applying "*blood runs thicker than water.*"

**26:8** - *"Abishai said to David, 'Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear; I won't strike him twice.'"*

**26:9** - *"But David said to Abishai, 'Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?'"*

**26:10** - *"'As surely as the LORD lives,' he said, 'the LORD himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish.'"*

**26:11** - *"But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let's go.'"*

Abishai spoke and acted out of his instinct as a soldier to kill. He also misinterpreted the opportunity that was given to them (cf. - I Samuel 24:4). He made it clear that he would kill Saul with a single blow. It would not be the right thing to do. David learned (and was often reminded) that he must submit himself to those who were ruling over him (Romans 13:1; Ephesians 6:5-8). If he never learned this valuable lesson then he wouldn't be able to expect others to submit to him when he took the throne.

David made it very clear that Abishai was not to kill Saul. He learned from the previous chapter that hasty decisions can often create years of problems. David trusted God to take his life or have it come to pass during a time of battle or he would die a natural death.

Instead of killing him, he commanded Abishai to take Saul's spear and water jug which were close to his head before they quietly left the camp. It would give sufficient proof once again that David had the opportunity to kill Saul but didn't.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**26:12** - *“So David took the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping, because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.”*

**26:13** - *“Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the hill some distance away; there was a wide space between them.”*

**26:14** - *“He called out to the army and to Abner son of Ner, ‘Aren't you going to answer me, Abner?’ Abner replied, ‘Who are you who calls to the king?’”*

**26:15** - *“David said, ‘You're a man, aren't you? And who is like you in Israel? Why didn't you guard your lord the king? Someone came to destroy your lord the king.’”*

**26:16** - *“What you have done is not good. As surely as the LORD lives, you and your men deserve to die, because you did not guard your master, the LORD's anointed. Look around you. Where are the king's spear and water jug that were near his head?”*

Warriors kept their spear in the ground beside them in order to be ready to enter battle quickly if they needed to. The water jug was a key part of their survival in the wilderness because of the lack of good water.

They came and went without disturbing anyone in the camp because of the deep sleep that the Lord had sent upon them. Even the sentinels were put asleep.

David then went to the opposite side of the hill. There was a valley that laid between them. He went to the top of the adjacent hill so his voice would carry in the clear air. David wanted to be out of the reach of Saul but not out of his ability to communicate.

Abner was the general of Saul's army so he was most responsible for Saul's life. It appears that David had to call several times before getting a response. It may have taken a while to wake up from such a deep sleep or because he wasn't sure who was calling he didn't want to answer. It was not customary to call out to a king.

David did have a respect for Abner in spite of what he taunted him with at this time (cf. - II Samuel 3:38). Why didn't Abner guard the king? Someone (not both David and Abishai just Abishai) wanted to kill the king. A king like Saul could have had Abner and some of his men put to death for putting his life in danger.

The proof was in the fact that David had the king's spear and water jug. In doing so David was showing that he and not Abner was the most faithful defender of the king's life.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**26:17** - *“Saul recognized David's voice and said, ‘Is that your voice, David my son?’*

*David replied, ‘Yes it is, my lord the king.’”*

**26:18** - *“And he added, ‘Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of?’”*

**26:19** - *“Now let my lord the king listen to his servant's words. If the LORD has incited you against me, then may he accept an offering. If, however, men have done it, may they be cursed before the LORD! They have now driven me from my share in the LORD's inheritance and have said, ‘Go, serve other gods.’”*

**26:20** - *“Now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the LORD. The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea—as one hunts a partridge in the mountains.”*

King Saul could only recognize David’s voice because dawn had not yet began to break through the darkness of the night. Saul repeated the same question as he did in chapter 24 at the cave near the Craggs of the Wild Goats. David replied once again in respect. He also wanted to know the reason for the pursuit. It is only guilty who are hunted down to be killed. David was innocent (Psalm 51:6) and therefore not to be hunted down like an animal.

David basically proclaimed two possible reasons for why the king was pursuing his life. It was either because the Lord had told him to do so or men who were guiding his thoughts. Perhaps David was being kind in not stating that Saul himself out his uncontrolled anger had decided to kill him which was most likely the reason.

If God was at the root of the pursuing then David felt that it could easily end with an acceptable offering made to the Lord. Other versions speak about having Jehovah smell the sacrifice. There is an older expression that speaks of having a sweet smelling savour rising to the Lord in heaven. If someone’s heart is humble enough, they will offer a sacrifice that is pleasing to God. God does not delight in sacrifices as much as he does in obedience (I Samuel 15:22-23)

If other men are the cause then the result of their actions was that David was now being pushed into foreign territories where other gods are worshipped. David wanted to return to the land of Judah where he could worship the true and living God (cf. - Psalm 63). If David was going to be killed, he wanted to have it done close to the altar of God.

David saw himself as someone not worthy of all the king’s time and effort. He was like a flea that is not worth the king’s attention because it would just continually jump from place to place. David also spoke of how foolish it would be to exert so much energy to hunt down a partridge that had flown up the mountains. After all they were so bountiful in the valleys why would anyone bother? Let the bird tire itself out and then capture it when it returned.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### C. David Becomes a Wilderness Fugitive (21:1-26:25)(Contd.)

**26:21** - *“Then Saul said, ‘I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a fool and have erred greatly.’”*

**26:22** - *“‘Here is the king's spear,’ David answered. ‘Let one of your young men come over and get it.’”*

**26:23** - *“‘The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness. The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the LORD's anointed.’”*

**26:24** - *“‘As surely as I valued your life today, so may the LORD value my life and deliver me from all trouble.’”*

**26:25** - *“Then Saul said to David, ‘May you be blessed, my son David; you will do great things and surely triumph.’ So David went on his way, and Saul returned home.”*

Saul's confession was about as deep as that of Pharaoh's (Exodus 9:27). The true meaning of his sinning was actually that he had erred or had made a mistake in his judgement.

If Saul's words are to be trusted then David has no fear of harm coming to him to attempt to kill him. There is no record of Saul ever chasing after David again. Perhaps he finally learned his lesson. It could be that he was embarrassed to try again. David was not trusting enough of Saul to take up his offer to return with him and live in the palace. Notice that Saul did not say that he would ensure that Michal was returned to him as his wife.

Sometimes we need to accept the conditions that are set before us. Compromises never fully appease both sides but they are often all we can expect. By returning Saul's sword to him, David was accepting the confession of Saul.

This chapter concludes with David stating a very important truth. God does reward everyone who acts in a righteous manner. The LORD did deliver Saul into David's hands to see if he would act righteously or not. In fact, it was so David would see what he himself would do. David had changed from the previous chapter and even Saul noticed it and realized that David was heading for a great future.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30)

**27:1** - *“But David thought to himself, ‘One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand.’”*

**27:2** - *“So David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maach king of Gath.”*

**27:3** - *“David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal.”*

**27:4** - *“When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him.”*

We reach a time in David’s life when he simply got tired of the cat and mouse game that was going on. God had been faithful to protect him for the continual assaults of king Saul. But there came a time when David just had enough of these problems (cf. - Galatians 6:9; II Thessalonians 3:13). We can tell from this chapter that he still did not trust king Saul.

There is no indication that God led David into the land of the Philistines to live. Notice the phrase *“But David thought to himself.”* This was simply a decision he made - perhaps a hasty decision which led him to a time of instability based upon his unbelief.

If Saul was able to destroy David then God’s word would not come to pass that David would become the king ( I Samuel 16:12,13). The best thing David could have done was to stay in the land of Judah that he was told to go to by the prophet (I Samuel 22:5) until he heard differently.

The last time David went into the hostile Philistine territory he acted like a madman (I Samuel 21:13). Why would God want him to return to this territory? Do we sometimes bring ourselves or even return into dangerous areas (cf. - Mark 8:35; Psalm 27:14)?

David thought that at least Saul would leave him alone as he resided in Philistine territory. It appears contrary to what David said earlier. He didn’t want to live in areas that were controlled by idolatry (I Samuel 26:19). Why then would he wish to go to Gath and then to Ziklag? Gath was a chief city located about twenty-four miles west of Jerusalem. Ziklag was a city that the Philistines has conquered but never inhabited about twenty-two miles south of Gath.

David left with his two wives, 600 men and their families to live in enemy territory. He was not acting like a man of God. He was not a man after God’s own heart at this time. It may have stopped Saul from pursuing after him but it also sent a confusing message to those who were placing their trust in Jehovah. The only positive thing that can be said about this decision was that David would have to learn his diplomatic skills. He also learned better military tactics as well as increased his army at this time (I Chronicles 12:1-7)

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

**27:5** - *“Then David said to Achish, ‘If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be assigned to me in one of the country towns, that I may live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?’”*

**27:6** - *“So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since.”*

**27:7** - *“David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months.”*

As time passed on, David made a proposal to king Achish that was quite subtle. He made it appear that he didn't want to become a burden upon the king. His real intent was that he would have some privacy to carry out his raids against some of the bordering towns that threatened Israel. He would also be able to get away from the religious practises of the Philistines.

Ziglag was once a city originally assigned to Judah (Joshua 15:31). It was then given to the Simeonites (Joshua 19:5) but never inhabited and was taken over by the Philistines at this time of history. David requested it be not just as his residence but also as his possession which he was granted. It was owned by the king(s) of Judah not the tribe of Judah. It was annexed to become crown land to be enjoyed by the kings as a perpetual possession.

David remained at Ziglag for a year and four months (cf. - I Samuel 29: 3) until Saul passed away (II Samuel 1:1-4; 2:1-4).

**27:8** - *“Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. (From ancient times these peoples had lived in the land extending to Shur and Egypt).”*

**27:9** - *“Whenever David attacked an area, he did not leave a man or woman alive, but took sheep and cattle, donkeys and camels, and clothes. Then he returned to Achish.”*

**27:10** - *“When Achish asked, ‘Where did you go raiding today?’ David would say, ‘Against the Negev of Judah’ or ‘Against the Negev of Jerahmeel’ or ‘Against the Negev of the Kenites.’”*

**27:11** - *“He did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought, ‘They might inform on us and say, This is what David did.’ And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory.”*

**27:12** - *“Achish trusted David and said to himself, ‘He has become so odious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant forever.’”*

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)**

David began raiding the border towns and their inhabitants. The Geshurites were a mountainous people who were never expelled from their land (Joshua 13:2) when the half tribe of Manasseh was allotted the land (Deuteronomy 3:14). They were remnants of the Amorites. The Girzites (or Gezrites) were the inhabitants of Gezer. That land was originally allotted to the tribe of Ephraim who were also not able to drive them from the land (Joshua 16:3)

The Amalekites had been sworn enemies of the children of Israel. Saul had been able to conquer some but not all of them (I Samuel 15:8,9). It was because of Saul sparing some of the plunder that he lost his kingship in God's eyes (I Samuel 15:28). They inhabited some of the land of the tribe of Ephraim as well (Judges 12:15). These tribes were nomads with large flocks which David took from them after defeating them. David felt compelled to defeat them because they were supposed to have been conquered during the years of Joshua's leadership. God had also promised to punish them for mistreating the children of Israel on their trek out of Egypt (I Samuel 15:2; Deuteronomy 7:2).

David was not truthful about whom he had attacked and took the booty from. He told the king of Achish that it was from southern Judah. He spoke of the Jerahmeelites which were the descendants of Jerahmeel, the son of Hezron, the grandson of Judah.

The Kenites would be the descendants of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses (Judges 1:16). They lived just south of Judah in the wilderness.

David didn't spare either a man, woman or child. His deceit could have been discovered because the ones he did destroy were allies of the Philistines. David still had some important lessons to learn before becoming Israel's reigning king (Proverbs 12:19; 29:25)

Achish truly believed that David had switched allegiance most probably because of the way king Saul had mistreated him. He thought that David was now seen as disgusting in the eyes of his people for attacking them when in reality he hadn't.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

##### Saul and the Witch of Endor

**28:1** - *“In those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, ‘You must understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army.’”*

**28:2** - *“David said, ‘Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do.’ Achish replied, ‘Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life.’”*

There are interesting twists that come into our lives. This is one of those times. David had moved his men and their families into the land of the Philistines (I Samuel 27). It didn't take long before his true allegiance became tested. We can't expect to live in enemy territory and not be expected to stand up for their cause.

Achish, the king of Gath, one of the principal cities of the Philistines, had been deceived by David's speech to him (cf. I Samuel 21:10-15). He believed that David would fight along with him this time against king Saul. Sir Isaac Newton believed that the Philistines had gained a great deal of soldiers because Amasis had driven many out of Egypt. It is also believed that with Samuel's death that Saul was in a predicament without having either a spiritual leader or with David as a strong military leader.

David made Achish believe that he would fight against Israel on behalf of Achish and the Philistines. He was so convincing that Achish made him the captain of his bodyguard (lit- keeper of my head - cf. Goliath). This was a position of great honour and trust.

**28:3** - *“Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land.”*

**28:4** - *“The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all the Israelites and set up camp at Gilboa.”*

**28:5** - *“When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart.”*

**28:6** - *“He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets.”*

After the death and burial of Samuel at his home place in Ramah, Saul decided to do a spiritual housecleaning of the land. He drove all the mediums and spiritualists away. He put on the front that he was desiring the Lord's guidance but that was not so because he had not followed the words of Samuel and had killed all the priests at Nob.

Where could Saul turn to for guidance or support? He had nothing or no one left to help him and he knew it. As soon as the Philistines set up their forces, the true Saul came out again.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

The spirits he had been following were those controlled by the mediums and spiritists. He wanted to put on a good front but most people could see through the disguise. God definitely knew what he was up to.

“Many seem zealous against, sin, when they are any way hurt by it, who have no concern for the glory of God, nor any dislike of sin as sin. Many seem enemies to sin in others, while they indulge it in themselves. Saul will drive the devil out of his kingdom, yet harbours him in his heart by envy and malice. How foolish to consult those whom, according to God's law, he had endeavoured to root out!”

#### Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

The Philistines encamped at “*Shunem*” (*Heb - double resting place*) while Saul encamped on the Philistine mountain of Gilboa. Gilboa was located at the southeastern end of the plain of Jezreel. This became the eventual site of both Saul and Jonathan's death.

Once again the true spirit of Saul arose. He was filled with terror because he knew that God was not within this battle. This fear would quickly spread through the camp.

Saul therefore, attempted in three ways to hear from God. He first of all he tried through dreams. But God never gave him the kind of dream that answered his concern about going to battle. He then tried the Urim (and Thummin). These were kept in the breastplate of the high priest which was now with David (I Samuel 23:9). Some believe that he made up another breastplate and Urim and Thummin and appointed a new high priest. We have no record of that happening. Therefore, we have no idea how he consulted the Urim and Thummin. Thirdly, he inquired of the prophets but there was no answer from God.

**28:7** - “*Saul then said to his attendants, ‘Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her.’ ‘There is one in Endor,’ they said.*”

**28:8** - “*So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. ‘Consult a spirit for me,’ he said, ‘and bring up for me the one I name.’”*

**28:9** - “*But the woman said to him, ‘Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?’”*

**28:10** - “*Saul swore to her by the LORD, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, you will not be punished for this.’”*



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

Saul's trusted servants may have thought that they were heading out on a futile journey. All of these mediums and spiritists were supposedly driven from the land by order of Saul. Yet they found one at Endor. These mediums would communicate with the dead (necromancy) even though it was forbidden in the Law of Moses (Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:31; 20:7; Deuteronomy 18:9-14).

*“En-dor” (Heb - “the fountain of the circle”)* was situated directly on the other side of the Gilboa range, opposite Mount Tabor. This meant that during the night hours, Saul would have to pass over the shoulder of the ridge on which the Philistines were encamped to make the ten mile trek. He took that risk to take an even greater risk - consulting the dead.

The woman (witch) would definitely be on her guard with any strangers. She knew that her life was always on the line. Saul had not only driven them from the land, he also had them consumed or destroyed. She felt that he may have been setting a trap to see if she would conjure up a spirit or not.

She must have found it strange that he could assure her that her life was safe if she did what he asked of her. Only the king could do that. In swearing by the LORD that her life would not be taken was ludicrous. God does not go against His Word. God commanded that she be put to death. It is strange how people try to twist the scriptures to get what they want in life. This is where the story really becomes difficult to explain.

**28:11** - *“Then the woman asked, ‘Whom shall I bring up for you?’ ‘Bring up Samuel,’ he said.”*

**28:12** - *“When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, ‘Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!’”*

**28:13** - *“The king said to her, ‘Don't be afraid. What do you see?’ The woman said, ‘I see a spirit coming up out of the ground.’”*

**28:14** - *“‘What does he look like?’ he asked. ‘An old man wearing a robe is coming up,’ she said. Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.”*

With what I'm sure was a sense of uneasiness she asked whom it was that Saul wanted to speak with. She was told Samuel. She would have then begun her attempt to conjure up the spirit of Samuel. Most believe she was a true witch and she had the ability to speak with departed spirits which were really lying spirits. There are only several things that could have happened next. She could have recognized that this spirit was not one that she was used of and therefore believed it was the true spirit of Samuel. But it still doesn't explain how she instantly knew that she was being deceived by Saul.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

Secondly, she could have simply conjured up a deceiving spirit that took on the voice and stature of Samuel. This spirit could have informed her that it was Saul that was asking for the spirit of Samuel. She would be used of communicating with them.

Thirdly, she could have been a hoax and this apparition brought fear to her because she never experienced anything from the nether world before.

When she was asked what she was seeing she described a figure that could fit the description of Samuel. Samuel was well known in Israel so her limited description would be known by most people. How did Saul know that it was Samuel? It does not say. Some believe it couldn't have been Samuel because he would have come from heaven not from the ground as a spirit. It is also unlikely that God would have allowed Samuel to return since He would not allow necromancy to take place in the land He promised His people.

**28:15 - “Samuel said to Saul, ‘Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?’ ‘I am in great distress,’ Saul said. ‘The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do.’”**

**28:16 - “Samuel said, ‘Why do you consult me, now that the LORD has turned away from you and become your enemy?’”**

**28:17 - “The LORD has done what he predicted through me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David.”**

**28:18 - “Because you did not obey the LORD or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the LORD has done this to you today.”**

**28:19 - “The LORD will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also hand over the army of Israel to the Philistines.”**

This is the part that really seems to make it clear that it was not Samuel. Anyone who died as one serving Jehovah in the Old Testament went to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:19-31). It was a place of peacefulness and bliss. No one or no devil had the where-with-all to disturb any soul that had been taken there by God. It was a place of reward awaiting the final reward of their faithfulness. No one could disturb someone from that afterlife.

Saul went on to describe the distress he was under. He felt like everything was closing in on him. He felt bound and in dire straits as the word “*distress*” indicates. His main concern was not the Philistines because he had fought against them in the past and had won against them. He could use tactics of war to overtake and overcome the Philistines.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

It was most likely because he knew that he was cut off from God. He felt the daily separation from God. There was not a voice from heaven. His heart had become cold to the things of God even though he tried to reach out, he constantly did other things to anger the LORD.

Notice that he doesn't mention the Urim and Thummin. He likely never had them from the beginning and he knew that Samuel would know that. He didn't try to pull the wool over the eyes of whom he thought was the nation's prior spiritual leader. Samuel would have known about his killing the priests in Nob. The Urim was with David not with Saul (I Samuel 23:9).

The dialogue contained in verses 16-19 are what confuses many people reading this portion. This spirit mentions that the LORD has turned away from Saul and has become his enemy. Therefore, if Samuel is God's prophet, he would have to speak the true message from God which Saul would not want to hear.

The one problem is that it would infer that David was really the enemy of Saul and that God would use David to destroy him. That was not the case. It was not so much that God was an enemy to Saul as it was that Saul had drove himself away from God's power and protection through his own disobedience.

There are just too many contradictions at this point. If Saul realized that God had turned against him then why would he call upon God's prophet through the help of a witch? Why wasn't Saul afraid to breach the Law of God in order to get his answer?

What confuses people is when the psychics of our day say things and make predictions that appear to come true. We need to know the source of this witchcraft. These spirits are deceiving and lying spirits that are at work. The spirit world understands what is taking place and can see what is inevitable to happen. It didn't take a brain surgeon to figure out the result of this upcoming battle.

When this spirit said that both Saul and his sons would be with him, it simply meant that they would be killed and be buried in a grave. This was not stating that they would be in Abraham's bosom. Only God could make that decision and the vast majority of us do not know until after our death. This is especially true of a disobedient, witch-consulting king. This lie of the devil continues to be perpetrated by those who serve him. Act as you will on earth the devil would say, you will still go to be with God.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

One other point that must be made is that only Saul and his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and MalkiShua died in the upcoming battle. Saul had other sons by Rizpah who were Abinadad and EshBaal or Ish-Bosheth (I Chroniclers 8:33; 9:39) who were not killed in the battle. Saul & Jonathan did not die the next day but rather several days later. It was also not all of Israel but only his army (the host) that was handed over to the Philistines.

**28:20** - *“Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel's words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and night.”*

**28:21** - *“When the woman came to Saul and saw that he was greatly shaken, she said, ‘Look, your maidservant has obeyed you. I took my life in my hands and did what you told me to do.’”*

**28:22** - *“Now please listen to your servant and let me give you some food so you may eat and have the strength to go on your way.”*

**28:23** - *“He refused and said, ‘I will not eat.’ But his men joined the woman in urging him, and he listened to them. He got up from the ground and sat on the couch.”*

**28:24** - *“The woman had a fattened calf at the house, which she butchered at once. She took some flour, kneaded it and baked bread without yeast.”*

**28:25** - *“Then she set it before Saul and his men, and they ate. That same night they got up and left.”*

Upon hearing the words that he thought were from Samuel, he fell full length on his face to the ground. It didn't help his emotional or physical condition that he hadn't eaten anything all day. He was probably weak to begin with from lack of food. The woman (witch) likely left him alone with the spirit for a short time but returned when she heard him fall to the ground.

The fear that Saul had taken upon himself had spread to the woman. She didn't want her life to be taken because of following the orders she had been given. The deceit of this story just seems to continue to increase.

Upon returning she noticed that Saul was in terrible shape so she offered Saul some food for his returning journey that evening. This may appear as a kind gesture but it also may have been a way of covering her back. She would have been in great danger if the king had died in her home. Suspicions would rise up and perhaps her witchcraft would become exposed. An accessory to the death of a king would carry with it a death penalty.

After he refused to eat, even his men became worried and reasoned with him until he finally agreed to common sense. It was customary to have a bench or a divan along a wall where some would eat propped up with pillows. The woman had a fattened (tied up) calf butchered and baked some unleavened bread (for it was quicker to make) for Saul to help him gain back his strength.

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)**

Saul left that night and headed back to Mount Gilboa to meet his fate. He knew without going to the witch at Endor that he was about to die. There were too many odds against him. He knew that God's word that had been spoken over him years before would soon have to take place. Without the presence of God in his life he was left to his own wisdom and strength which were both depleted.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

##### God's Way of Escape

God has many ways of providing escape routes from life's difficulties. How often have we waited for what appears to be the last moment before God intervenes? We often face trials with a secret hope that defies human logic. None of us is without sin therefore, we cannot always feel justified in bearing our full trust based upon our own merit.

David was not fully innocent for the predicament he found himself in. The fear of man can often overcome our faith in God. David had associated himself with the Philistine king to such a point that he was fully trusted by him. Even so, God made a way of escape for him because his heart still seemed to be upright.

Saul had just finished being told that because he took up counsel and association with the witch of Endor that he would die in the upcoming battle. God saw a difference in the heart of David even though he also was found placing his trust in his enemy.

**29:1 - *"The Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek, and Israel camped by the spring in Jezreel."***

**29:2 - *"As the Philistine rulers marched with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were marching at the rear with Achish."***

Aphek was also the name of a town close to the vicinity of the plain of Shunem (28:4). This was a town about 12 miles N.E. of the coastal city of Joppa.

Springs or fountains were an important link to life especially for armies. This fountain is the present Ain Jalud or Goliath's fountain because it was regarded as the scene of Goliath's defeat. It was a very large fountain. It issues from the cleft of the rock at the foot of the mountain on the Northeastern border of Gilboa. It formed into a beautiful pool of about 40-50 feet in diameter. It then flowed from a brook into the valley.

This is the same fountain that Saladin and the Christians successfully encamped during the times of the Crusades.

The Philistines were grouped in companies of hundreds and thousands. The princes and rulers of the Philistines would march protected by the army. This is where David was privileged to be. This would form what was called the *"rear-guard."* Their duty would be to protect against an ambush.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

**29:3** - *“The commanders of the Philistines asked, ‘What about these Hebrews?’ Achish replied, ‘Is this not David, who was an officer of Saul king of Israel? He has already been with me for over a year, and from the day he left Saul until now, I have found no fault in him.’”*

**29:4** - *“But the Philistine commanders were angry with him and said, ‘Send the man back, that he may return to the place you assigned him. He must not go with us into battle, or he will turn against us during the fighting. How better could he regain his master's favor than by taking the heads of our own men?’”*

**29:5** - *“Isn't this the David they sang about in their dances: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?’”*

Achish was convinced that David would be faithful because he had every opportunity in over a year (*“these days or these years”* - KJV refers to an indefinite period of time.) to be deceitful and yet was guiltless. At least that is what Achish thought (cf. 27:10-12).

David had previously been given the city of Ziklag to live in (27:6).

The Philistine leaders had reason to doubt the authenticity of any Israelite's loyalty (cf. 14:21). David was playing the role of a double agent. It is a risky position to take. The phrase *“turn against us”* means that he will become our *“adversary”* (ie. - satan).

The Philistines felt that David had an ulterior motive. To back up their argument the leaders of Achish reminded Achish of the famous song that the women of Israel sang in reference to David (cf. 18:7).

**29:6** - *“So Achish called David and said to him, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, you have been reliable, and I would be pleased to have you serve with me in the army. From the day you came to me until now, I have found no fault in you, but the rulers don't approve of you.’”*

**29:7** - *“Turn back and go in peace; do nothing to displease the Philistine rulers.”*

Achish made a solemn declaration to David even evoking the name of Jehovah to convince David of his sincerity. David was given an honourable discharge from service from the heathen king. It is so interesting how God turned away the disgrace and danger from his wayward servant David. The "under shepherd" who had protected his sheepfold from the danger of wolves and bears and other predators was now himself being protected by the **"Chief, Good & Great Shepherd."**

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

The rulers could not find any fault in David. They simply did not trust him. Wise and good men will gain respect wherever they go from those who understand how to estimate the value of others. We should always behave ourselves in such a way that even our enemies think highly of us. Achish allowed David to leave unharmed to prevent further jealousies.

**29:8** - *"But what have I done?" asked David. "What have you found against your servant from the day I came to you until now? Why can't I go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"*

**29:9** - *"Achish answered, 'I know that you have been as pleasing in my eyes as an angel of God; nevertheless, the Philistine commanders have said, 'He must not go up with us into battle.'"*

**29:10** - *"Now get up early, along with your master's servants who have come with you, and leave in the morning as soon as it is light."*

**29:11** - *"So David and his men got up early in the morning to go back to the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines went up to Jezreel."*

We must recognize that David did not want to fight against his Israelite brothers. He simply pretended to be disappointed in order not to reveal his deceptive strategy. David knew that the king had already made up his mind and would not change the decision in spite of any request to do so.

David would have been in a very awkward position if Achish would have changed his mind (cf. Ps 37:23). David had amassed a great army by this time and so he was a growing concern (I Chronicles 12:1-22).

David must have had a strong influence upon Achish. The terms he used spoke of reverence toward God and His Holy Angels. In a court of law no evidence would have been available to force David to return. All the evidence was hidden by David and his men.

Deceit can go a long way. Even corrupt leaders can become exalted before their enemies. The courts of heaven will not be deceived though. There will be no O. J. Simpson type of trial in heaven. Achish wanted David to move quickly out the Philistine camp as soon as it was safe for travel.

David returned to Ziglāg while the Philistines marched toward the Israelite army at Jezreel. **"Jezreel"** means **"God sows."** David was able to return rescued from a disastrous situation. He was able to return without exposing his deception and also not having to fight against his own people who he really was king of.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

Only God could have turned this situation around in such a way.

David had to learn to put his trust in God. God has many merciful ways to teach us many lessons of life. It was David's mistrust of God's protection and provision that lead him into the enemy's camp. This dangerous trek led him into much sin. His character was damaged by those of us who have read the truth.

It would serve us well to learn the lesson not to attempt to set our own paths during difficult times. David was offered a way of escape because his soul was in such a condition to benefit from the deliverance.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

##### David Destroys the Amalekites

**30:1** - *“David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it,”*

**30:2** - *“and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.”*

**30:3** - *“When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive.”*

**30:4** - *“So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.”*

**30:5** - *“David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel.”*

One lesson of life at this particular time was that retaliation breeds retaliation. Anger breeds more anger. It was a time if you killed my dog, I'll kill your cat. Serious matters were dealt with quickly and with little room for discussion.

*“But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life,  
24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,  
25. burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.”*

*Exodus 21:23-25*

Jesus taught a better way of living in order to bring an end to the cycle of retaliation and unforgiveness ([Matthew 5:38-48](#)). This was definitely not the proper way of handling these matters in David's day and time.

David was out with king Achish pretending to be one of his forces against the Israelites. He never entered into battle with his people but it did take him at least three days journey from his home. He left behind those who didn't go to war in Ziklag which included older men, women and children. This left them wide open for an attack which the Amalekites took advantage of.

The Negev and Ziklag were attacked and burned. Those living were taken captive and everything else including the cattle and sheep were removed as plunder. It's unlikely that this band of marauding Amalekites had heard of David's exploits into their territory earlier. If so they would have killed all men, women and children just as David and his men had done.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

Upon David's return from attempting to deceive king Achish into believing that he and his men would fight for him against the Israelites and king Saul, he found his hometown in ruins. The Amalekites had burned much of their homes and made pilferage of anything that was worth any value.

It wasn't all the 'stuff' that broke David and his men's heart enough to make them cry without retraining themselves. It was because all of their wives and children and older ones were gone. It takes a lot of energy to cry so much that you have no strength left to cry. That was the intensity of this heartbreaking event. Even David's wives were included in the loss. No one was exempted.

**30:6 - "David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God."**

**30:7 - "Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, 'Bring me the ephod.' Abiathar brought it to him,"**

**30:8 - "and David inquired of the LORD, 'Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?' 'Pursue them,' he answered. 'You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.'"**

The result is a little unexpected. There was a mutiny that arose. These men probably concluded that David placed their families at risk by attempting to line up with the Philistine king Achish. He also provoked his southern neighbours. David had left his family and their families in a very vulnerable position.

The men were talking among themselves about stoning David to death. This was the same conclusion that the children of Israel thought they would do to Moses and Aaron (Numbers 14:10). Even though David had accomplished a great deal in remoulding these men into a great army who highly expected him, this caused them to rescind some of those greater changes.

I love David's reaction to these threats over his life. The Bible says ***But David found strength in the LORD his God.*** That is a vital key for us to learn as well when we reach times in our lives when we feel we can't go on. The Jewish Targum says ***"he strengthened himself in the Word of the Lord his God."*** There are times when we just need to be strong in the Lord and stand in His mighty power not ours (Ephesians 6:10). This was a critical turning point for this great leader. He knew he had to seek the Lord and not turn to his own wisdom and knowledge. It was a truth he passed onto his son (Proverbs 3:5,6).

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

David then called upon Abiathar the priest to stand before God and seek His will for the next step to take. Priests were called upon to stand in the gap before man and God while the prophets brought the messages back from God to the people. God would also at times use dreams to accomplish His will.

When David called for the ephod to be brought, he was wanting to have the Urim and Thummin which were stored behind the breastplate of the high priest. The only priest left alive after Saul's brutal slaughter at the town of Nob (I Samuel 22:19,20) was Abiathar the son of Ahimelech, the high priest. He would by right be the only one who could wear the breastplate and call upon the Lord in this manner.

Some suggest that this was a transitional time period and Abiathar did not assume the position immediately but rather gradually became the high priest. That is why it suggests that the ephod was brought in separately. Once it was there, they would dress Abiathar with it and allow him to carry out this part of the duties of the high priest.

David then inquired of the LORD whether or not he should attack the Amalekites. He was given the approval of God and also had his hope built up. David should have done it earlier instead of attempting to join his forces with Achish. He could have saved himself a lot of hardship. We need to call upon the Lord more often to keep out of problems. God answered David quickly because there was no time to waste (cf. - I Samuel 23:11,12).

**30:9 - *“David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Ravine, where some stayed behind,”***

**30:10 - *“for two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine. But David and four hundred men continued the pursuit.”***

**30:11 - *“They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. They gave him water to drink and food to eat-“***

**30:12 - *“part of a cake of pressed figs and two cakes of raisins. He ate and was revived, for he had not eaten any food or drunk any water for three days and three nights.”***

David took all his men on the first part of the journey to recapture what the Amalekites had taken from him. They all made it to the Besor Ravine which flowed from the mountain of Idumea and eventually drained into the Mediterranean Sea. It was just south of Gaza.

A third of his men were so exhausted that they couldn't continue to go on. There is no doubt that their pace was quite fast in order to catch up with the Amalekites. David simply left them behind with some of their supplies and carried on his pursuit with the other four hundred men.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

As they were making their way toward recapturing their families, they came along an Egyptian slave. He was famished and was becoming dehydrated. David shared with him some food and water in order for him to regain his strength.

**30:13** - *“David asked him, ‘To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?’ He said, ‘I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago.’”*

**30:14** - *“We raided the Negev of the Kerethites and the territory belonging to Judah and the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag.”*

**30:15** - *“David asked him, ‘Can you lead me down to this raiding party?’ He answered, ‘Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them.’”*

Upon questioning the man they discovered that he had been an Egyptian slave of one of the marauding Amalekites. It was the custom of the day to be kind and caring to older slaves who had served their master for many years. In this case, this slave had probably just been taken into captivity through another recent raid. That is why he was left to die when he became ill. He had very little time to survive after being up to three days in the wilderness without water or food.

The Kerethites (or Cherithites) were a kindred tribe with the Philistines. They both inhabited the same land but the Philistines were more powerful and used their name to identify the occupants of the land. There were several prophecies indicating that they were to be annihilated from the earth (Zephaniah 2:5; Ezekiel 25:16).

David’s kindness toward him once again brought immediate results. He had no problem directing David to where the Amalekites were heading. That was conditional upon two things. First, that David wouldn’t kill him and secondly, that he wouldn’t have to return to his master. David’s word could be trusted. Quite likely David ended up with another faithful servant.

**30:16** - *“He led David down, and there they were, scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah.”*

**30:17** - *“David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled.”*

**30:18** - *“David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives.”*

**30:19** - *“Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back.”*

**30:20** - *“He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, ‘This is David’s plunder.’”*

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

The sight that David and his men came to see was something to behold. When they made their way over the last ridge, they were able to see the Amalekites scattered over the entire countryside. There was no longer any order to this troop. Instead, they were eating drinking and dancing.

These revellers thought they were in complete security. They supposed that the Philistines were preparing to attack Israel and that David and his men were with Achish. There would be no one left to stop them.

This is so typical of people all over this earth that often see no visible cause for danger when they are nearest to their time of destruction. It reminds me of the same scene that took place in Daniel chapter five. King Belshazzar held a great banquet for his nobles and they were all in a drunken stupor when the writing came upon the wall. Before the night ended, the Babylonians were conquered by the Medes and the Persians. It is often the case that men feel most secure when they are about to be meet their Master.

*“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you,”*

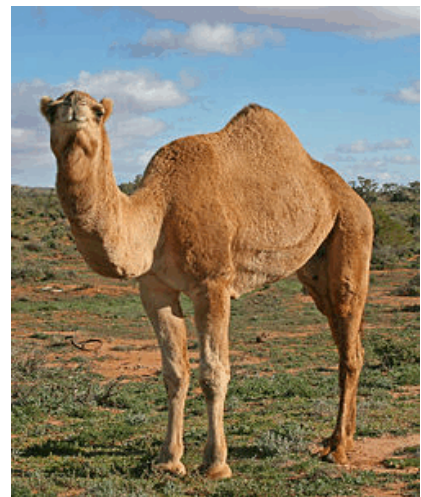
*2. for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.*

*3. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”*

*I Thessalonians 5:1-3*

David and his men arrived in the evening twilight and fought until the next evening. To ensure that as many were killed as possible. The number of Amalekites that escaped on camels equalled the entire army of David. These camels were the most common breed called dromedaries. They only had one hump. They were an even-toed-ungulate much like of pig and deer. These men just probably escaped with their lives and left behind the booty they were revelling about.

David recovered the rest of the sheep and cattle along with their families that were taken captive. Everything was brought back along with additional plunder.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

God brought about a great victory with the use of a common slave to guide David and his men. You never know what God can do with your life if you just offer it to Him. He also can multiply what you offer to Him for the sake of others (Matthew 14:13-21; 16:19-39).

**30:21** - *“Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Besor Ravine. They came out to meet David and the people with him. As David and his men approached, he greeted them.”*

**30:22** - *“But all the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers said, ‘Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go.’”*

**30:23** - *“David replied, ‘No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us.’”*

**30:24** - *“Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.”*

**30:25** - *“David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.”*

David and his men had a wonderful greeting when they arrived back at the brook at Besor. Unfortunately, it didn't take long before the grumbling began. Those who did the work fighting and took the risk to die did not want to share the spoil of war with those who had stayed behind.

The actual names for these men were *“evil”* or *“wicked men.”* These are the types that continue to bring division among a group. They were also identified as *“troublemakers.”* The term is actually *“the sons of Belial.”* It is a very strong term. It links them with the devil as being wicked; good for nothing. David still had some work to do to set a better pattern for them and help to change their form of thinking.

These trouble makers wanted the men that stayed behind because they were too exhausted to leave with just their wives and children. It was very important to set the precedence for the future. David made it clear that victory was gained not because of those who fought but because God set His protective hand over their army. God won the battle. It wasn't David's army. The odds were against them. They had to be careful not to allow pride to enter in.

Jesus told His disciples the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard to emphasis a proper pattern for those working for Him. Jesus ends by making it clear that we will all be treated equally when we stand before Him on the day of our bema seat judgement. We must be very careful trying to set up levels in God's kingdom. We must all stand equal before God. It will never be what we do that brings us into a closer relationship with God. God will be fair with us. He knows how to divide up His rewards. We may lose what we have by allowing a spirit of bitterness to arise in our hearts.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

*"But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?"*

*14. "Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you."*

*15. "Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?"*

*Matthew 20:13-15*

David asked this argumentative group who would join with them in their thinking. He knew that no one who was wise or just would agree with their conclusions. David opposed this selfish and envious attitude.

The policy that David followed was equal reward no matter what one did to bring it forth. The words used were *“statue and ordinance.”* These became not just a custom but also a commandment to follow. It actually became a verdict that would be followed in any other similar cases to follow.

Some would argue that it encourages laziness on the part of some. Laziness is another issue that can be handled in different way. The same is pride or any other reason why some would not want to do their part on a continual basis.

**30:26** - *“When David arrived in Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends, saying, ‘Here is a present for you from the plunder of the LORD's enemies.’”*

**30:27** - *“He sent it to those who were in Bethel, Ramoth Negev and Jattir;”*

**30:28** - *“to those in Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa”*

**30:29** - *“and Racal; to those in the towns of the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites;”*

**30:30** - *“to those in Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athach”*

**30:31** - *“and Hebron; and to those in all the other places where David and his men had roamed.’*

David took this one step further. Once he returned to the ruined city of Ziklag he chose to divide the spoil even further. He made sure that the elders of Israel who were friends of his (who did not fight in the wars) received the “plunder of the LORD’s enemies.” It was really identified as the LORD’s plunder. It’s important to understand that God can divide His blessings however He wishes.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### D. David Against the Philistines (27-30) (Contd.)

The chapter ends by identifying some of the recipients of God's plunder. Some of these cities may have been plundered by the Amalekites because they were located in the southern region where many of these attacks took place.

Bethel (Joshua 19:4) & Ramah (Joshua 19:18) are not the common ones but rather ones in the tribe of Simeon. Jattir was located on the southern mountains of Judah (Joshua 15:48). Aroer is about 20 miles south of Hebron. Siphmoth and Racal are both unknown as to where they were located. Eshtemoa was in the southwestern portion of the mountains of Judah. Both the towns of the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites are southern of the tribe of Judah along with Hormah, Bor Ashan, and Athach.

The city of Hebron was known as Abraham's city (Genesis 23:17). It became one of the cities of refuge (Joshua 20:7; 21:13). David was later anointed as king at Hebron (II Samuel 2:4). It is believed that "*the other places where David and his men had roamed*" were places that were favourable to them as they were escaping from king Saul. David showed his thankfulness for helping to relieve some of the distress he faced during those difficult times in his life.

When we understand that everything we have is a gift from God we have no problems sharing with others. God finds it hard to pour into a full cup. The more we pour out to others, the more we make room for future blessings.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### E. Saul Takes His Life (31)

**31:1** - *“Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them, and many fell slain on Mount Gilboa.”*

**31:2** - *“The Philistines pressed hard after Saul and his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua.”*

**31:3** - *“The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and when the archers overtook him, they wounded him critically.”*

**31:4** - *“Saul said to his armor-bearer, ‘Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me.’ But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it.”*

**31:5** - *“When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him.”*

**31:6** - *“So Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer and all his men died together that same day.”*

What is recorded in this chapter is what took place after I Samuel 29:1-11. It didn't take very long for the Philistines to begin winning the battle. The Israelites were led by a leader who was full of fear and it was passed on to them as well. The battle began in Jezreel but ended in Mount Gilboa which was closely located.

The battle plan for the Philistines was believed to begin with the archers throwing the Israelites into confusion. The battle had not even got close in combat before the Israelites were fleeing. The normal advantage of the heights Mount Gilboa was of no help because of the fear in their hearts.

The Philistines outnumbered as well as were equipped and trained better than the Israelites were. As soon as the Philistines sensed they were gaining ground, they pursued after Saul and his sons with an even greater tenacity. An arrow finally reached its mark and penetrated the body of Saul, severely wounding him. He asked his armour bearer to take his sword and kill him rather than allow the Amalekites to make sport of his dying body. The armour bearer was responsible for the life of the king so he would not obey the order to finish him off.

Saul decided to end his own life while he still had the strength to do it. He raised himself enough so he could fall upon his own sword and end his life. Once the armour bearer knew that Saul was dead he also took his life in the same manner. Jewish writers believe that he was Doeg and that he killed himself with the same sword that Saul fell upon. They also believe that it was the same sword that had been used to kill the priests at Nob (I Samuel 22:18). The murderers of Julius Caesar also killed themselves with the same dagger they killed him with.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### E. Saul Takes His Life (31) (Contd.)

The result of the persistence of the Amalekites was the death of Saul, his three sons, his armour bearer as well as good number of his standing army. This meant that Jonathan would not hinder David now from taking the throne, not that he would have tried to. It may have created a problem more with the people who had a high respect for Jonathan.

**31:7** - *“When the Israelites along the valley and those across the Jordan saw that the Israelite army had fled and that Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and fled. And the Philistines came and occupied them.”*

**31:8** - *“The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.”*

**31:9** - *“They cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and they sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news in the temple of their idols and among their people.”*

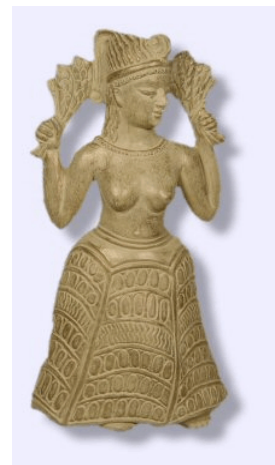
**31:10** - *“They put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths and fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.”*

The surviving Israelites abiding in the towns surrounding Valley of Jezreel as well as those west of the Jordan River (including the tribes of Naphtali, Zebulun, Issachar) fled from their homes in fear for their lives. This meant that the Philistines took possession of all of the land of Israel excluding the land given to the tribe of Judah and the area of Peraea. They not only took possession. They also occupied the land.

A custom of these types of battles was to return to those slain in the fields to strip them of any valuables before allowing the birds and animals to devour their carcasses. To their surprise they found Saul along with his three sons among the dead.

As a gesture of mockery and victory over their enemies, they decapitated Saul, plundered his armour and began their rejoicing. They even sent messengers throughout their land to celebrate the victory with them. They not only spread the news among their people, they also proclaimed it in their idolatrous temples where they would also mock the God of the Hebrews.

As an added sign of victory over the God of Israel they put Saul's armour in one of their temples where they worshipped Ashtoreth, the detestable god of the Sidonians.



Ashtoreth

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### E. Saul Takes His Life (31) (Contd.)

Astarte is also known as Astarat and Astoreth. She was believed to be an incarnation of Ishtar and Inanna. This Semitic goddess was worshipped by the Syrians, Canaanites (today called Palestinians), Phoenicians, Egyptians and other Semitic Tribes. King Solomon built a Temple to her as Astoreth, near Jerusalem.

Astarte was worshipped as many things. To the Egyptians, she was honored as a goddess of war and tenacity; to the Semites, she was a goddess of Love and Fertility; among the Greeks, she was transposed into the goddess of Love known as Aphrodite. In the Bible, She is referred to as "*the abomination or detestable.*" The worship of Astarte spread far and wide, and in time, she was worshipped by the Philistines, the Greeks, the Romans, the Sicilians, and in many parts of Europe and Africa.



Map of the Decapolis showing the location of Beit She'an, (here called by its Greek name, Scythopolis)

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### E. Saul Takes His Life (31) (Contd.)

Another important part of the story is the mention of Beth Shan (Beth Shen or Beit She'an). The pictures on the previous page show the result of many excavations over decades of time. The fertility of the land and the abundance of water led the Jewish sages to say, "*If the Garden of Eden is in the land of Israel, then its gate is Beth Shean.*" It is because of its prime land that it has been inhabited for thousands of years. It was inhabited by the Egyptians in the late Bronze period (1570-1200 BC). Another group was led by Pompey and the Romans who rebuilt it and renamed it Scythopolis (The city of the Sythians - cf. Colossians 3;11) in 63 BC. It became known as the capital city of the Decapolis and was the only one on the east side of the Jordan river. It was destroyed on January 18, 749 AD by a severe earthquake

After Saul's death, his body and the bodies of his sons (except Ishbosheth's, who would reign two years before David's rule) were placed on the wall at Beth Shan, his armor was placed at an Ashtoreth Temple, and his head was placed in a Temple of Dagon.

A problem arose with this portion of Scripture because it was believed that both Temples could not have existed at the same time. It was believed that a Philistine Temple (of the god Dagon) and a Canaanite Temple (the goddess Astoreth) could not be present within the same level of occupation because the Canaanites were an earlier people and had gods of opposing peoples.

The answer to this riddle is the belief that the Philistines more than likely absorbed the Canaanite gods into their beliefs and thus kept the Temple as an adjoining part of their Dagon Temple. In 1930, Alan Rowe uncovered the Philistine and Canaanite Temple in the same level of occupation at Beth Shan. This discovery once again supports the idea that the Bible is textually and archaeologically accurate.

*"Bible and Spade"*  
Winter 1972  
pp. 9-11

**31:11** - *"When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard of what the Philistines had done to Saul,"*  
**31:12** - *"all their valiant men journeyed through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where they burned them."*  
**31:13** - *"Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted seven days."*

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### E. Saul Takes His Life (31) (Contd.)

Jabesh Gilead was on the other side of Jordan about eight miles from Beth Shan. The valiant men of Jabesh Gilead took on this heroic act to honour the remains of their royal family. This was their way of showing respect to their king and appreciation for Saul previously delivering them from the hands of the Ammonites and their king Nahash (I Samuel 11:1-15). It would have brought them into a deep degradation through an oppressive and tyrannical leader like Nahash.

These heroic events were also covered in I Chronicles 10. After travelling through the night they removed the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall at Beth Shan. They returned to Jabesh Gilead and burned the flesh from their bodies so they couldn't be identified before burying their bones. Cremating bodies was not a common practise among the Israelites. It was reserved for those who had committed terrible sins (Leviticus 20:14; 21:9). The bodies of the kings were normally prepared with chosen spices and aromas and then buried in a sepulchre. There were fires lit during the night but not to cremate the body (II Chronicles 16:14; 21:19; Jeremiah 34:5) but rather simply as a way of honouring the dead.

It is clear that the bones of Saul and his sons were not completely burned because the bones were buried under the Tamarisk tree in Jabesh. They followed the burial by the traditional seven days of fasting and mourning for their king. It was not until the reign of David that Saul's bones were moved to their family grave at Zela in the land of Benjamin.

Unfortunately, no matter what these men did to honour their king, Saul was not being honoured by the God of Israel.

*“Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD;  
he did not keep the word of the LORD and even  
consulted a medium for guidance,  
14. and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD  
put him to death and turned the kingdom over to  
David son of Jesse.”*

*I Chronicles 10:13,14*

What a sad obituary of a life that started so well but ended in disgrace. We now turn our eyes to David and take the opportunity to compare their lives. No life is perfect. Even David did what was wrong in the sight of God. He paid a price for his sin as well. It is vital not only that we start well in life but also that we end great.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10)

##### II Samuel 1 David Hears of Saul's Death

David had been in exile for ten years trying to flee from King Saul. During those years God instilled within David the kind of character that would take him to the throne of Israel. David not only accepted the anointing of God upon his life but he also waited for the people to accept him. Eventually he won the affection and admiration of the people.

*“And David shepherded them with integrity of heart;  
with skillful hands he led them.”*

*Psalms 78:72*

A major theme of this book is that of restoration. There is the restoration of the nation after being pulled apart by Saul. There is also the restoration of David after his sinful actions with Bathsheba. David's throne was also restored back to him after Absalom rebelled and attempted to become the king of Israel.

It is amazing that God would still say of David that he was “a man after God's own heart.” (I Samuel 13:14; Acts 7:46, 13:22). This goes to show what God is willing and able to do for us. We also live in a world that is fast approaching the judgement of God. Yet prior to this fateful day will come plenty of opportunities to extend the grace and mercy of God. We should never give up hope in reaching out to those who appear to be incapable of receiving God's Word. The day of fulfilling the plan of God in placing all things under the head of Christ is here (Ephesians 1:10).

“Second Samuel recounts the triumphs and defeats of King David. From his rise to the throne to his famous last words, this biography describes a remarkable, divinely-inspired leader. As king, David took a divided and defeated Israel from his predecessor King Saul and built a prominent nation. Like most political biographies, Second Samuel highlights the character traits that enabled David to succeed—his reliance on God for guidance (2:1), his sincerity (5:1–5), and his courage (5:6, 7). But the book also describes the tragic consequences of David's lust (12:1–23) and pride (24:1–17). By presenting both the strengths and the weaknesses of David, the book gives a complete picture of a very real person—a person from whom we can learn.”

[The Nelson Study Bible](#)

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

**1:1** - *“After the death of Saul, David returned from defeating the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days.”*

**1:2** - *“On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and with dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honor.”*

**1:3** - *“Where have you come from?” David asked him. He answered, “I have escaped from the Israelite camp.”*

There is no chapter break in the original scrolls. It covers the history of about forty years from 1010 - 970 B.C.. The stories contained in II Samuel are also paralleled in I Chronicles 10-29.

David and his six hundred men along with their families were able to spend two days at Ziklag because the city was not totally destroyed by the Amalekites.

A refugee from Saul's camp came before David with his clothes torn and dust upon his head. This was a sign of mourning (Joshua 7:6; I Samuel 4:12; II Samuel 15:32). He turned out to be an Amalekite (1:8) which were the ones that David had just returned from defeating.

Stating that he had just come from the Israelite camp does not mean that he was one of Saul's men. He could have been there to plunder the fallen which was quite common after such an extensive battle with so many perishing on the open field.

**1:4** - *“‘What happened?’ David asked. ‘Tell me.’ He said, ‘The men fled from the battle. Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead.’”*

**1:5** - *“Then David said to the young man who brought him the report, ‘How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?’”*

**1:6** - *“‘I happened to be on Mount Gilboa,’ the young man said, ‘and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and riders almost upon him.’”*

**1:7** - *“‘When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, What can I do?’”*

**1:8** - *“‘He asked me,’ ‘Who are you?’ ‘An Amalekite,’ I answered.”*

**1:9** - *“‘Then he said to me,’ ‘Stand over me and kill me! I am in the throes of death, but I'm still alive.’”*

**1:10** - *“So I stood over him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord.”*

David took a great interest in the battle not because of his ambition to gain the throne. He truly was concerned about the welfare of Saul, his son Jonathan and the army of Israel. David briefly interrogated the Amalekite to discover what was fact and what was fiction in his story.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

The story that the Amalekite told was clearly seen to be fabricated. Saul had more than just leaned upon his sword (I Samuel 31:4). It would be next to impossible not to die after falling upon a sword. The weight of one's body would cause the sword to thrust entirely through which would be impossible to miss vital organs. David knew that Saul would not have been just leaning upon the sword. He would have died quickly after the sword pierced his body.

There are three accounts of Saul's death (I Samuel 31:1-13; II Samuel 1:1-10; I Chronicles 10:1-14). It's interesting that there are three different versions of what brought about his death. We find that Saul killed himself; the Amalekite killed and thirdly that God put Saul to death. Ultimately, Saul's life was in God's hand and that he died because of turning against the known will of God.

The Amalekite plundered his body by taking Saul's insignias of kingship, his golden crown as well as a golden armband after his death. This evidence would be used to bring the guilty verdict against the Amalekite.

**1:11 - *"Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them."***

**1:12 - *"They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword."***

**1:13 - *"David said to the young man who brought him the report, 'Where are you from?' 'I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite,' he answered."***

**1:14 - *"David asked him, 'Why were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?'"***

**1:15 - *"Then David called one of his men and said, 'Go, strike him down!' So he struck him down, and he died."***

**1:16 - *"For David had said to him, 'Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, 'I killed the LORD's anointed.' "***

The story brought great sadness to David hearing that not only Saul but also his three sons were killed in the battle at Mount Gilboa (I Samuel 31; I Chronicles 10:1-12). It would have taken about three days to receive the news because Ziklag was about eighty miles away from the battle ground.

It was a common practise to show forth their grief by tearing their clothes, fasting and mourning until the evening (Genesis 37:29,34). After the time of mourning had taken place, David once more interrogated the Amalekite. He was told that this man was a resident alien. This would bring him certain privileges (Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:33). Yet if that was a fact he would know that he should have attempted to hide the corpses to protect them from the Philistines. It proved that he was a wanderer who made a living by plundering the dead.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

God had told Moses to destroy the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-16; Deuteronomy 25:17-19) and therefore, blot out their memory from the earth. He was fulfilling the work that Saul failed to do ( I Samuel 15). The Amalekite foolishly thought he would gain a reward for destroying David's enemy. David performed a righteous judgement by having the Amalekite killed in the same way he said he had killed king Saul. It is a serious matter to touch the Lord's anointed or bring harm to the prophets of God (I Samuel 24:6; 26:9; II Samuel 19:21; I Chronicles 16:22).

#### David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan

**1:17** - *"David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan,"*

**1:18** - *"and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):"*

**1:19** - *"Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen!"*

**1:20** - *"Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice."*

**1:21** - *"O mountains of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, nor fields that yield offerings of grain . For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil."*

**1:22** - *"From the blood of the slain, from the flesh of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied."*

**1:23** - *"Saul and Jonathan— in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions."*

**1:24** - *"O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold."*

**1:25** - *"How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights."*

**1:26** - *"I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women."*

**1:27** - *"How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!"*

It was common for songs of a lament to be made for kings and great warriors who died. It is said that this song became known as "Kasheth - The Bow." Several explanations have been given for its title. One is because the Benjamites were very skilful with bow and arrow. It was also a very principle weapon of this age and time. Unfortunately, the very weapon of the skill was what mortally wounded Saul.

The Targum calls the Book of Jashur (Joshua 10:12-13) the Book of the Law. It's believed to be a public register which had recorded in it the memorable events of their forefathers. It contained stories which were used to help train Israel's soldiers in the use of the bow and arrow.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

Both Saul and Jonathan were symbolically called Israel's glory. Other versions call them "*the beauty*" which would make them the chief ornament or pride of Israel. It literally means "the gazelle or the antelope of Israel." These animals were known for their beauty and symmetrical form.

"*How the mighty have fallen*" is the chorus of the song. The song is divided into three sections.

"The first contains all that had to be said in praise of the fallen heroes; the deepest mourning for their death; and praise of their bravery, of their inseparable love, and of the virtues of Saul as king. The second commemorates the friendship between David and Jonathan. The third simply utters the last sigh, with which the elegy becomes silent."

Keil & Delitzsch  
"Commentary on the Old Testament"  
Volume 2, p.289

David wanted the memories of Saul and Jonathan to be favourable. After all Saul did fight in some of the wars (I Samuel 14:47-48). He was claimed to have slain thousands (I Samuel 18:7). David didn't want their enemies to use the defeat as a way of proclaiming their greatness. The city of Gath was the capital city of the Philistines and Ashkelon was their chief city. David didn't want them to promote their religion. It was there that they would celebrate their victory before their idols.

The next stanza deals with Mount Gilboa. David was asking God to withhold the rains and dew from watering the fields surrounding the area. This would send forth a message that even God's creation was mourning the loss.

Many soldiers in Saul's army simply cast aside their shields as they ran for their lives. As for the shield of Saul it could be taken either literally or symbolically. Literally, leather shields were anointed with oil to preserve them (Isaiah 21:5). Figuratively, we also know that the kings (like Saul) were anointed to serve their God.

It was typical of Hebrew writings to personify weapons of war. They were spoken of as drinking blood and devouring flesh (Deuteronomy 32:42; Isaiah 34:5-6; Jeremiah 46:10).

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)**

The king and his son left loving memories for many. Both Saul and Jonathan were together with their people fighting for their freedom at the time of their death. They quickly carried out their duties (i.e., - for the city of Jabesh Gilead). Nothing is swifter than an eagle (Deuteronomy 28:49) or stronger than a lion (Judges 14:18; II Samuel 17:10).

Saul had taken the spoils of war and distributed it among the people. They were blessed with not only scarlet (the colour of the wealthy) but also with fine linens and golden ornaments. These also became the luxuries of the wives of his soldiers.

Lastly, David speaks of his brother, Jonathan. Jonathan was his brother-in-law (married to Michal, Jonathan's sister) as well as a true brother at heart. The comparison with the love of a woman is the kind that expresses the deepest and most devoted type of love available. There is no place to interpret homosexual tendencies between them. That would only come from a perverted mind.

The term "the weapons of war" seems to mean more than just a loss of weapons that would have been plundered. It would also speak of both Saul and Jonathan and others who stood as shields to protect the people.

Here we have an example of how we should pay tribute to those who die in battle in their efforts to protect their country.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

##### II Samuel 2 David Anointed King Over Judah

David and his men could not remain at Ziklag for much longer because it was in Philistine country. Yet he did not usurp his authority and quickly take the throne over all of Israel. He had been a fugitive for 10 years so it wasn't because he wasn't a patient man. But it was not God's timing even yet. Seven years still had to pass before he could reign over ALL of Israel.

**2:1** - *“In the course of time, David inquired of the LORD. ‘Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?’ he asked. The LORD said, ‘Go up.’ David asked, ‘Where shall I go?’ ‘To Hebron,’ the LORD answered.”*

**2:2** - *“So David went up there with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel.”*

**2:3** - *“David also took the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its towns.”*

David was used of enquiring of the Lord when he wasn't sure what to do or where to turn. He did so by going to either Abiathar the priest with the ephod (I Samuel 23:9-12) or he would seek guidance from Gad the prophet (I Samuel 22:5).

David was told to return to the land allotted to the tribe of Judah which was the land of his forefathers and the tribe where the kings should reign from (Genesis 49:10). Hebron was the chief city he was told to live in which would offer a strategic military advantage because of its location in the mountains. Located close to it were the tombs of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca as well as Jacob and Leah. The city had been given to Caleb years earlier as a blessing for following the Lord wholeheartedly (Joshua 14:13-14). How appropriate that it was now going to be the home of David.

Abigail, one of David's wives was married to a Calebite. He therefore, inherited the land near the wilderness of Maon (I Samuel 25:2) which was located just south of Hebron. Hebron was a very important city in the southern part of Judah at that time.

It was also appropriate that David's 600 men along with their families were allowed to take up residence and rest from their fugitive lives and continual battles for a period of time.

*“If we endure (suffer with him), we will also reign with him.”*

*II Timothy 2:12a*

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

**2:4** - *“Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. When David was told that it was the men of Jabesh Gilead who had buried Saul,”*

**2:5** - *“he sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead to say to them, ‘The LORD bless you for showing this kindness to Saul your master by burying him.’”*

**2:6** - *“May the LORD now show you kindness and faithfulness, and I too will show you the same favor because you have done this.”*

**2:7** - *“Now then, be strong and brave, for Saul your master is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them.”*

David follows a similar example as our Lord did. Jesus was anointed to reign as Supreme Ruler over all the earth. Yet He never forced His way to the throne. He waited and waited and waited. He has been recognized by those who serve and love Him but He still is awaiting the day when He will be crowned “King of all” and His kingdom will come (Matthew 6:10).

David had already been anointed by Samuel approximately 10 years earlier (I Samuel 16:13). Now the elders of Judah (not the rest of Israel at this time) came to grant their approval and acceptance of God's anointed. It must be said that while David was at Ziklag that a contingency from the tribes of Benjamin (king Saul's tribe), Gad and Manasseh came to join his army. They were great warriors and became his mighty men of valour.

One of the first items on David's agenda was to ensure that king Saul and his three sons were given an honourable burial. He discovered that the brave men of Jabesh Gilead had risked their lives to recover the bodies. They also had burned their flesh (so they couldn't be identified by their enemies) and buried their bones at Jabesh (I Samuel 31:8-13).

They would have had to travel 25 miles from the tribe of Gad and also cross the Jordan River. David waited twenty five years before he had their bones buried in their native tribe of Benjamin (II Samuel 21:12-14).

David's act of kindness toward the men of Jabesh Gilead was a way of announcing his acceptance as the king of Judah. I'm sure it was announced in a manner to offer an extension of peace and thankfulness for their act of kindness and reverence to their previous king. Too often we are negligent at tying up loose ends that can prevent backlashes in the future. The enemy will use any foothold we provide him with to divide God's people. It's important to do everything we can to bring peace among our brethren.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

*“There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him . . .  
19. and a man who stirs up dissension among the brothers.”*

*Proverbs 6:16,19*

#### War Between the Houses of David and Saul

**2:8** - *“Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner, the commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-Bosheth son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim.”*

**2:9** - *“He made him king over Gilead, Ashuri and Jezreel, and also over Ephraim, Benjamin and all Israel.”*

**2:10** - *“Ish-Bosheth son of Saul was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he reigned two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David.”*

**2:11** - *“The length of time David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.”*

Unfortunately Abner was not about to step aside and allow David and his family to assume the throne. This set up a conflict which led to a civil war between the house of David and his loyal followers and the house of Saul and those who held allegiance to him and his offspring.

We must also search our hearts to see whom we are following. Are we following the Lord wholeheartedly or are we limiting His reign over our lives?

“Jesus Christ will be Lord of all or He will not be Lord at all.”

[Augustine of Hippo](#)

There will always come a conflict when we don't accept the Lord's anointed to rule and reign over our lives. Our story now brings into view Abner who was Saul's cousin and the commander of Saul's army. Here stood the man who brought David to Saul after killing Goliath (I Samuel 17:55-58). He worked close in hand with king Saul in an attempt to kill David (I Samuel 26:5ff). David rebuked Abner when he failed to protect his king (I Samuel 26:13-16). Therefore, Abner felt no allegiance toward David.

Abner instead chose to raise up the last of Saul's sons, Ish-Bosheth and have him crowned as king. Abner knew that he intimidated the young king (II Samuel 3:11; 4:1).

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

Ish-Bosheth's name ("***Bosheth***" - means "***shame***") had been changed from "***Ish-Baal***" - "***man of the lord***" (I Chronicles 8:33). The Canaanites named one of their gods "***Baal***" so it was best to make the change. He was brought to the city of Mahanaim by Abner which was one of the Levitical cities of refuge to ensure his safety (Joshua 21:38).

It was there that Abner had him crowned as king in place of his father as the succession to the throne. It was man's choice, not God's choice. He first of all was crowned king over the area of Gilead which was located on the Eastern side of the Jordan River including the tribes of Dan, Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh.

It is believed that it took five years for all of Israel to accept Ish-Bosheth as their king. Even though he was crowned at the beginning of David's seven years and six months reign over Judah only, he really only reigned as king over all of Israel for the last two years of David's reign in Hebron. He was assassinated at the age of forty-two after reigning only those two years.

David therefore reigned for seven years and six months over the tribe of Judah only in Hebron. He then conquered Jebus (renaming it Jerusalem) and served another thirty three years. So all totalled, David reigned for forty and a half years (II Samuel 5:4 rounded off to forty years)

**2:12 - "*Abner son of Ner, together with the men of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon.*"**

**2:13 - "*Joab son of Zeruiah and David's men went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. One group sat down on one side of the pool and one group on the other side.*"**

**2:14 - "*Then Abner said to Joab, 'Let's have some of the young men get up and fight hand to hand in front of us.' 'All right, let them do it,' Joab said.*"**

**2:15 - "*So they stood up and were counted off—twelve men for Benjamin and Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, and twelve for David.*"**

**2:16 - "*Then each man grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his dagger into his opponent's side, and they fell down together. So that place in Gibeon was called Helkath Hazzurim.*"**

**2:17 - "*The battle that day was very fierce, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by David's men.*"**

War has a way of never ceasing. Conflict simply breeds more conflict. Abner thought he had the upper hand because he now had all the tribes except Judah on his side. He proposed a duel to take place at the great cistern which was located about twenty-three miles north of Gibeon located in the tribe of Benjamin. The two opposing groups of soldiers sat at opposite sides of the pool watching each other's moves. The duel was set up and twelve men from each side were chosen to fight to the death. All twenty-four of them were killed by each others dagger.



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

The place was named "*Helkath Hazzurim*" means "*field of daggers*" or "*field of hostilities*." Since neither side won from the duel, the war escalated quite quickly until both armies were involved. Joab and his army was able to defeat Abner's army in a fierce battle. Yet small conflicts often lead to bigger wars that eventually end with still having more conflicts. Such was the case here as well.

**2:18** - *"The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Now Asahel was as fleet-footed as a wild gazelle."*

**2:19** - *"He chased Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued him."*

**2:20** - *"Abner looked behind him and asked, 'Is that you, Asahel?' 'It is,' he answered."*

**2:21** - *"Then Abner said to him, 'Turn aside to the right or to the left; take on one of the young men and strip him of his weapons.' But Asahel would not stop chasing him."*

**2:22** - *"Again Abner warned Asahel, 'Stop chasing me! Why should I strike you down? How could I look your brother Joab in the face?'"*

**2:23** - *"But Asahel refused to give up the pursuit; so Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Asahel's stomach, and the spear came out through his back. He fell there and died on the spot. And every man stopped when he came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died."*

David had three nephews. They were Joab (David's army general), Abishai and Asahel. Asahel had been blessed with feet that were very swift. Later on in history we know that Roman soldiers were taught to run swiftly and swim well.

Asahel made a straight bee line to overcome Abner who was escaping from the battle. When Abner noticed he was being followed he called out to ask if it was Asahel in which he was told it was. Abner knew that killing Asahel would only increase the hostility so he attempted to give him an option of fighting someone his own age and experience. If he won, he would have had weapons to show for his pursuit. But Asahel foolishly chose to chase after the veteran commander. His swiftness brought him sudden death.

"Death often comes by ways we least suspect. We are often betrayed by the accomplishments we are proud of!"

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary](#)

The butt ends of spears were often pointed to enable the soldier to thrust it into the ground when sleeping (I Samuel 26:7). It was this sharpened end that Asahel swiftly ran into to such a point that it came out his back. It brought about his immediate death. Some versions speak of the fifth rib. We have twelve ribs of which seven are called the true ones protecting the heart and five are spurious which protect the liver, bowels etc. It was this area that was punctured.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

**2:24 - "But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner, and as the sun was setting, they came to the hill of Ammah, near Giah on the way to the wasteland of Gibeon."**

**2:25 - "Then the men of Benjamin rallied behind Abner. They formed themselves into a group and took their stand on top of a hill."**

**2:26 - "Abner called out to Joab, 'Must the sword devour forever? Don't you realize that this will end in bitterness? How long before you order your men to stop pursuing their brothers?'"**

**2:27 - "Joab answered, 'As surely as God lives, if you had not spoken, the men would have continued the pursuit of their brothers until morning.'"**

**2:28 - "So Joab blew the trumpet, and all the men came to a halt; they no longer pursued Israel, nor did they fight anymore."**

It appears that Joab and Abishai were in close pursuit and now even more determined to avenge the death of their brother. Abner was quickly supported by his troops as they gathered at the hill of Ammah which would give them an advantage.

Abner wisely called for a truce. It is hard to know his motivation but I suspect he thought they would then be able to stop the battle and bury their brother. He also knew that David was attempting to bring peace and unity to the nation. This could begin the process of reconciliation.

Joab chose to bring an end to the conflict by blowing the trumpet. It signalled the end of the war so his men would immediately put down their arms and stop their pursuit.

**2:29 - "All that night Abner and his men marched through the Arabah. They crossed the Jordan, continued through the whole Bithron and came to Mahanaim."**

**2:30 - "Then Joab returned from pursuing Abner and assembled all his men. Besides Asahel, nineteen of David's men were found missing."**

**2:31 - "But David's men had killed three hundred and sixty Benjamites who were with Abner."**

**2:32 - "They took Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb at Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men marched all night and arrived at Hebron by daybreak."**

They walked all night and returned to the place where they had left Ish-Bosheth. Joab lost nineteen men because of the battle not including Asahel while Abner lost three hundred and sixty men from the tribe of Benjamin

Joab buried his brother at their family tomb in Bethlehem, which was also the hometown of David. They then marched through the night and arrived back at Hebron where king David was living which was about a five-hour march (14 miles). Unfortunately, the war between the families continued as mentioned in the next chapter.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

##### II Samuel 3

**3:1** - *“The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.”*

**3:2** - *“Sons were born to David in Hebron: His firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel;”*

**3:3** - *“his second, Kileab the son of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;”*

**3:4** - *“the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;”*

**3:5** - *“and the sixth, Ithream the son of David's wife Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron.”*

It is thought that the war (or better the continual state of hostility with frequent skirmishes) between the Saul and David's households lasted five years.

“The contest between grace and corruption in the hearts of believers, may fitly be compared to this warfare. There is a long war between them, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; but as the work of holiness is carried on, corruption, like the house of Saul, grows weaker and weaker; while grace, like the house of David, grows stronger and stronger.”

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary](#)

There is an uncertainty about exactly when Ish-Bosheth had his two-year reign over Israel (II Samuel 2:10). Some believe that there was a five-year vacancy after the death of Saul because of a dispute between Mephibosheth and Ish-Bosheth as to who should reign as king in place of their father. Others believe that he was crowned as king but the war between the two households began within two years. During the final five years it is suggested that Ish-Bosheth was inactive because Abner was really the one reigning as their military leader.

During these five years the support for David increased. Those from the 11 tribes of Israel were switching their allegiance. David was willing to wait and trust the Lord instead of forcing his way to become the king of all of the 12 tribes.

There is no mention of David having any sons before his time at Hebron. He may have had daughters. Each of the six sons mentioned were born to different mothers indicating the wives that David attained. Two wives were brought with him to Hebron and the other four he married while in Hebron. It was accepted at this time of Biblical history but it brought problems.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

His firstborn son Amnon, forced himself upon his sister Tamar (II Samuel 13:1,20). We have a similar list of David's sons in I Chronicles 3:1-4. The son born from Abigail was named "**Daniel**" (I Chronicles 3:1) which means "**God has judged me.**"

#### Abner Goes Over to David

**3:6** - *"During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner had been strengthening his own position in the house of Saul."*

**3:7** - *"Now Saul had had a concubine named Rizpah daughter of Aiah. And Ish-Bosheth said to Abner, 'Why did you sleep with my father's concubine?'"*

**3:8** - *"Abner was very angry because of what Ish-Bosheth said and he answered, 'Am I a dog's head—on Judah's side? This very day I am loyal to the house of your father Saul and to his family and friends. I haven't handed you over to David. Yet now you accuse me of an offense involving this woman!'"*

**3:9** - *"May God deal with Abner, be it ever so severely, if I do not do for David what the LORD promised him on oath"*

**3:10** - *"and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba."*

**3:11** - *"Ish-Bosheth did not dare to say another word to Abner, because he was afraid of him."*

One of the ways that Abner strengthened his position was by going into Saul's concubine (I Kings 2:21-22). It was common practice in the Middle East for the wives and concubines of the king to become the property of their successor. We are not sure if the accusations were ill founded or not.

Abner was indeed very angry with the accusation. He felt that his kindness had been rewarded with a false accusation. To suggest he was like the dog's head, would be a great insult. Dogs were not recognized as domestic pets at this period of time. Abner tried to build a defence of his loyalty as a way of proving the accusation was wrong. It appears that Abner already knew that the entire kingdom was to come under the leadership of David as their king. Abner continued to lord over his weaker nephew.

**3:12** - *"Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to say to David, 'Whose land is it? Make an agreement with me, and I will help you bring all Israel over to you.'"*

**3:13** - *"'Good,' said David. 'I will make an agreement with you. But I demand one thing of you: Do not come into my presence unless you bring Michal daughter of Saul when you come to see me.'"*

**3:14** - *"Then David sent messengers to Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, demanding, 'Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins.'"*

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)**

It was at this point that Abner sent messengers to David in an attempt to switch his allegiance and have the 11 tribes of Israel join with the tribe of Judah under King David. It was essentially an attempt to make a covenant of friendship to forgive and forget the past.

David proposed a condition to Abner. He would accept the proposition if Abner ensured that David's wife Michal would be returned to him. This would show that David was willing to renew his relationship not only with Michal but also with the house of Saul (I Samuel 25:44). Ish-Bosheth would not be able to refuse such a request. After all, David had risked his life to gain her as his bride (I Samuel 18:27).

**3:15 -** *“So Ish-Bosheth gave orders and had her taken away from her husband Paltiel son of Laish.”*

**3:16 -** *“Her husband, however, went with her, weeping behind her all the way to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, ‘Go back home!’ So he went back.”*

Ish-Bosheth sent Abner to the town of Gallim in order to get Michal from her second husband, Paltiel (I Samuel 25:44). Her husband was finding it hard breaking away and was not initially wanting to let her go. But a strong rebuke from Abner at what was believed to be the border of Judah caused Paltiel to return to his home without his wife.

**3:17 -** *“Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, ‘For some time you have wanted to make David your king.’”*

**3:18 -** *“Now do it! For the LORD promised David, ‘By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.’ ”*

**3:19 -** *“Abner also spoke to the Benjamites in person. Then he went to Hebron to tell David everything that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin wanted to do.”*

**3:20 -** *“When Abner, who had twenty men with him, came to David at Hebron, David prepared a feast for him and his men.”*

**3:21 -** *“Then Abner said to David, ‘Let me go at once and assemble all Israel for my lord the king, so that they may make a compact with you, and that you may rule over all that your heart desires.’ So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.”*

The elders of Israel refrained from accepting David as their king because of Abner's control over them. Now that he was about to endorse David there was nothing to hold them back. Everyone knew that God had already given His endorsement and had anointed David to rule over them. Abner spoke especially to his own tribe of Benjamin because that was the tribe that King Saul had come from. They would have the greatest attachment to the family of Saul. He didn't want them to attempt to place one of Saul's sons on the throne. There was no need to create any more friction.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

Abner now came to David with the contingency of 20 leaders from Israel. David made a feast to honour them. It was also a token of reconciliation as well as a covenant to confirm the agreement they had just entered into.

Abner left the presence of David in order to gather representatives from the elders of all of Israel. This would remove any doubts that David may have had that Israel would not support him as their king as well.

#### Joab Murders Abner

**3:22 - "Just then David's men and Joab returned from a raid and brought with them a great deal of plunder. But Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, because David had sent him away, and he had gone in peace."**

**3:23 - "When Joab and all the soldiers with him arrived, he was told that Abner son of Ner had come to the king and that the king had sent him away and that he had gone in peace."**

**3:24 - "So Joab went to the king and said, 'What have you done? Look, Abner came to you. Why did you let him go? Now he is gone!'"**

**3:25 - "You know Abner son of Ner; he came to deceive you and observe your movements and find out everything you are doing."**

Joab returned to hear of the covenant that had been made. He returned victoriously from pursuing the Edomites, Amalekites and the Philistines which were attempting to take advantage of the civil war between Israel and Judah. Abner had already left in peace from the presence of King David.

Joab was angry when he heard that David had made a covenant with Abner and sent him away in peace. He attempted to portray Abner as a traitor so he could gratify his revenge for the killing of his brother. It was common in those days for enemies to enter the camp of another in an attempt to observe how many men and weapons they had. Joab was accusing Abner of deceitfully trying to gain military information.

**3:26 - "Joab then left David and sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the well of Sirah. But David did not know it."**

**3:27 - "Now when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the gateway, as though to speak with him privately. And there, to avenge the blood of his brother Asahel, Joab stabbed him in the stomach, and he died."**

There is no indication that David answered Joab. It wasn't because he agreed with Joab but rather it was a silence of restraint. Silence can sometimes be golden.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

It's never easy dealing with relatives. There are always so many links and passions. The expression that "*blood is thicker than water*" held true in this case. Yet there was little that David could do to change the bitter heart of Joab.

It doesn't seem like Abner journeyed very far before Joab met up with him. Josephus believed that the well of Sirah was only 2 ½ miles from Hebron. Joab convinced him to return to Hebron where he set up a private meeting and killed him in revenge for the blood of his brother, Asahel.

**3:28 -** *"Later, when David heard about this, he said, 'I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner.'"*

**3:29 -** *"May his blood fall upon the head of Joab and upon all his father's house! May Joab's house never be without someone who has a running sore or leprosy or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food."*

**3:30 -** *"(Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.)."*

King David did all he could do to distant himself from this act of violence. He wanted everyone to know that he had nothing to do with the death of Abner. All of the guilt and responsibility were placed on the head of Joab and his family.

There were often times when an individual's actions had a long-lasting impact on their family (Joshua 19:23; II Samuel 12:10-12). Some of the curses that would follow Joab's family from this day on would be diseases of the skin including leprosy. There would also be those who would be crippled, those who would die in battle as well as those who would be hungry. There is a high price to pay for revenge. That is why the Bible teaches us to forgive one another.

**3:31 -** *"Then David said to Joab and all the people with him, 'Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and walk in mourning in front of Abner.' King David himself walked behind the bier."*

**3:32 -** *"They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king wept aloud at Abner's tomb. All the people wept also."*

**3:33 -** *"The king sang this lament for Abner: 'Should Abner have died as the lawless die?'"*

**3:34 -** *"'Your hands were not bound, your feet were not fettered. You fell as one falls before wicked men.' And all the people wept over him again."*

**3:35 -** *"Then they all came and urged David to eat something while it was still day; but David took an oath, saying, 'May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun sets!'"*

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

David chose to issue a royal edict to command everyone including Joab to mourn the death of Abner and attend his funeral. The phrase ***“all the people”*** is used seven times from vv. 31-37. David's command included the tearing of their garments and putting on of sackcloth and weeping over the death of this great man. David even followed the brier to its place of internment. Neither Joab nor Abishai were ever brought to justice for their crime. David covered the multitude of their sins.

The body of Abner was placed in a cave in Hebron which is not usual. Most bodies were interned outside of the city. The final act of respect was shown in the weeping that took place at the grave side. David's words ***“should Abner have died as the lawless die?”*** or ***“should Abner die as a fool dieth?”*** meant that he did not. David made sure that he died a hero's death. Those who were guilty of a crime usually went to their death with their hands bound or their feet in fetters. The king's words brought further tears before they laid his body to rest.

In concern for the king's welfare the people wanted him to eat. Most funerals were held in the morning. So it would be a long day without food. He may not have eaten after hearing of the death of Abner.

***3:36 - “All the people took note and were pleased; indeed, everything the king did pleased them.”***

***3:37 - “So on that day all the people and all Israel knew that the king had no part in the murder of Abner son of Ner.”***

***3:38 - “Then the king said to his men, ‘Do you not realize that a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel this day?’”***

***3:39 - “And today, though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds!”***

The sincerity of the king touched the hearts of the people. There was nothing more that he could have done. It was very clear to the people of Israel that King David was not responsible for the death of Abner. David recognized Abner as a fallen prince; a great man, serving as the general of Saul's army.

When David said ***“I am weak”*** he was not suggesting he was on able to be king. He was rather explaining that he chose to be gentle in contrast to the hard reproach of his nephews. Meekness should never be misconstrued as weakness ( Psalm 103:8-14).

We need to learn to leave vengeance up to the Lord (Romans 12:19-20). We are often known by our vices. David began his kingship with the demonstration of grace and mercy



### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

##### II Samuel 4 Ish-Bosheth Murdered

**4:1** - *“When Ish-Bosheth son of Saul heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage, and all Israel became alarmed.”*

**4:2** - *“Now Saul's son had two men who were leaders of raiding bands. One was named Baanah and the other Recab; they were sons of Rimmon the Beerothite from the tribe of Benjamin—Beeroth is considered part of Benjamin,”*

**4:3** - *“because the people of Beeroth fled to Gittaim and have lived there as aliens to this day.”*

The news of the death of Abner caused Ish-Bosheth to lose heart. It is not that he was a strong prince prior to this time because he was actually quite feeble. He probably believed that there was a plot now forming to dethrone him because he was not aware of the meeting with king David. This would make him even more fearful.

The detail given of the two men who were leaders of Saul's raiding bands is important to understand. It showed just how reckless these men were. They were Benjamites and yet had no concern with murdering the son of their king who was from their tribe.

Often during the time of the death of the king, the inhabitants of certain cities would feel vulnerable to their enemies. They would often leave their cities to find a safer refuge. So was the case of the people of Beeroth.

**4:4** - *“(Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled. His name was Mephibosheth.)”*

The next verse almost appears out of nowhere. But it seems like it is preparing us for the portions of Scripture in II Samuel 9:1-13; II Samuel 16:1-4; II Samuel 19:25.

Mephibosheth was born to Jonathan five years before his death at Jezreel. That would now make Mephibosheth 12 years old. He was unfortunately dropped during the haste of trying to find safe refuge after the Philistine victory at Jezreel. He was lame in both feet from that day on. It is a sad story on the ending of Saul's family.

Since there was no real prince to take the throne, it made way for the next part of this story to be told. The Bible does not avoid speaking about the difficult and terrible times that have taken place. We need to be thankful for this. It should help us when we go through struggles.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

**4:5** - *“Now Recab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out for the house of Ish-Bosheth, and they arrived there in the heat of the day while he was taking his noonday rest.”*

**4:6** - *“They went into the inner part of the house as if to get some wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Recab and his brother Baanah slipped away.”*

**4:7** - *“They had gone into the house while he was lying on the bed in his bedroom. After they stabbed and killed him, they cut off his head. Taking it with them, they traveled all night by way of the Arabah.”*

It was quite common for kings to rest in the early afternoon because of the heat created by the sun. It was also customary for soldiers to receive a certain quantity of corn together with some pay for their service to the king. So it wouldn't be unusual for Recab and Baanah to be in the inner part of the king's home. Unfortunately, the old expression that an idle soul is an easy prey to the destroyer came true once again.

They took advantage of the situation and stabbed the king under his fifth rib which would be in the stomach area. They chose to behead the king in order to have proof of his death to present to King David. They were able to escape undiscovered and unsuspected by anyone. They most likely hid his head in one of their sacks that contained grain. They travelled for 68 miles until they arrived at Hebron. Most of their journey would be along the plain of Jordan.

**4:8** - *“They brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, ‘Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to take your life. This day the LORD has avenged my lord the king against Saul and his offspring.’”*

**4:9** - *“David answered Recab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, “As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of all trouble,”*

**4:10** - *“when a man told me, ‘Saul is dead,’ and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and put him to death in Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news!”*

**4:11** - *“How much more—when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed—should I not now demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you!”*

**4:12** - *“So David gave an order to his men, and they killed them. They cut off their hands and feet and hung the bodies by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-Bosheth and buried it in Abner's tomb at Hebron.”*

They presented the head of Ish-Bosheth to King David. They were thinking that it would bring them a rich reward. After all, this would end the reign of any of King Saul's progeny. They saw it as a way of avenging King Saul's relentless pursuit of David. Were they in for the surprise of their life. They had acted foolishly. Now they were going to reap the rewards of a fool.

### **III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)**

#### **F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)**

King David made it very clear that the reason for his survival was not because of a continual victory over the house of King Saul. It was because Jehovah had protected him against his adversaries.

David went on to explain how he had the wicked man put to death who tried to gain a reward because of Saul's death. Now the crime was even greater. Ish-Bosheth had not done anything wrong to King David. He had lived a righteous life as far as David was concerned. There was absolutely no reason for his death.

The custom of the day was eye for eye and tooth for tooth. David was not about to have the blood of an innocent man on his shoulders. Some may object to the fact that the Bible does support capital punishment (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:12; Numbers 35:31-34).

David revenged the life of Ish-Bosheth by having these men killed. He also had their hands and feet cut off (that had been quick to shed innocent blood) and their bodies were hung beside the pool at Hebron as a warning to others not to take lightly the lives of innocent people (Deuteronomy 21:22,23). It also made it clear that King David was not responsible for the death of King Ish-Bosheth. He then had the body of Ish-Bosheth buried in the same tomb as was the body of Abner.

David was able to handle each and every crisis as difficult as they appeared. He took each problem one at a time. No one was going to think for him. He chose to do what he thought God would require of him. He did not sway from his beliefs even though it may have made things temporarily easier for him. He was a man of his word and lived according to the Word of God.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

##### II Samuel 5

**5:1** - *“All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “We are your own flesh and blood.”*

**5:2** - *“In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, ‘You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.’ ”*

**5:3** - *“When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a compact with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.”*

**5:4** - *“David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years.”*

**5:5** - *“In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.”*

No one could say that David forced his way to take over the throne and rule as the king of Israel and Judah. This was actually the third time David was anointed to be king - the second time in Hebron (I Samuel 16:13; II Samuel 2:4). It was important to be anointed king at Hebron because all of the great patriarchs and their wives (with the exception of Rachel) were buried there (Genesis. 23:2; 25:9; 35:27-29; 49:29-33).

This time the elders representing all the people chose David to be their king. Some of us would find it very difficult to wait that long for God to fulfill His will over our lives. It was 17 full years before David was acknowledged as king over all of Israel. A fuller account of this event is recorded in I Chronicles 12:23-40.

It was important that they selected a man who was of their own flesh and blood (Deuteronomy 17:15; I Chronicles 11:1). The Church is also a member of the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:30) - flesh of His flesh, blood of His blood! We are not only created by Him but recreated in our new spiritual birth. David was from the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

David had also been the one who led the nation into many victories against their enemies as appointed by King Saul (I Samuel 17:32,45-47; 18:7,13). He was the nation's hero. His nature and experience made him not only a great leader but also a great shepherd. He was the one who had been anointed to be king by the highly respected leader Samuel (I Samuel 16:1).

The covenant or compact or league that David made with the people was twofold. He promised to rule over them according to the Law of God while they would submit in obedience to his righteous rule over them. He was thirty years old (seven ½ yrs over just Judah in Hebron and thirty-three years over the whole kingdom) when he ruled over all of Israel. Jesus also began His ministry at the age of thirty.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

##### David Conquers Jerusalem

**5:6** - *“The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, ‘You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off.’ They thought, ‘David cannot get in here.’”*

**5:7** - *“Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the City of David.”*

**5:8** - *“On that day, David said, ‘Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those ‘lame and blind’ who are David's enemies. That is why they say, The ‘blind and lame’ will not enter the palace.’”*

**5:9** - *“David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the supporting terraces inward.”*

**5:10** - *“And he became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him.”*

These next few verses should teach us that we need to be very careful who and what we place our confidence in. The terrain allowed the city to be easily fortified and defended. The inhabitants of Jebus believed that their city was impregnable. They were dead wrong. It was a lesson that the Babylonians also had to learn.

Jerusalem was located near the centre of the united kingdom, in the land originally owned by the tribe of Benjamin. Saul's tribal territory of Benjamin bordered Judah. The city of Jebus spanned both of the tribes and neither of them were able up to this time to defeat the Jebusites.

The idols that were worshipped by the Jebusites had eyes but could not see and feet but could not walk. It is believed that David mocked these idols. The Jebusites returned to the mocking by stating that David and his men would have to get by their idols before conquering the city. Some believe this passage is saying that even if they placed blind and lame men on the wall as their guards that they could still protect their city. Whatever the case was, David took up the challenge.

As with plenty of the Hebrew texts, verse seven tells us of the outcome while the next few verses explain it in further detail. David and his men definitely captured the city of Jebus. The unique story that must be told is how they captured the city. The city was surrounded on the east by the Kidron Valley, on the west by the Tyropean Valley, and on the south by the Valley of Hinnom. After the city was captured, David renamed the northern mount Zion ( Psalm 48:2).

David knew that the only way to penetrate the city would be to climb up through the water shaft on the eastern wall of the city. Those who have studied this shaft have said that it would have been very difficult but not impossible to climb. David reinforced this area years later.

### III. THE RISE OF DAVID - I Samuel 16:1- II Samuel 5:10 (Contd.)

#### F. David Becomes Israel's King (II Samuel 1:1-5:10) (Contd.)

It's important to note that David made this city his residence and his fortress. We need to also remember the great victories that God has led us into. The name of Jebus was renamed Jerusalem (the city of peace) and was also known partially as the city of David.

The city expanded under his rule. Supporting terraces allowed for more space for buildings. The word used to describe these supporting terraces was "*millo*" which means "*fullness*." It referred to a stone embankment. It was built on the southeastern side in order to support new buildings as well as the wall. Archaeologists have uncovered this structure which measured 1500 feet long and 900 feet wide. In later years both King Solomon and King Hezekiah strengthened this section of Jerusalem (I Kings 9:15, 24; 11:27; II Chronicles 32:5).

It was a wise choice for this location because it was never previously an Israelite city and therefore, it had no association with either the northern or southern tribes. David didn't want to be seen for being more favourable to one tribe over another which made him very powerful from this time on. It is believed that he brought the head of Goliath to Jerusalem at this time to remind the people that God was able to conquer all of their enemies (I Samuel 17:54).

### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22

#### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13)

**5:11 - "Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David."**

**5:12 - "And David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel."**

The name of Hiram was a common name of the kings of Tyre much like Pharaoh was for Egypt. Both he and his sons were friendly and helpful to both David and Solomon especially when David needed to build his palace as well as when Solomon built the Temple. The Israelites were skilled as farmers and shepherds. Few of them had the skill to hew stones and build large structures. David's grand house was known as the house of cedar (II Samuel 7:2).

On the other hand this Phoenician king gained from the food production of the Israelites. David also helped him by defeating the Philistines who were their warlike neighbours. David had his kingdom located on the trade route for the city of Tyre.

It's important that we carefully choose the alliances we make. We've all had relationships that have gone sour. David was very careful in whom he chose to become close to. He spared both himself and his kingdom a great deal of pain. We need to heed his example.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

**5:13** - *“After he left Hebron, David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were born to him.”*

**5:14** - *“These are the names of the children born to him there: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,”*

**5:15** - *“Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia,”*

**5:16** - *“Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet.”*

These next few verses are a sad commentary of the life of David. It was customary to have many wives as well as concubines during this time. But the Scriptures also indicate that the king was not to multiply wives (Deuteronomy 17:17). Neither David nor his son Solomon heeded God's warning, and it brought them a great deal of pain and sadness. The only wife of David that did not conceive was Michal because she despised David when he danced before the returning Ark of the Covenant (II Samuel 6:17-23).

We also must be very careful how we set the standards for our lives. Do we look around and compare what the world is doing? How many wives do our heathen neighbours marry into? It should never be our standard if we wish to walk in obedience to God's Word. **If the way is broad and “everyone is doing it” we should recognize it as a warning not an opportunity.**

##### David Defeats the Philistines

**5:17** - *“When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold.”*

**5:18** - *“Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim;”*

**5:19** - *“so David inquired of the LORD, ‘Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?’ The LORD answered him, ‘Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you.’”*

**5:20** - *“So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, ‘As waters break out, the LORD has broken out against my enemies before me.’ So that place was called Baal Perazim.”*

**5:21** - *“The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off.”*

The Philistines chose this time to attack King David. He had not had a chance to increase his army and set up his kingdom. It is much like the devil does today. He attacks us when he believes we are the most vulnerable. He also attacks us at our weakest point. He will throw all hell at us when he thinks he has the advantage. Do we know what to do during those times? If not, we may become a casualty. The road of life is strewn with many who have chosen to casually serve God. **If you are not part of the infantry, don't be surprised if you become part of the wounded in the infirmary or end up in the cemetery.** Yet even faithful warriors end up there.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

We cannot take lightly the assaults of the enemy over our lives. The Bible says that the Philistines ***“went up in full force to search for him.”*** David went to his stronghold. We need to also go to our stronghold. Our strength is in the Name of the Lord. We need to stay under the blood of Jesus. The weakest Christian on his/her knees is more powerful than any devil and the forces of hell. We must position ourselves humbly before God before we can expect to gain possession and maintain possession of what He has for our lives. That is our stronghold.

The next few verses actually cover two different battles that David has against the Philistines. It's interesting that they both take place in the valley of Rephaim. This was a large valley. Its name actually means ***“of the giants”*** (Joshua 15:8). The fact that the Philistines spread themselves over the valley, shows that they came in large number.

These battles are also recorded in I Chronicles 14:8 – 17. Both these battles took place before David was able to set up his fortress in Jerusalem on Mount Zion. David was wise enough to inquire of the Lord before entering any battle. His example should speak volumes to us.

The Lord made it clear (by the Urim and Thummim) that He would fight this battle and bring the victory. By the time David's army reached the battlefield, the Philistines had repositioned themselves at Mount Perazim to gain an upper edge. Little is mentioned of the battle other than the fact that the Philistines were defeated. David renamed the place ***“Baal Perazim”*** which means ***“the Lord who breaks out.”*** The Philistines even left their idols behind. David and his men took these idols and burned them (I Chronicles 14:12).

***5:22 - “Once more the Philistines came up and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim;”***

***5:23 - “so David inquired of the LORD, and he answered, ‘Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the balsam trees.’”***

***5:24 - “As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move quickly, because that will mean the LORD has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army.”***

***5:25 - “So David did as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.”***

It appears that within a very short period of time the Philistines returned to the Valley of Rephaim. After inquiring of the Lord once again, David was given a new and different battle plan. We also need to seek the Lord every opportunity we can. We can make the foolish mistake of attempting to win each battle the same way. In doing so we may think we are the victors. The new battle plan made it clear that David was totally depending upon the Lord for his victory.



#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

It is not always wise to face our enemies head-on. God showed David a new tactic of war. He was to circle behind his enemies and wait until he heard the top leaves of the Balsam trees or Mulberry trees rustling in the wind. Some have called this the Bacah tree which is found abundantly near Mecca. It's believed to have derived its name from the white pungent sap that drops like tears when a leaf is torn (cf. - Psalm 84:6).

This brought another victory to David even though it was clear that it was the army of the Lord that won this battle. These miracles are still happening today. Some of these have been reenacted in a recent movie titled "*Against all Odds – Jewish Miracles.*" The area from Gibeon to Gezer (I Chronicles 14:16) would mean that they pursued their enemies back to the border of their land.

I love the order of these chapters. It clearly shows me the plan of God for the life of this great king. It also helps me to understand that nothing happens by coincidence. Even the battles we face have a purpose. We must continually seek the face of God before advancing in the kingdom of God. The next chapter brings us into close contact with the presence of our Mighty God.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

### II Samuel 6 The Ark is Brought to Jerusalem

The Ark of the Covenant symbolized the presence of God and had been kept in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle of Moses (Psalm 80:1; 99:1). The Philistines captured the Ark during the days of Eli (I Samuel 4). The Ark had been missing for more than 75 years from its rightful place in the divine sanctuary at Shiloh.

God judged the Philistines in order for them to return the Ark. It was first sent to Beth Shemesh and then afterward taken to Kiriath Jearim. We are told that those living in the house of Abinadab took care of it (I Samuel 5:1 – 7:1).

David set up a tent in Jerusalem in order to return the Ark of the Covenant to its people. This happened during the time when both Zadok and Ahimelech were serving as high priests (II Samuel 8:17). One served at Shiloh which was later moved to Gibeon (II Chronicles 1:1–6). The other high priest served at Jerusalem.

**6:1 - “David again brought together out of Israel chosen men, thirty thousand in all.”**

**6:2 - “He and all his men set out from Baalah of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark.”**

**6:3 - “They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart”**

**6:4 - “with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it.”**

**6:5 - “David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals.”**

According to I Chronicles 13:5, David gathered these chosen men from the most southwestern boundary to the most northern boundary of the land of Israel (Numbers 4:18). He set out from where the Ark of the Covenant was located at Baalah of Judah or what was known as Kiriah Jearim (Joshua 15:60).

The name that is given to God at this point is Jehovah or LORD of the hosts or LORD Almighty. It speaks of the One who is over a large organized army. It was wonderful to name the Lord with great titles but there was still something missing. There is no indication that David sought the guidance of the Lord on how to bring back the Ark.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

It's easy to see from this portion of Scripture how God's people can quickly imitate the carnal ways of the ungodly nations that surround them. God had told Moses specifically how the Ark of the Covenant was to be carried by only those who were the Levites from the house of the Kohathites. They also had to have the Ark completely covered, and carried on their shoulders by the polls that went through the rings of the Ark (Numbers 4:1 – 20). Instead, they foolishly followed the pattern that the Philistines used (I Samuel 6).

We must never think that we can do God's work in our way. The presence of God is never to be taken lightly. This wasn't just a mistake of David. It was a mistake of all of the leadership.

God does not need to be guided by anyone. He also doesn't need to be steadied. He will never fall. No one at any time was to either look upon the Ark or touch it (Numbers 4:15,20). Only the Levites were allowed to move any of the parts of the Tabernacle (Numbers 1:51). We have no proof that Abinadab or either of his sons Uzzah or Ahio were qualified as Levites to have anything to do with transporting the Ark of the Covenant.

God is not so much impressed with our celebration as He is with our obedience and consecration to Him. It's not how high we jump or how loud we shout but how sensitive we are to the voice of God and determined to do His complete will. You would think they would have been much more careful after the mistake that king Saul had made (I Samuel 15:22).

**6:6 - "When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled."**

**6:7 - "The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God."**

**6:8 - "Then David was angry because the LORD's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah."**

One writer suggests that the oxen attempted to eat some grain from the threshing floor and by doing so they caused the cart to tilt. This threshing floor had to have been close to Jerusalem.

Uzzah attempted to reach out and steady the Ark of the Covenant. His good intentions brought about his death (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). We may find just like David did that this seemed to be a harsh treatment for such an innocent act. But we need to be reminded that we live in a generation that is quickly disregarding the things of God because there is no quick punishment for their sinfulness. The name "**Perez Uzzah**" means "**Outbreak against Uzzah.**" We are told that the day will even come when men will curse the judgment of God against them for their evil ways (Revelation 16:11).

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

**6:9** - *“David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, ‘How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?’”*

**6:10** - *“He was not willing to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.”*

**6:11** - *“The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the LORD blessed him and his entire household.”*

**6:12** - *“Now King David was told, ‘The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God.’ So David went down and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing.”*

It didn't take long for the heart of David to be quieted before the Lord. He realized that it was wrong to be angry at God for protecting His Holiness. Yet it deeply tormented him to think that the Ark of the Covenant may never be located in Jerusalem.

The spirit of David once again came to the forefront. He chose not to attempt to rush God. Instead, he had the Ark of the Covenant taken to the house of Obed-Edom who was a Levite (I Chronicles 15:18, 21, 24). Obed-Edom was both a gatekeeper and the player of the harp.

Once David was told that Obed-Edom's entire household was being blessed because they had welcomed the presence of God, David was more intent in assuring that the Ark of the Covenant be brought to Jerusalem. David made sure that he was following the instruction of the Lord this time when he brought the Levites, the captains of his army along with the elders of Israel (I Chronicles 15:1-13,25).

**6:13** - *“When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf.”*

**6:14** - *“David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might,”*

**6:15** - *“while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.”*

After the Levites had taken only six steps (the number of man) David had them sacrifice both the bull and a fattened calf. Some have suggested that they made sacrifices every six steps but there was no record of that in Scripture. They actually offered seven bullocks and seven fatlings or stall fed calves (I Chronicles 15:26).

David laid aside his royal robes in place of a linen ephod. It would definitely make it easier to dance in. The linen ephod was normally considered to be worn by the priesthood to distinguish them from the other people. David was not presuming to become a priest but rather associating himself with those who were privileged to serve the Lord in that capacity.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

It is noted that David danced before the Lord with all of his might as well as shouting as the trumpets made their joyful sound. We must remember that this was a time of history when not much is mentioned about dancing with this kind of enthusiasm before the Lord. David was never ashamed to express his feelings before God.

**6:16** - *“As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart.”*

**6:17** - *“They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD.”*

**6:18** - *“After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty.”*

**6:19** - *“Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.”*

Unfortunately, not everyone felt the same joyfulness at the return of the Ark of the Covenant. David's first wife, Michal, despised her husband for acting in a way that she felt was out of order for her husband king. Michal portrayed the same spirit as her father, king Saul. It would have been much better for her to be worshipping and praising beside her husband. Her hardened heart emanated that she saw God as a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (I Peter 2:6-8).

After bringing the Ark of the covenant and placing it in the tent, David then made sure that both the sacrifice of a burnt offering and a fellowship or peace offering was made before the Lord. The original Tabernacle of Moses was erected and left at Gibeon until Solomon built the Temple (I Chronicles 21:29; II Chronicles 1:3).

After the completion of the offerings, David made sure that the people were blessed. They also were fed unleavened bread along with dates and raisins. Some believe that they also were given meat to eat along with flagons of wine to drink before returning to their homes.

It is often asked whether dancing was used as a form of worship in either the early church or in Jewish synagogues. We do know that the Greeks introduced dancing in the post-Apostolic Church but it led to serious moral problems and was banned. It became difficult to distinguish between a Christian dance and one that honoured the pagan gods or goddesses of the day. We must always remember that whether we sing, dance, shout, clap our hands or express our worship in any other way, that it must be honouring to the Lord. It should never bring attention to ourselves but rather should be an expression of our joyful heart unto our worthy Lord.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

**6:20** - *“When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, ‘How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!’”*

**6:21** - *“David said to Michal, ‘It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel—I will celebrate before the LORD.’”*

**6:22** - *“I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor.”*

**6:23** - *“And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.”*

When David returned to his home, Michal, the daughter of Saul (note that she was not called the wife of David) came out to meet him. She called him *“the king of Israel”* instead of calling him her husband. It was her way of dissociating herself because she despised his actions.

“How sad that David’s day of happy celebration ended with this kind of insensitive and heartless reception from his own wife, but often God’s servants go quickly from the glory of the mountain to the shadow of the valley.”

Warren W. Wiersbe  
*“Be Restored”*

Victor, Cook Communications ministries  
2002, p. 44

David had not disrobed himself but rather had laid aside his royal robe to don a robe that could better express his joy to God. David uses words that appear as an attempt to humble Michal’s pride by mentioning her father’s rejection by the Lord. He also made it clear that he was chosen by God to replace her father. Therefore, and now that the Ark of the Covenant had returned, he was not about to refrain himself from rejoicing before God and his people.

If she only could’ve understood his motive, she would be able to accept that there would be more times of rejoicing before God. From that day on God made it impossible for Michal to have any children. She was barren her entire life. Many people have become barren because they despise the things of God.

#### **IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)**

##### **A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)**

###### **II Samuel 7 God's Promise to David**

**7:1 - "After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him,"**

**7:2 - "he said to Nathan the prophet, 'Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.'"**

**7:3 - "Nathan replied to the king, 'Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you.'"**

King David took up residence in the palace that was built by Hiram king of Tyre. It was during the time that David had pushed back the Philistine army. It offered a temporary rest from the enemies that continually surrounded them.

It was during this time of rest that David felt that it was time to build a proper Temple in honour of Lord. It was honourable that David wanted to do something to bring further glory to God. It was during one of the songs of Ascents that David made his desire known (Psalm 132:1-5). He was living in a beautiful palace made of cedar (II Samuel 5:11). The returning of the Ark of the Covenant was just his first step because it was still under the curtains of the tent.

Nathan the prophet spoke prematurely in an attempt to encourage David to build the Temple. Unfortunately, he had not got his directions from the Lord. His intentions were good but we must be careful when we attempt to give direction from the Lord when actually it is coming from our own decision-making.

**7:4 - "That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying:"**

**7:5 - "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?'"**

**7:6 - "I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling."**

**7:7 - "Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'"**

This is the first time that we hear of the prophet Nathan. Up to this time David had been served by the prophet Gad (I Samuel 22:5). Gad and Nathan worked together maintaining the official records and organizing the worship (I Chronicles 29:29). David became very close to Nathan and even named one of his four sons from Bathsheba after him (I Chronicles 3:1-5). The first thing that God wanted to establish in the land was not a Temple but rather a caring leader who would lovingly shepherd the people of Israel. God's plans are always right.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

It didn't take very long for Nathan to be told by God that his first response was wrong. Buildings have often been seen as God's blessing upon His people. But we must realize that God is with us every day, in every situation, at every moment. It was an admirable desire on the heart of David but God was not needing it or requiring it at this time of history.

**7:8 - "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel.'"**

**7:9 - "I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth."**

**7:10 - "And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning"**

**7:11 - "and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders (traditionally - judges) over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. 'The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you:'"**

What the people needed most was a loving and caring king not a kingdom builder. Too often we forget that the temple we must build is really the people. They are the temple of the Holy Spirit. David had developed shepherding skills which really equated with leadership skills. David had been a follower now he was called to be a ruler with a true heart after God.

The next words must've been very encouraging from the mouth of Nathan. God was reassuring David that it was He that had made David successful in the battles he had fought. Now his name was going to be ranked as one of the greatest men on earth.

"Disappointments are His appointments."

T. Pierson

But God was not just concerned about David. He was concerned about the entire nation of Israel. And they were about to be given the land of their forefathers. It's interesting that just because they fought for it didn't mean they were established in that land. Their enemies constantly fought back in order to bring instability and a fear to the people. God was about to bring that to an end under the reign of David. The house of David was about to reach levels of victory, wealth, and prestige that had never been reached prior to this time.

Don't ever lose heart when things don't go your way. It's probably a time to seek the heart of God and truly understand His plan. Be ready to admit when you're wrong. The heart of God is always more concerned about the welfare of His people than of the promotion of His Name. God is not insecure enough to need a Temple to proclaim His glory.



#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

Even the apostle Paul recognized that the greatest words he ever wrote were no comparison to the people he had won to Christ (II Corinthians 2:13). Anyone with a heart of David will understand that people take priority over palaces.

**7:12 - "When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom."**

**7:13 - "He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."**

**7:14 - "I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men."**

**7:15 - "But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you."**

**7:16 - "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me (most Hebrew manuscripts use the word 'you'); your throne will be established forever."**

**7:17 - "Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation."**

David was led by the Lord to begin thinking about the generation to come. Any good leader must always be considering who it is that they will be turning over the mantle of leadership to. Success is never meant for one generation. One of the greatest blessings of godly leadership is to see their children continue their ministry and even take it to greater levels.

The prophecy that came to David through Nathan made it very clear that his son would be raised up to build a house for God's name. It was to be a kingdom that would last as long as this earth would be in existence. The throne of David ended in the year 586 BC with the last king of Judah, Zedekiah. But the lineage of David continued on through Jesus Christ the Son of God (Matthew 1:6 – 16; Luke 3:23 – 37).

It is always in a godly father's heart to know that their children will live a life that is pleasing to the Lord. God made it clear that He would discipline David's son but never remove His love as was the case with King Saul. David's kingdom was going to far surpass the kingdom set up by King Saul.

This was now the word of the Lord not the word of Nathan. We must be very careful in accepting words we may want to be hearing over the words that we need to be hearing from God. There have been many a word of prophecy or word of knowledge that have no witness from the Spirit of God. There is a great need in our nation for the gift of discernment of spirits. We now have the benefit of God's written Word to compare what is being said as coming from God. Unfortunately, the church has often been misled because of its desire for spiritual pleasure. Many times God's Word does not taste like honey.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

###### David's Prayer

**7:18** - *"Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said:*

*"Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?"*

**7:19** - *"And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD?"*

**7:20** - *"What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign LORD."*

**7:21** - *"For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant."*

**7:22** - *"How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears."*

The Scriptures tell us that *"King David went in and sat before the LORD"* it was referring to the tent that had been set up for the Ark of the Covenant. It was the closest David could get to God's presence. Sitting before the Lord was also an act of worship.

These next few verses speak highly to me of the fact of what should happen to someone who truly spends time in the presence of God. They never approach the Lord in a disrespectful or haughty manner. Instead, they come before the Lord in an attitude of true humility. It has been noted that David used the word *"servant"* to describe himself 10 times in these next verses.

David remembered his insignificant beginnings. His father Jesse was a shepherd. David was taken from the sheepfold to be anointed as king of Israel by Samuel. David knew that he was not worthy of the incredible calling that God had set upon His life.

The answer to David's question of *"Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD?"* is both a "yes" and "no." It is no because God specifically chose the house of David to bring forth the lineage of Christ. But it is also yes because all of us can become part of God's wonderful family if we choose to accept His gracious gift of salvation.

We would all do better if we lived as David stated *"For the sake of your word and according to your will."*

I can see why David burst into this eloquent time of praise and worship. Can you imagine the privilege of sitting before the Ark of the Covenant with the glory of God shining forth? Also having the words that Nathan brought forth on behalf of God still ringing in his ears. Oh the joy! Oh the bliss! Oh the divine favour that was poured out upon this humble servant of the Lord.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

**7:23 - "And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt?"**

**7:24 - "You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God."**

David's prayer continued to glorify God not just for what He had done in his own personal life and the life of his family, but also to the entire nation of Israel. It was God who chose to adopt the Israelites as His chosen nation. God didn't need to make a name for Himself but through that decision we have watched for thousands of years His protection and provision as they walked in obedience to His Word. We have also seen Him hand out His punishment when this nation chose to be disobedient and walk with a hardened heart.

God not only brought down walls, he also destroyed many armies. One of the reasons that these nations were conquered was to prove that they were serving other gods who could not save them. David could not forget the fact that his forefathers were redeemed from Egypt. The Hebrew even brings it out more fully by stating "*whom you redeemed from Egypt, from the nations and their gods.*"

**7:25 - "And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised,"**

**7:26 - "so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, 'The LORD Almighty is God over Israel!' And the house of your servant David will be established before you."**

**7:27 - "O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer."**

David teaches us a great way to deal with disappointment in these next few verses. If God is not about to choose us to fulfill His will, then we need to accept the fact and cooperate with His choice. David was wise enough not to try to change God's mind.

Just to do what God said He was going to do would prove that He is Almighty. It was also not David or Solomon who were going to build the house to bring glory to God. It was God who was going to provide the wood, stone, precious metals and linens. It was God who was going to endow the workers with the knowledge they required to build the Temple and everything that was to be placed into it.

David's heart was just being poured out to the gracious God he served. It was time to bring his prayer to a close.

#### **IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)**

##### **A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)**

**7:28 - "O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant."**

**7:29 - "Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever."**

David was content to see the Lord's Kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. There is no doubt that God's Word can be trusted. It has never failed and it will never fail.

It meant so much to David to know that his house would be blessed by the Lord. He was not just concerned for himself but for his offspring who would lead on his behalf for generations to come. We also need to be concerned not only for the present situations that our nation is facing but also what our grandchildren and their children for generations to come will have to face. Our decisions will have an impact upon the future of those we love.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

##### II Samuel 8 David's Victories

**8:1** *“In the course of time, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Gath from the control of the Philistines.”*

The Philistines had been the constant enemies of the children of Israel. During this period of time David didn't wait for them to attack on Israelite land. Instead, he entered their land and began to overcome them. He went far and wide to find them. They were restless enemies who were about to meet their fate.

The city of *“Gath”* was essentially the Philistine stronghold of Gath along with its suburbs. This battle is also noted in I Chronicles 18:1. Gath was not just a chief city, but rather the chief city of the Philistines. It was the only city that had a king over it.

**8:2** - *“David also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths of them were put to death, and the third length was allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute.”*

**8:3** - *Moreover, David fought Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to restore his control along the Euphrates River.”*

David then headed toward the land of the Moabites and was able to defeat their army. He took their soldiers and had them lie upon the ground. Two thirds of them were killed. Some believe that this was in retaliation for them harming his mother and father because they are never heard of after he had asked for them to be cared for (I Samuel 22:3). There was little recorded evidence of what took place in this battle other than what we find in I Chronicles 11:22.

The remainder of the Moabites along with the soldiers that were allowed to live were forced to pay a regular tribute to David which more than likely ended up in his treasury. This was part of David's storehouse which he passed on to his son Solomon to build the Temple.

It's believed that the kingdom of Zobah named Hadadezer or Hadadarezer (II Samuel 10:16-19) was named after the Syrian sun-god. The Euphrates River was often seen as the eastern border that many armies marched up to and conquered its inhabitants.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

**8:4** - *“David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He hamstringed all but a hundred of the chariot horses.”*

**8:5** - *“When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand of them.”*

**8:6** - *“He put garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to him and brought tribute. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.”*

This is where David begins to build up an incredible army that is well equipped. A number of reliable manuscripts including the Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Masoretic text all mentioned that there were 1700 charioteers which would be more reasonable if there were 1000 chariots. A comparable text found in I Chronicles 18:4 also speaks of 7000 charioteers.

It's surprising that David would hamstring the majority of horses that were used to pull the chariots. He had nothing to fear because he had conquered all of the surrounding armies. Many believe he just should have killed the horses instead of putting them through such agony. It was a practice also done by Joshua to the Canaanite horses (Joshua 11:6). The king was not allowed to have a large amount of horses (Deuteronomy 17:16) so he would put his trust in God instead (Psalm 20:7).

Damascus was the capital city of Syria (Aram). After conquering the city he reinforced it and secured it with his troops. From that time on the Syrians as well were forced to pay tribute to David. It was during this time that David was able to conquer many of the armies that had fought against Israel.

**8:7** - *“David took the gold shields that belonged to the officers of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem.”*

**8:8** - *“From Tebah and Berothai, towns that belonged to Hadadezer, King David took a great quantity of bronze.”*

**8:9** - *“When Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer,”*

**8:10** - *“he sent his son Joram to King David to greet him and congratulate him on his victory in battle over Hadadezer, who had been at war with Tou. Joram brought with him articles of silver and gold and bronze.”*

It was not uncommon for the chief officers of the armies to go into the battlefield with golden shields as well as other jewelry. These costly ornaments would distinguish them as the king's choice troops as well as his bodyguards. King Solomon later had them fashioned into bucklers and shields (I Kings 10:16). The brass that was taken from their enemies was later used by Solomon in the formation of the brazen sea, pillars and other vessels for the Temple (I Chronicles 18:8).

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

Neighbouring kings would often send gifts to recognize these victories and solicit their protection as well as their alliance for the future. No wonder this became known as the golden reign of Israel.

**8:11** - *“King David dedicated these articles to the LORD, as he had done with the silver and gold from all the nations he had subdued:”*

**8:12** - *“Edom and Moab, the Ammonites and the Philistines, and Amalek. He also dedicated the plunder taken from Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.”*

**8:13** - *“And David became famous after he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.”*

**8:14** - *“He put garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.”*

It is clear from this verse the David did not personally accumulate these items of gold and silver but rather accumulated them to be used in the Temple which Solomon would build. He even set people over these to make sure that they were closely guarded for their future use (I Chronicles 28:1). The kings were warned by God not to accumulate great amounts of silver and gold (Deuteronomy 17:17).

David's name became famous because of these many wars that he won. He recorded these victories in some of his songs (Psalm 60:6-12). One of the most famous wars was when he defeated 18,000 Edomites in what was known as the Valley of Salt. It took six months to accomplish this (I Kings 11:15,16).

Not only did he conquer these capital cities he also placed in them a garrison of soldiers. They may have served as a dual purpose to also collect the tribute he demanded.

##### *David's Officials*

**8:15** - *“David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people.”*

**8:16** - *“Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder;”*

**8:17** - *“Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests; Seraiah was secretary;”*

**8:18** - *“Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites; and David's sons were royal advisers.”*

David was the one who was able to extend the borders of Israel closest to a land that was promised to them (Genesis 15:18). David served as a righteous judge over the affairs of his people as a type of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:5).

#### **IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)**

##### **A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)**

He also gathered around him the most prominent individuals of the kingdom to help serve the people. Joab served as a captain over his army. Jehoshaphat was called upon to keep accurate records of the main events that took place in Israel.

There were two high priests that served during the reign of David. They were both from the lineage of Eleazar. Zadok is believed to have served at the high place in Gibeon while Ahimelech served in the city of Zion especially after the Ark of the covenant was brought to Jerusalem.

There were a number of secretaries serving in the kingdom. Seraiah was most likely King David's private secretary. He would record more of the important decisions of the kingdom rather than its military victories.

The Jewish Targum translates the Kerethites and the Pelethites as the archers and slingers. Both of these were very vital in any war. We are not entirely sure if this is what is meant because the Kerethites were also noted as Philistines (Ezekiel 25:16; Zephaniah 2:5).

David's sons served as chief ministers in his government. Essentially they were his royal advisers. Some writers even suggest that they served as priests but that is unlikely since David was from the tribe of Judah.

So this chapter contains some of the great military exploits that David was able to accomplish. It's not unlike our lives as we become Christians. It seems that we have many battles to face when we take our proper position in Christ.



#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

##### II Samuel 9 David and Mephibosheth

**9:1** - *“David asked, ‘Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?’”*

**9:2** - *“Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, ‘Are you Ziba?’ ‘Your servant,’ he replied.”*

**9:3** - *“The king asked, ‘Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?’ Ziba answered the king, ‘There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet.’”*

**9:4** - *“‘Where is he?’” the king asked. Ziba answered, ‘He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.’”*

It is always in good keeping with kingdom living to reach out with compassion and kindness to those around. David remembered that his closest friend Jonathan had treated him well in the time of their friendship.

Now that some of the warfare had subsided, David was able to focus on other important matters of the kingdom. One of those matters was again trying to bring about greater reconciliation between his family and that of King Saul's family. The reason that David had to seek out Mephibosheth was not because he was a crippled boy. It doesn't seem that he even knew that at the time. David had promised both Saul and Jonathan that he would not destroy their families when he became king (I Samuel 20:12–17,42).

It is a picture of Christ who now that He is glorified to His heavenly throne is pouring out His spiritual blessings to those in need. The meaning of the name David is *“beloved”* which is another title given to Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:17).

It was brought to David's attention that Ziba was still serving a member of Saul's household. It is believed that Ziba was a Canaanite servant of Saul's family. That is why he remained as a servant to Mephibosheth after the death of King Saul and Jonathan (Leviticus 25:46). David was deceived by him later on in time (II Samuel 16: 1-4; 19:17,24-30).

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

**9:5** - *“So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel.”*

**9:6** - *“When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, ‘Mephibosheth!’ ‘Your servant,’ he replied.”*

**9:7** - *“‘Don't be afraid,’ David said to him, ‘or I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.’”*

**9:8** - *“Mephibosheth bowed down and said, ‘What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?’”*

It appears that Makir was a very kind individual because he also showed favour to David later on when he was fleeing from Absalom (II Samuel 17:26-29)

You must wonder the thoughts that went through the mind of Mephibosheth at this time. It would all depend upon which stories he listened to. Was he influenced by the deceitful words of his grandfather King Saul? Or was he guided by the words of his father Jonathan?

Most believe that he approached the king in apprehension. Yet it was clear to see that David's intentions were truly motivated by love and honour. It reminds me of the fact that it was God who initiated the reconciliation that we now enjoy (Romans 5:8).

The next words that came out from the mouth of David must've initially seemed like a dream come true. Not only was he going to receive all of the land that belonged to his grandfather and not just his father's land. He would also inherit what had become crown land because of David's marriage to Michal.

He would eat at the king's table every day **for the rest of his life**. No wonder he was told not to fear.

“David had eaten at Saul's table and it nearly cost him his life, but Mephibosheth would eat at David's table and his life would be protected.”

Warren W. Wiersbe  
*“Be Restored”*  
Victor books, p. 58

Mephibosheth had a contempt for himself referring to himself as a dead dog (II Samuel 16:9). Dogs were not treated with kindness and care as they are in our society.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### A. David's Achievements (5:11-9:13) (Contd.)

**9:9** - *“Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, ‘I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family.’”*

**9:10** - *“You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table.’ (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)”*

**9:11** - *“Then Ziba said to the king, ‘Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.’ So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.”*

Ziba was informed that Mephibosheth was now awarded all the land that would've belonged to Saul's family (Kish). Ziba along with his 15 sons and 20 servants were to work the land and bring the product to Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was able to ensure that his family was fed with the produce of the land along with the flocks and herds that were passed over to him.

**9:12** - *“Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth.”*

**9:13** - *“And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table, and he was crippled in both feet.”*

This incident occurred somewhere within the middle of the reign of King David. We know this because Mephibosheth was just five years old when he was dropped (II Samuel 4:4). Now it is mentioned that he now has a young son as well.

He had to face a number of years of hardship until he met the king. It is just like us once we meet our Saviour and our entire life changes. We are no longer under condemnation (Romans 8:1; John 3:18). We have been given a higher position in Christ (Romans 5:17). We are blessed with the riches of Christ (Ephesians 2:4-7; 3:8). There is not a need that we have that God cannot supply (Philippians 4:19).

David was not troubled by the fact that Mephibosheth was crippled in both of his feet. Charles Swindoll describes this event so eloquently in his book **“The Grace Awakening.”**

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### B. David's Defeats the Ammonites (10)

##### II Samuel 10

**10:1** - *“In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king.”*

**10:2** - *“David thought, ‘I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me.’ So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father. When David's men came to the land of the Ammonites,”*

**10:3** - *“the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun their lord, ‘Do you think David is honoring your father by sending men to you to express sympathy? Hasn't David sent them to you to explore the city and spy it out and overthrow it?’”*

**10:4** - *“So Hanun seized David's men, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away.”*

**10:5** - *“When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, ‘Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back.’”*

The sincerity of David's heart to bring reconciliation once again is expressed as we begin this chapter. The Ammonites were descendants of Lot (Genesis 19: 30ff). King Saul had gained his first victory over King Nahash and the Ammonite army when they attacked the city of Jabesh Gilead ( I Samuel 11). It gained King Saul a great deal of respect and appreciation from the inhabitants of that city.

David on the other hand was in exile from King Saul at this time. While King Saul was making enemies, David was building bridges for the future. King Nahash and David built a friendship through this time. That is why King David now believed that he could continue that relationship with Nahash' son, Hanum. Unfortunately Hanum had some of the same type of youthful expectations that King Saul had. It led to war. It always leads to war.

David sent a delegation of his men to express David's condolences over the death of Nahash. The term “*show kindness*” also has the meaning of making a covenant. It was essentially an attempt to bring about a peace treaty. The advisors to the new King spoke out of their insecurities and hatred. They felt that David was trying to spy out their land in order to prepare for an attack.

It's unfortunate when immaturity, fearfulness and ignorance sometimes triumphs over wisdom and common sense. A great opportunity was quickly lost. We must be very careful who we turn to for advice. King Rehoboam made the same mistake of following immature and unwise counsel (I Kings 12).

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### B. David's Defeats the Ammonites (10) (Contd.)

Hanun had the ambassadors that David had sent dealt in a humiliating manner. Cutting off someone's beard was considered as a form of indignity equal to that of flogging or of branding someone. It's most likely that they cut off one side and left the other side in it full-length. Some believe that they just cut half of the bottom part of the beard.

The second act was equally as humiliating. No one wore undergarments or trousers under their long flowing gowns. Therefore, by cutting them up to the middle of their buttocks they would be exposed in a society that frowned upon any lack of modesty.

Word quickly reached King David of this humiliating act that had taken place. He sent word to these men to stay in Jericho until their beards had grown back to normal. Jericho was chosen probably because of two reasons. First, they wouldn't have to travel very far in the land of Israel. Secondly, Jericho was not established yet so therefore there were few inhabitants except for the shepherds.

**10:6 - "When the Ammonites realized that they had become a stench in David's nostrils, they hired twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers from Beth Rehob and Zobah, as well as the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob."**

**10:7 - "On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men."**

**10:8 - "The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance to their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the open country."**

The reaction of David to the Ammonites was clearly one of scorn. There had been a declaration of war made so David prepared his troops for the battle ahead. The Ammonites gathered 33,000 soldiers from the Syrians (Arameans) and those dwelling in Mesopotamia to fight with them. David initiated the attack because he realized that he would have to fight either on his land or on theirs. The retaliation was so quick that the Ammonites were not even able to get past the entrance of their city gate of Medeba ( I Chronicles 19:7). Their hired army stayed in the region close to the city.

**10:9 - "Joab saw that there were battle lines in front of him and behind him; so he selected some of the best troops in Israel and deployed them against the Arameans."**

**10:10 - "He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother and deployed them against the Ammonites."**

**10:11 - "Joab said, 'If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you are to come to my rescue; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come to rescue you.'"**

**10:12 - "Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The LORD will do what is good in his sight."**

#### **IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)**

##### **B. David's Defeats the Ammonites (10) (Contd.)**

The strategies of war were carefully thought out before Joab gave the command for his men to fight. It's one thing to fight a war while it's another thing to fight a war with wisdom. It is ancient wisdom that tells us to choose our battles and carefully prepare for them. Too often we rush into a situation and believe that we will win because we are innocent.

Joab realized that he needed to divide his army to win the battle. He sent his brother Abishai to fight the Southern armies while he attacked the northern troops.

**10:13 - *"Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him."***

**10:14 - *"When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were fleeing, they fled before Abishai and went inside the city. So Joab returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem."***

Joab chose some of the most skilful warriors to do a frontal attack against the Arameans or Syrians. Joab's victory was so great that he caused the southern army to retreat to Rabbah, the fortified capital city of the Ammonites.

Joab realized that the weather would not permit him to continue this war against the fortified city. So he decided to leave and return home until a more suitable time permitted (II Samuel 11:1). Solomon later wrote about the importance of considering time and making sure that you carefully consider the season you are in (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

**10:15 - *"After the Arameans saw that they had been routed by Israel, they regrouped."***

**10:16 - *"Hadadezer had Arameans brought from beyond the River; they went to Helam, with Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them."***

**10:17 - *"When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan and went to Helam. The Arameans formed their battle lines to meet David and fought against him."***

**10:18 - *"But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there."***

**10:19 - *"When all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore."***

#### **IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)**

##### **B. David's Defeats the Ammonites (10) (Contd.)**

The Arameans led by their powerful king Hadadezer were not so quick to give up even though they had been defeated in the first war. They decided to regrouped their forces for a second battle. They knew that David would stand against them for supporting the Ammonites. David quickly annihilated their army killing 700 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers.

Under the leadership of David Israelite the empire grew from the Nile River of Egypt to the Euphrates River. He also conquered Edom, Moab, and Ammon as well as the Arameans.

Wouldn't it be nice to finish the reign of David at this point? It would be so nice if we didn't have to include the next chapter in his life. But God was not going to just accentuate the good things of King David's reign. We should be thankful that everything is being included because there are times in our lives when we fail to serve God as we should as well. It's encouraging to know that God doesn't give up on us even during our times of weakness and failures.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### C. David Sins (11-12)

##### II Samuel 11 David and Bathsheba

**11:1** - *“In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.”*

**11:2** - *“One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful,”*

**11:3** - *“and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, ‘Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?’”*

##### 1. The Conceiving (11:1-3)

There were just a few times of the year when it was appropriate for armies to set out to fight their battles. The winter would often make it quite difficult for both fighting and transportation because of the cold and dampness and the summer was too hot. The end of the year (or the month of Adar or February) was used to make final preparations. Joab set out in the spring of the year (the month of Nisan or March) to finish off the earlier battle. It didn't take long for them to complete what they set out to do in destroying the Ammonites and taking siege of the city of Rabbah.

David chose to stay at home because this was not too difficult a war to win. Unfortunately this opened up an opportunity for the enemy to tempt David into sinning. It was common for the kings to take a nap in the heat of the day after eating dinner. After the nap, King David decided to refresh himself with the cool air of the evening by walking on the flattened roof of his palace. David not only glanced over to see Bathsheba bathing herself but he began to lust after her.

David had fought many battles but this was one he was not going to win. He had not made a covenant with his eyes like Job had (Job 31:1). The words of Solomon years later may have reflected upon this unfortunate event in the life of his father (Proverbs 6:25). Jesus also gave his words of warning years later (Matthew 5:28). It is a battle that still rages today.

Bathsheba's father was also known as Ammiel ( I Chronicles 3:5). The two words are simply reversed in their meaning. The name means *“The people of my God or the God of my people.”* This name expressed the covenant - *“I will be your God; We will be Your people.”*

David should have stopped pursuing Bathsheba after he was told that she was married to Uriah. But instead, he used it as an opportunity because he knew Uriah was fighting his war.



#### **IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)**

##### **C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)**

**11:4** - *“Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home.”*

##### **2. The Committing (11:4)**

The evidence does not seem to indicate that she was forced to go to the king. In fact, it appears that she was the one who spread the net and caught her prey. No Jewish citizen was forced to submit to a king who was breaking God’s law. Both of them knew that their actions were punishable by death and yet they continued ( Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22 – 24).

There is no doubt that both of them entered into the sin knowing full well that they were making a serious lapse in their judgment. She was taking a high risk realizing that she was coming to the end of her monthly and that she was more likely to become pregnant.

**11:5** - *“The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, ‘I am pregnant.’”*

**11:6** - *“So David sent this word to Joab: ‘Send me Uriah the Hittite.’ And Joab sent him to David.”*

**11:7** - *“When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going.”*

**11:8** - *“Then David said to Uriah, ‘Go down to your house and wash your feet.’ So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him.”*

**11:9** - *“But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.”*

##### **3. The Covering (11:5-27)**

These are the only words we find recorded of Bathsheba in this entire story, but they are the words of David did not want to hear. She let him know that she was bearing his child. The next step was now in the hands of David. He added insult to injury as it is said.

David devised a plan to have Uriah return home from the battlefield. Upon his arrival, David briefly questioned him about how the war was going against the Ammonites. It was just a cover up for what David was hoping to take place.

David then sent Uriah to his home to be with his wife. It would be customary for him to wash himself up after travelling on the dusty roads. It’s believed that the gift of the king sent would’ve included a lavish evening meal including wine. David had hoped that Uriah would use the opportunity to have intercourse with his wife and thereby cover up the sin.

#### **IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)**

##### **C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)**

David had not prepared himself for what took place next. He didn't realize that Uriah was a more honourable man than he was at this particular time and in this particular situation. God was not about to allow David to "protect" the honour of Bathsheba or allow him to cover up his own sin. God was not about to be excluded because nothing escapes His sight (Psalm 44:21; Isaiah 29:15; Luke 12:2; Hebrews 4:13).

Uriah chose not even to enter into his home because he knew full well that he would not be able to withstand the temptation to sleep with his wife. In fact, Uriah would not even leave the entrance to King David's palace.

**11:10 - "When David was told, 'Uriah did not go home,' he asked him, 'Haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?'"**

**11:11 - "Uriah said to David, 'The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!'"**

**11:12 - "Then David said to him, 'Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back.' So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next."**

**11:13 - "At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home."**

David quickly thought of another scheme to get Uriah to go home. But Uriah responded by gently rebuking the king for even suggesting that he should enjoy some personal pleasure. Uriah reminded the king that the Ark of the covenant was being kept in a tent so how could he go to the luxuries of his home. His fellow soldiers were also sleeping on open fields.

David tried one last time to get Uriah to go home. This time he invited him for a final meal in which he made sure that he got drunk. It was much more likely that Uriah would then give into his temptation to lie with his wife. But for the third and final time David's deceptive ways were thwarted.

**11:14 - "In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah."**

**11:15 - "In it he wrote, 'Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die.'"**

**11:16 - "So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were."**

**11:17 - "When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died."**

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)

David finally thought that if he could not cover up the fact that a child had been conceived that he was going to attempt to bring about the death of this innocent man and gallant soldier. He knew that he could trust Uriah so he sent a letter with him containing instructions to Joab to make sure that he got killed in a heated battle. Joab was instructed to send Uriah to the front lines and then withdraw from him so that he was sure to be killed.

**11:18** - *“Joab sent David a full account of the battle.”*

**11:19** - *“He instructed the messenger: ‘When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle,’”*

**11:20** - *“the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, ‘Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall?’”*

**11:21** - *“Who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall? If he asks you this, then say to him, ‘Also, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.’ ”*

Joab could clearly see that David was up to something. He cooperated because he knew as well that he had already killed Abner and that he may need a favour in the future. He sent back a report to the king of the ensuing battle.

Joab fabricated his own little story to make it sound like David may be upset with him for placing his men in danger. He then added the thought that he may be in trouble because Gideon's wicked son was killed from the millstone that was thrown over a wall in a previous battle (Judges 9:52). Joab made sure though that he finished the story by stating that Uriah had got killed. He knew that it would pacify the king's wrath.

**11:22** - *“The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say.”*

**11:23** - *“The messenger said to David, ‘The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate.’”*

**11:24** - *“Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.”*

Joab sent messengers to David in Jerusalem which was about 64 miles away with an explanation of what happened in the battle. It was common for armies that were surrounding cities to pretend that they were being beaten so that their enemies would leave the protection of their walled cities. Yet it seldom worked because the army of the city would keep its archers protected behind the city wall. If their army felt that they were once again being pushed back, they would still have the protection of their archers. In fact, it would often become a trap for the advancing army which was mentioned in the death of Uriah.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)

**11:25** - *“David told the messenger, ‘Say this to Joab: Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it. Say this to encourage Joab.’”*

**11:26** - *“When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him.”*

**11:27** - *“After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.”*

David made it appear that he was not upset with Joab and that he simply wanted him to gain victory over the Ammonites no matter what the cost.

As soon as Bathsheba heard that her husband had been killed in battle, she took the normal seven days to mourn his death (Genesis 50:10; I Samuel 31:13). David probably didn't waste much time in bringing her to his home and making her his eighth wife. He wanted to avoid as much suspicion as possible about whose child she was bearing. Yet she was already believed to be in her third month of pregnancy.

Some have suggested that David was not committing adultery because soldiers would write their wives a bill of divorcement before going to battle. In this way, if they were killed in battle their wives would be free to remarry. They would also not be committing adultery by having intercourse during the time that their husband was at war. But there was no reason to incite this custom as a protection for King David's actions. It is clear that God was not pleased. That next chapter clearly shows the consequence for their actions.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)

### II Samuel 12 Nathan Rebukes David

We may sometimes think that God overlooks our sinful actions because He doesn't deal with them immediately. This story should show us that we can be sure that our sins will be exposed in God's timing (Numbers 32:23). There is always a deep consequence to pay for these kinds of actions (Isaiah 59:2).

One of the greatest reasons why there is so much iniquity in the nations of the world is because we do not deal with sinful actions immediately. Life would be much different on this planet if nothing was allowed to be unpunished at the time that it is wrongly committed. Some court cases take several years and then have even got thrown out of the courts because of the long delay. This simply encourages further injustice to take place. No one wants to fall into the hands of an angry God (Hebrews 10:31). He will always judge right (Genesis 18:25).

**12:1 - *"The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, 'There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor.'"***

**12:2 - *"The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle,"***

**12:3 - *"but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him."***

Nathan was sent to David by the Lord in order to expose the sin that had taken place months earlier. He used a parable as a form of a word picture to grab the attention of King David. He made it appear that he had been involved in a similar case that required a decision as one of the main prophets in this area.

The parable was actually highlighting David and Uriah who were both living in Jerusalem. The rich man of course was King David who was abundant with sheep and cattle symbolic of his many wives and children. Uriah on the other hand only had "***one little ewe lamb***" which was his wife Bathsheba. We are not sure if they had any children. It may have been added to give a greater emphasis to the parable. Some believe that Uriah had been previously married and had children with a wife who had died. It was also believed he then remarried Bathsheba who was younger.

The next part was also added to give a deep call to David's emotions. Nathan likened the little ewe lamb to one that was a family pet. There were such types of family pets so the story could be believed. One could easily see how the entire family would become very attached to this little lamb. It became like one of the other children. Anyone who has a family pet can easily understand the impact this would have upon King David as he was hearing the story.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)

**12:4 - "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."**

A number of scholars relate the traveller to being Satan. He comes temporarily into our lives just to create opportunities for us to sin. In this case, David was overtaken by the lust that arose in his heart. He had other wives that could have satisfied his sexual desires. The big problem is that there is a great deal of difference between lust and sexual desire.

David chose to lust after Bathsheba. She became as it was a sacrifice that was presented to Satan (the traveller) to fulfill his desires as well. The Talmud warns us about the traveller that comes into our lives. He first of all passes by and just leaves his thoughts and impressions with us. The next time he comes he stays for a while. Eventually if we don't deal with him, he will become the Master of our home and our lives.

**12:5 - "David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, 'As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!'"**

**12:6 - "He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."**

David became extremely righteous all of a sudden when he thought he was dealing with someone else's sin. His judgment was that the man should die. This was not in accordance with the law of Moses. It was only required that he restore fourfold to the one he had stolen from (Exodus 22:11). David stipulated the fourfold payment but he also demanded his death.

**12:7 - "Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.'"**

**12:8 - "I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more."**

**12:9 - "Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites."**

**12:10 - "Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own."**

The phrase "**You are the man!**" has been the topic of many a sermon. I've often wondered what the tone was when the prophet Nathan delivered that message. Was his voice broken and his heart contrite or was it stern? We do know that God made it very clear that He was displeased with the actions of king David.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)

There was a high price to pay for this fourfold debt? He lost his four sons by untimely deaths. This son of Bathsheba, on whom David had set his heart, was slain by the Lord; Amnon, was murdered by his brother Absalom; Absalom was slain under the oak tree by Joab; and Adonijah was slain by the order of his brother Solomon, even at the altar of the Lord! The sword and calamity did not depart from his house, from the murder of wretched Amnon by his brother to the slaughter of the sons of Zedekiah before their father's eyes by the king of Babylon

**12:11 - *"This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.'"***

**12:12 - *"You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel."***

Some of the greatest attacks against David came from within his own family. His daughter was dishonoured by her own brother, and his wives were debased publicly by his own son! The saying "*what goes around comes around*" unfortunately took place in David's family. David was driven from Jerusalem by his own son Absalom when he attempted to take over the throne as the king of Israel (II Samuel 15: -5). His act of adultery was also repaid by his own son Absalom who had sexual intercourse "*with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.*" ( II Samuel 16:22).

**12:13 - *"Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.' Nathan replied, 'The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.'"***

**12:14 - *"But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."***

**12:15 - *"After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill."***

Once again we see the true heart of David coming out. He did not try to make excuses for his sinful action. Instead, he openly admitted that he had "*sinned against the LORD.*" He had the same nature as the tax collector who confessed to Jesus (Luke 18:13).

Some would suggest that God has His favourites. I rather believe that God was One who stood by His Word (II Samuel 7:11,12). It may be difficult to understand, but God chooses to side with grace over law. He is a God of forgiveness.

That does not mean that we will not be punished for our sins. The transgression of David against God and His Word had allowed those who opposed God to make a mockery. As soon as Nathan left David's presence the Lord brought a terminal illness to the child. Both mercy and justice met to bring forth the proper sentence. Notice that God identified her as "*Uriah's wife.*"

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)

**12:16** - *“David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground.”*

**12:17** - *“The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.”*

**12:18** - *“On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, ‘While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate.’”*

**12:19** - *“David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. ‘Is the child dead?’ he asked. ‘Yes,’ they replied, ‘he is dead.’”*

The next few days were a time when David agonized about what he could see was clearly going to happen. He did not go into the tent to lay before the Ark of the Covenant. Instead he went to his home and laid on the ground. He chose not even to lay on his couch or his bed.

The elders of Israel who were the closest to him became concerned for his welfare. They could see he hadn't eaten properly and that he was punishing himself for his past actions. Day after day passed which brought more concern to those who loved David.

It took seven days for the child to die. No one wanted to be the bearer of the bad news. They could easily see how deep his grief was when this son of his was very sick and dying. They weren't sure how he would take the news of his death. They were most likely afraid that he may lose his will to live.

He noticed them talking among themselves and it became clear to him that his son had died. He needed a clear answer and so he asked a clear question *‘Is the child dead?’* Some find it difficult to accept that he didn't go into a deep depression. The fact is that he knew that God would be true to His word. The child had died in his place. The sin had been atoned for. It was time to go on in life.

**12:20** - *“Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.”*

**12:21** - *“His servants asked him, ‘Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!’”*

**12:22** - *“He answered, ‘While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.’”*

**12:23** - *“But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.”*



## IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

### C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)

David did not take long to rise to his feet from the ground he was laying upon, wash himself, apply lotions and change his clothes. He then went in before the Lord in the tent he had set up. David took on the same heart as Jeremiah encouraged the people to.

*“Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?”*

*40. Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.*

*41. Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven . . .”*

*Lamentations 3:39 – 41*

We find the same example set out in Job 2:10. After his time of worship, David returned to his home and broke his fast. His actions appeared so abrupt and so different that even his servants questioned him. David doesn't seem to be offended or challenged by their questions. He wasn't foolish enough to appear as a great and mighty King before his humble servants. Instead he took on a humble attitude himself and simply answered their logical question.

David realized that he had an opportunity as long as the child was alive. God made His decision and David was not about to challenge Him. God's will needs to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

David realized that his days of fasting had come to an end. He had attempted to change the mind of God but was unsuccessful in doing it. No further fasting or praying was going to bring this baby back to life. David knew that the day would come when he would also die. At that time they would be reunited in heaven. What a revelation for his time period!

**12:24 - *‘Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and lay with her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him;***

**12:25 - *and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.*”**

This is the first time that Bathsheba is called David's wife. There is no doubt that she and David had been greatly distressed on account of the sin they had committed and had been exposed by Nathan. David set her mind at ease that God had pardoned their sinful action. A very significant way of proving this was the fact that God was going to allow them to have a child together. They decided to call him **“Solomon”** which means **“peaceable.”**

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)

God sent word through the prophet Nathan to name him “*Jedidiah*” means “*loved by the LORD.*” Some may wonder why his name was never changed to Jedidiah. The reason for this was because of the fact that prior to the birth of this child God said that his name would be called Solomon ( I Chronicles 22:9). It appears that God gave the second name as a way of bringing assurance that he would be loved by God. They could sing with the hymn writer . . .

*Blessed assurance, Jesus ( Jehovah) is mine  
Oh what a foretaste of glory divine  
Heirs of salvation, purchase of God  
Born of his spirit, washed in his blood*

Fanny J. Crosby

It’s wonderful to know that once God forgives us of our past sins that He also points us toward a future filled with hope, love and blessed peace. There was almost and uninterrupted time period of peace during Solomon’s reign.

**12:26 - “*Meanwhile Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal citadel.*”**

**12:27 - *Joab then sent messengers to David, saying, ‘I have fought against Rabbah and taken its water supply.’”***

**12:28 - “*Now muster the rest of the troops and besiege the city and capture it. Otherwise I will take the city, and it will be named after me.*”**

**12:29 - “*So David mustered the entire army and went to Rabbah, and attacked and captured it.*”**

The city of “*Rabbah*” was overtaken in two steps. It is believed to have been about two years to complete the entire process. The city actually was divided by the banks of the river. The southern part of the city was taken by Joab (I Chronicles 20:1). The northern part of the city was where the castle and the ancient acropolis were situated. The acropolis and castle would’ve been heavily fortified and therefore the most difficult to overcome.

This is the part that is mentioned in I Samuel 12:28-29 that David fought against and conquered. David didn’t take any chances. He used his entire army to overcome Rabbah.

Joab was able to cut off the city’s water supply which would weaken the inhabitants considerably. He could have taken the northern part of the city as well but instead he left the honour to David. In this way David would be able to rename it since he had conquered it.

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### C. David Sins (11-12) (Contd.)

**12:30** - *“He took the crown from the head of their king —its weight was a talent of gold, and it was set with precious stones—and it was placed on David's head. He took a great quantity of plunder from the city”*

**12:31** *“and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made them work at brickmaking. He did this to all the Ammonite towns. Then David and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.”*

The word that he chose to describe their **“king”** is also the name of the national idol of the Ammonites. He was called **“Malcham”** (see Zephaniah 1:5). The golden crown that was taken in battle had a value of between 75 to 125 pounds of gold. It's unlikely that it weighed around 100 pounds but rather that it would be valued to that much gold. And precious stones that were embedded into the crown would increase its value greatly. Josephus believed that this precious stone was sardonyx. There was also much plunder taken from the city. This would've been taken to David's treasury.

David treated the princes of Ammon in a severe manner. The NIV says that he had consigned them to labour with saws, iron picks and axes and made them work at brick making. Other versions talk of them being **“put under”** these tools. It seems to indicate that they died an excruciating death being cut apart and their flesh torn to pieces. He also made them pass through the furnaces that were used to produce bricks. This is believed to be in retaliation for passing their children through the fire as a sacrifice to Molech (Psalm 21:9). The Ammonites were known to be very violent themselves ( I Samuel 11:2; Amos 1:13).

Solomon foolishly allowed the heathen Ammonite god called Molech to be added to his gods in Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:5).

David didn't just conquer the city of Rabbah. He also went on to overcome the rest of the Ammonite towns as well. He returned to Jerusalem once he completed his task.

## IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

### II Samuel 13

#### D. Amnon and Tamar (13:1-22)

**13:1** - *“In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David.”*

**13:2** - *“Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.”*

**13:3** - *“Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man.”*

**13:4** - *“He asked Amnon, ‘Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?’ Amnon said to him, ‘I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.’”*

The majority of what is covered from this chapter to the end of chapter 23 is not included in the book of Chronicles. Due to the fact that David had a number of wives, he had a number of children who actually were stepchildren to each other. This was the case between Amnon and Tamar.

Amnon allowed himself to have a lustful desire after his beautiful stepsister Tamar. She was a virgin and it seems clear that she desired to keep herself pure until she married the man of her dreams. Amnon's intent was to make a harlot out of her.

There will always be people around us such as Amnon's cousin Jonadab who will come alongside to devise a way for those who choose to sin if they allow it. It is so true that *“birds of a feather, flock together.”* He noticed that Amnon was not acting in a normal manner. Their shrewd spirits were in unity with each other.

Amnon was asked why he was so down heartened. After all he was the king's eldest son. He was blessed to be able to eat at the king's table every day as well as be dressed with the finest clothing.

He told Jonadab that he was in love with Absalom's sister. Notice he didn't say his sister. She was his half-sister. It was probably a way of him trying to lessen the sin of his lustful desire for her. He knew that the Mosaic law prohibited him from doing what he was planning to do (Leviticus 18:9; 20:17).

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### D. Amnon and Tamar (13:1-22) (Contd.)

**13:5 - "***Go to bed and pretend to be ill,' Jonadab said. 'When your father comes to see you, say to him, I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.'* "

**13:6 - "***So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand.'*"

Jonadab encouraged Amnon to pretend to be sick. Notice at this time he was told to ask that his sister Tamar (not Absalom's sister) prepare food in his sight. He was making it appear that his stomach couldn't handle food that was prepared and brought to his chamber from those who normally cooked it. He was a good actor because he convinced King David that he would falter away without his request being met.

**13:7 - "***David sent word to Tamar at the palace: 'Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him.'*"

**13:8 - "***So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it.*"

**13:9 - "***Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat. 'Send everyone out of here,' Amnon said. So everyone left him.*"

David was deceived to the point that he sent for his daughter Tamar to come in from the palace. Her orders were to go to the house of her brother and make some food for him. The word used to describe cake or bread was believed by some to be in the shape of a heart.

Amnon refused to eat what she had prepared as long as others (most likely the other servants) were still in the room. He made everyone leave so that he could perform his insidious act.

**13:10 - "***Then Amnon said to Tamar, 'Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand.' And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom.*"

**13:11 - "***But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, 'Come to bed with me, my sister.'*"

**13:12 - "***Don't, my brother!' she said to him. 'Don't force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing.'*"

**13:13 - "***What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you.'*"

#### IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)

##### D. Amnon and Tamar (13:1-22) (Contd.)

Amnon then went into his bedroom which was located in the inner chamber. In this way he secluded himself from anyone who could witness his evil act. Tamar was innocent and had no suspicion of what her brother had planned to do.

The moment came when he overpowered her and forced her into this incestuous act. She tried to have him consider what his actions would lead to. This action was definitely not allowed in Israel.

Tamar also realized that she would be disgraced in Israel. He would never be allowed to serve on the throne of Israel once his evil act was exposed. Tamar even tried to cause him to refrain by having him think that king David would allow them to marry since they were born to different mothers. It would be like Abraham and Sarah.

**13:14 - *“But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.”***

**13:15 - *“Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, ‘Get up and get out!’”***

**13:16 - *“‘No!’ she said to him. ‘Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me.’ But he refused to listen to her.”***

**13:17 - *“He called his personal servant and said, ‘Get this woman out of here and bolt the door after her.’”***

**13:18 - *“So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing a richly ornamented robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore.”***

**13:19 - *“Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornamented robe she was wearing. She put her hand on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went.”***

We don't know whether she shouted out in order to get help or whether she tried to conceal and protect the guilt of her brother. She would not be held responsible under the law because he overpowered her (Deuteronomy 22:25). Amnon's actions were not only brutal but also inexcusable.

It is believed that feelings of dread and shame and remorse quickly entered his mind and he began to fear being exposed and subsequently punished. She may have also had some very sharp words after he raped her. The hatred that grew toward her was even more intensified than the lust that he earlier had allowed himself to be overcome by. He forced her out of his inner chamber and even had the door bolted so she could not return.

Tamar displayed her mourning by placing ashes on her head and tearing the garment she was wearing. This robe would indicate that she was a virgin so it was a clear statement of what had happened. Her loud crying would also bring attention to her as she left brokenhearted.

#### **IV. THE REIGN OF DAVID - II Samuel 5:11-13:22 (Contd.)**

##### **D. Amnon and Tamar (13:1-22) (Contd.)**

**13:20** - *“Her brother Absalom said to her, ‘Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet now, my sister; he is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart.’ And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman.”*

**13:21** - *“When King David heard all this, he was furious.”*

**13:22** - *“Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.”*

She made her way to Absalom (her full brother) knowing that he would comfort and care for her. In Eastern countries, where polygamy prevails, the girls are considered to be under the special care and protection of their uterine brother, who is the guardian of their interests and their honor, even more than their father himself (Genesis 34:6-25).

Absalom counselled her not to make it public knowledge but rather stay with him in seclusion. He began to devise a way that he could get revenge. In doing so he would not only remove Amnon as the rightful inheritor of the throne but also avenge the disgrace of Tamar. David became equally angry but nothing is mentioned about what he did or didn't do. This sinful action was kept among them in order to not bring dishonour to the entire family.

#### **V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8**

##### **A. Absalom Kills Amnon (13:23-38)**

**13:23** - *“Two years later, when Absalom's sheepshearers were at Baal Hazor near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king's sons to come there.”*

**13:24** - *“Absalom went to the king and said, ‘Your servant has had shearers come. Will the king and his officials please join me?’”*

**13:25** - *“‘No, my son,’ the king replied. ‘All of us should not go; we would only be a burden to you.’ Although Absalom urged him, he still refused to go, but gave him his blessing.”*

**13:26** - *“Then Absalom said, ‘If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us.’ The king asked him, ‘Why should he go with you?’”*

**13:27** - *“But Absalom urged him, so he sent with him Amnon and the rest of the king's sons.”*

Two years passed by before the day of reckoning takes place. Absalom owned a herd of sheep. Sheep were often sheared more than once in a year. But the first shearing brought forth the best wool. It was a festive time when many were invited to join in the celebration.

It is believed that Baal Hazor was about 8 miles northeast of Jerusalem on the way to Jericho so it could easily be reached in one day of travel. King David chose not to go even though Absalom tried to convince him. Instead he allowed Absalom to invite the rest of his brothers.

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### A. Absalom Kills Amnon (13:23-38) (Contd.)

**13:28** - *“Absalom ordered his men, ‘Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, Strike Amnon down, then kill him. Don't be afraid. Have not I given you this order? Be strong and brave.’”*

**13:29** - *“So Absalom's men did to Amnon what Absalom had ordered. Then all the king's sons got up, mounted their mules and fled.”*

**13:30** - *“While they were on their way, the report came to David: ‘Absalom has struck down all the king's sons; not one of them is left.’”*

Absalom ordered his men to kill Amnon after he had become intoxicated from drinking wine during the festive time. It seemed to take some convincing but he was able to get his men to strike Amnon to death.

The rest of Absalom's brothers escaped thinking that their lives may also be in jeopardy. As is not uncommon during these times, the report about what truly happened became corrupted. David was told that all of his sons had been killed.

**13:31** - *“The king stood up, tore his clothes and lay down on the ground; and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn.”*

**13:32** - *“But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, ‘My lord should not think that they killed all the princes; only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom's expressed intention ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar.’”*

**13:33** - *“My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead.”*

King David showed his deep remorse by not only tearing his clothes but also laying on the ground. Jonadab quickly set the record straight that only Amnon had been slain. He added that this is what Absalom had been planning to do ever since Amnon had raped Tamar.

**13:34** - *“Meanwhile, Absalom had fled. Now the man standing watch looked up and saw many people on the road west of him, coming down the side of the hill. The watchman went and told the king, ‘I see men in the direction of Horonaim, on the side of the hill.’”*

**13:35** - *“Jonadab said to the king, ‘See, the king's sons are here; it has happened just as your servant said.’”*

**13:36** - *“As he finished speaking, the king's sons came in, wailing loudly. The king, too, and all his servants wept very bitterly.”*

Absalom knew that this act of murder was punishable by death (Numbers 35:21). He could not run to a city of refuge for safety because his crime was premeditated. Absalom had promised his men protection and yet he could not even protect himself. That is truly the state of a sinful man.



## **V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)**

### **A. Absalom Kills Amnon (13:23-38) (Contd.)**

The watchman most likely situated at the tower noticed that there were a number of people coming from the direction that would lead to Absalom's home. Jonadab concluded that it had to be the king's sons. He of course, tried to take credit for making the right conclusion.

The king's sons came and went before their father who also joined in because of the loss of his eldest son. It was unfortunate that the sword had now found its way into David's own home and children.

**13:37** - *“Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. But King David mourned for his son every day.”*

**13:38** - *“After Absalom fled and went to Geshur, he stayed there three years.”*

**13:39** - *“And the spirit of the king longed to go to Absalom, for he was consoled concerning Amnon's death.”*

Absalom fled from Israeli territory to join his grandfather from his mother's side in Geshur (II Samuel 3:3). The nature of his grandfather was beginning to show forth in Absalom's life.

David on the other hand mourned the death of Amnon every day. Absalom chose to stay in Geshur for three years. As time went on though, David also realized the he was missing the opportunity to see his son Absalom. Truly *“ blood runs thicker than water.”*

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### B. Support for Absalom Grows (14)

**14:1** - *“Joab son of Zeruiah knew that the king's heart longed for Absalom.”*

**14:2** - *“So Joab sent someone to Tekoa and had a wise woman brought from there. He said to her, ‘Pretend you are in mourning. Dress in mourning clothes, and don't use any cosmetic lotions. Act like a woman who has spent many days grieving for the dead.’”*

**14:3** - *“Then go to the king and speak these words to him.’ And Joab put the words in her mouth.”*

Joab had served the King for so long that he recognized the yearning that was in David's heart for the return of the exiled son. He also recognized that it was not in the best interest of the nation not to have a crowned prince in case anything happened to David. After all the king was now around 60 years of age.

David was actually caught in a predicament because he had to uphold the law and yet he loved his son. Absalom was guilty of plotting and carrying out the murder of his half brother Amnon. Joab was able to work out a way of having Absalom return from living in exile.

Joab fabricated a story and had a wise woman who could act the part to ask for a time to speak to King David. She came dressed as a woman in mourning with the story that was similar to that of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:8 – 16).

**14:4** - *“When the woman from Tekoa went to the king, she fell with her face to the ground to pay him honor, and she said, ‘Help me, O king!’*

**14:5** - *“The king asked her, ‘What is troubling you?’ She said, ‘I am indeed a widow; my husband is dead.’”*

**14:6** - *“I your servant had two sons. They got into a fight with each other in the field, and no one was there to separate them. One struck the other and killed him.”*

**14:7** - *“Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant; they say, ‘Hand over the one who struck his brother down, so that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed; then we will get rid of the heir as well.’ They would put out the only burning coal I have left, leaving my husband neither name nor descendant on the face of the earth.”*

It was typical in that day, the same as it is today, for anyone to bow before the king or even prostrate themselves as a sign of honour. She then pleaded with the King to not just hear her story but do something about it.

Her fabricated story began by explaining that she was a widow and therefore without any assistance if she had no sons to help her. Her sons got into an argument and one killed the other. The rest of her clan have come to a verdict that the guilty son should also be killed. This would leave her with no one to take care for her and no one to pass on her husband's inheritance to. She requested a pardon for her son from King David.

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### B. Support for Absalom Grows (14) (Contd.)

**14:8** - *"The king said to the woman, 'Go home, and I will issue an order in your behalf.'"*

**14:9** - *"But the woman from Tekoa said to him, 'My lord the king, let the blame rest on me and on my father's family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt.'"*

**14:10** - *"The king replied, 'If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me, and he will not bother you again.'"*

**14:11** - *"She said, 'Then let the king invoke the LORD his God to prevent the avenger of blood from adding to the destruction, so that my son will not be destroyed.' 'As surely as the LORD lives,' he said, 'not one hair of your son's head will fall to the ground.'"*

It would appear that the king's response should be enough, but not for this woman. She made it appear that she did not want any accusations levelled at the king because of the goodness of his decision toward her. David once again made it clear that no one was to bother her because of his pardon for her son. She then went to the highest level of a pardon by having the king take an oath in the Lord's name. This type of oath can never be revoked.

**14:12** - *"Then the woman said, 'Let your servant speak a word to my lord the king.' 'Speak,' he replied."*

**14:13** - *"The woman said, 'Why then have you devised a thing like this against the people of God? When the king says this, does he not convict himself, for the king has not brought back his banished son?'"*

**14:14** - *"Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But God does not take away life; instead, he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him."*

**14:15** - *"And now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought, 'I will speak to the king; perhaps he will do what his servant asks.'"*

**14:16** - *"Perhaps the king will agree to deliver his servant from the hand of the man who is trying to cut off both me and my son from the inheritance God gave us."*

**14:17** - *"And now your servant says, 'May the word of my lord the king bring me rest, for my lord the king is like an angel of God in discerning good and evil. May the LORD your God be with you.'"*

The king had actually worked himself into a corner that he could not get out of. If he was willing to protect her fabricated story of her guilty son whom he did not know then why would he do not protect his own son whom he loved? The crown prince was being left in exile. She thought slaying the murderer of Amnon could not bring him back to life so why not give Absalom another chance? Life is too short to keep these record of wrongs.

Here stood David as an example of the mercy and forgiveness of God. Would it be right for him to banish his son when he himself had been forgiven of both murder and adultery.

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### B. Support for Absalom Grows (14) (Contd.)

**14:18** - *“Then the king said to the woman, ‘Do not keep from me the answer to what I am going to ask you.’ ‘Let my lord the king speak,’ the woman said.”*

**14:19** - *“The king asked, ‘Isn't the hand of Joab with you in all this?’ The woman answered, ‘As surely as you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything my lord the king says. Yes, it was your servant Joab who instructed me to do this and who put all these words into the mouth of your servant.’”*

**14:20** - *“Your servant Joab did this to change the present situation. My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God—he knows everything that happens in the land.”*

David began to realize that this woman had been sent by someone else to him in order to bring Absalom back to the kingdom. The truth finally came out that this was instigated by Joab.

Joab knew quite a bit of the inner workings of King David. He was used to bring about the death of Uriah and to try and hide David's sin of adultery. He also knew that David's heart was breaking every day because he missed his son Absalom.

This woman ends the conversation by lifting up the king not only for his wisdom but also for his discernment. She had gotten her way but also she was able to give the king an opportunity to have his son brought out of banishment. It was a win-win situation. Only the king was allowed to offer a pardon.

**14:21** - *“The king said to Joab, ‘Very well, I will do it. Go, bring back the young man Absalom.’”*

**14:22** - *“Joab fell with his face to the ground to pay him honor, and he blessed the king. Joab said, ‘Today your servant knows that he has found favor in your eyes, my lord the king, because the king has granted his servant's request.’”*

**14:23** - *“Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem.”*

**14:24** - *“But the king said, ‘He must go to his own house; he must not see my face.’ So Absalom went to his own house and did not see the face of the king.”*

The king met with Joab to give him permission to seek out Absalom and return him to Jerusalem. Joab also realized that if he had not received the king's favour that his life could've been on the line as well. He did not delay in travelling the 18 miles to Geshur. This meant that Absalom would be back in Jerusalem in about 7 to 10 days.

The king made one stipulation that had to be followed. As difficult as this would be because David would love to see his son, he made it clear that they must not meet face-to-face. He must remain under house arrest. This would offer just a little more time to see what kind of reaction he would get from the people. The king's duty was to uphold the law.

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### B. Support for Absalom Grows (14) (Contd.)

**14:25** - *“In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him.”*

**14:26** - *“Whenever he cut the hair of his head—he used to cut his hair from time to time when it became too heavy for him—he would weigh it, and its weight was two hundred shekels by the royal standard.”*

**14:27** - *“Three sons and a daughter were born to Absalom. The daughter's name was Tamar, and she became a beautiful woman.”*

**14:28** - *“Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face.”*

Things haven't seem to change much over the years. The people praised Absalom because of his status, wealth and good looks. People still have their idols. Isn't it interesting how the lack of character does not get in the way when these other “strengths” are clearly seen.

The Bible speaks of the fact that Absalom was a very handsome man. His skin was so clear of any blemishes that it actually made him stick out in a crowd. He also had very long hair and when it was cut it actually weighed around 5 pounds according to the royal shekel which was a little heavier than the sanctuary shekel.

Absalom had three sons born to him but they must've died at a young age (18:18). He also named his daughter after his sister Tamar. She was also a very lovely woman. But the fact was that Absalom did not have any male heirs to the throne.

Absalom lived for two years in isolation in Jerusalem before he was able to have an audience with King David. Unfortunately, the isolation did not do much to improve his character.

**14:29** - *“Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab refused to come to him. So he sent a second time, but he refused to come.”*

**14:30** - *“Then he said to his servants, ‘Look, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire.’ So Absalom's servants set the field on fire.”*

Absalom realized that being banished from the king meant that he could never be the heir to the throne that he so badly wanted. So he felt it was time to force the issue. There is no doubt that he was not remaining silent during these years. He was building up his support and felt that it was time to make his move.

He sent word to Joab on two occasions because he wanted Joab to speak on his behalf. He felt it was foolish to move from Geshur and remain under house arrest in Jerusalem. Once again Absalom's conniving ways came to light. Absalom sent his servants to set Joab's barley field on fire. He knew that would get his attention, which it did!

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### B. Support for Absalom Grows (14) (Contd.)

**14:31** - *“Then Joab did go to Absalom's house and he said to him, ‘Why have your servants set my field on fire?’”*

**14:32** - *“Absalom said to Joab, ‘Look, I sent word to you and said, Come here so I can send you to the king to ask, Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there! Now then, I want to see the king's face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death.’”*

**14:33** - *“So Joab went to the king and told him this. Then the king summoned Absalom, and he came in and bowed down with his face to the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.”*

Absalom’s act of defiance caused Joab to go and see him. Absalom would be required by law to repay Joab for his loss (Exodus 22:6). That really was not a concern to Absalom because he had greater stakes. He was seeking the throne of Israel.

Once again we see the tenacity of Absalom. There is no account written to indicate that Absalom ever was repented or that he sought the forgiveness of his father David for any of his sinful actions. We also are not aware that he ever went to the Temple to offer the required sacrifices.

Altogether it was five years before David had seen his son Absalom ( 13:38; 14:28). They met together and were able to make a fragile truce. Absalom kept his deception to himself. Terrible days were ahead.

“Now that the prince was free, he could be visible in the city and enjoy the adulation of the crowds, while at the same time quietly organizing his sympathizers for the coming rebellion. David was about to lose his throne and crown, his concubines, his trusted advisor Ahithophel , and ultimately his son Absalom. It would be the darkest hour of David’s life.”

Warren W. Wiersbe  
*“Be Restored”*  
p. 91

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### C. Absalom's Conspiracy (15:1-12)

King David was used to fighting giants and armies but it became totally different when it was one from his own family. These are the kind of battles that leave the deeper types of scars. David knew this was going to happen and that is why he was so hesitant in allowing Absalom to come back to Jerusalem. David also knew that God was true to His word and that he would have to face this giant as well.

David maintained the right balance of recognizing God's severe hand of discipline along with His gracious hand of deliverance.

*“Or, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me!  
2. Many are saying of me, ‘God will not deliver him.’  
3. But you are a shield around me, O Lord, you bestow glory on me and lift up my head.  
4. To the Lord I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill.”*

*Psalm 3:1-4*

**15:1 - “In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him.”**

**15:2 - “He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, ‘What town are you from?’ He would answer, ‘Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.’”**

We are not told exactly how much time passed by before Absalom began this conspiracy to take over the throne. His chariot and horses along with the fifty men were used to make him look more important than he was. Years later we are told that Nero the Roman Emperor never went on a journey without a thousand chariots and a great number of runners before the chariots.

Absalom got up early in the morning to prove that he was diligent and industrious. He went to the gate of the city. It was at this gate that most of these types of disputes were dealt with by the king. Absalom took advantage of the fact that David was neglecting part of his duties. It may have been that David was just getting tired and both his age and the many wars he fought were finally catching up to him.

Absalom was usurping the authority of his father, King David. He was attempting to serve as Israel's counterfeit king. He tried to play the part of a judge when he needed to judge himself.

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### C. Absalom's Conspiracy (15:1-12) (Contd.)

**15:3** - *“Then Absalom would say to him, ‘Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you.’”*

**15:4** - *“And Absalom would add, ‘If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that he gets justice.’”*

**15:5** - *“Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him.”*

**15:6** - *“Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.”*

It has been suggested that Absalom was a demagogue because of his unusual behaviour. One definition of a demagogue is *“one who advances his own interests by affecting a deep devotion to the interests of the people.”* Absalom used every skill he had as an egotistical prince to mesmerize the people and gain their support.

He attempted to appear as humble in stopping them from bowing down before him. Instead he would take hold of them and give them a kiss. It doesn't take much to flatter the hearts of people who feel they are being neglected.

**15:7** - *“At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, ‘Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the LORD.’”*

**15:8** - *“While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: ‘If the LORD takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the LORD in Hebron. [b]’”*

**15:9** - *“The king said to him, ‘Go in peace.’ So he went to Hebron.”*

Within four years Absalom had reached the point where he felt confident enough to take the throne from his father David. This is a problem that has continued to plague God's work. It's amazing that people are still falling for this trap. It goes to show that flattery can get you somewhere, for at least a short period of time.

The day is soon approaching when this world will be deceived by the worst leader it could ever imagine ( Revelation 13:3; II Thessalonians 2). The antichrist will win the hearts of people before he begins his seven-year reign of horror. He will deceive the nation of Israel and have them sign a covenant that will eventually be turned around in an attempt to destroy them ( Daniel 9:26 – 27 ). Jesus also had a warning for the people of His time,

*“I have come in my Father's name, and you did not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.”*

*John 5:43*



## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### C. Absalom's Conspiracy (15:1-12) (Contd.)

Absalom began to put his conspiracy into action. He requested permission from the king to go to Hebron to fulfill a vow that he had made while living in Geshur. He was no longer under house arrest so he could leave from Jerusalem.

He could tell anyone who asked that he had permission from the king. He would most likely lay aside any fears that the people had because of the former feast that he had when he had killed Ammon.

**15:10 - "Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, 'As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, Absalom is king in Hebron.'"**

**15:11 - "Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter."**

**15:12 - "While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom's following kept on increasing."**

Absalom was a very sly individual. He knew the people that he could gain support from. It is often true that *"birds of a feather flock together."* These were strange birds! He began his uprising in Hebron. David had moved the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem. There were most likely a number of the people who resented that move.

Absalom was born in Hebron so he could have appealed to a special type of kinship with the people. Hebron was not only linked to the priests as a sacred city but also to Caleb (Joshua 21:8-16). It was located just 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem. It also contained a walled city which would give him an ideal location to set up his throne.

He cunningly invited 200 of some of the key men of Jerusalem to join with him. He now had them where he wanted them. But there was one other person that he wanted on his side and that was Ahithophel. Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba. David was responsible for her husband Uriah's death (II Samuel 23: 34, 39). Ahithophel ended up rejecting Solomon who became God's choice for the next king (I Chronicles 3:5). He's not the type of man that you really want on your side anyway.

What do you do when these types of insurrections take place around you? Do you take up arms and begin to fight and stand up for your honour? If your name was Saul, you would. But this was not Saul. This was David. He learned very early in life not to pick up the javelin and throw it back at the person trying to bring harm to him. There will always be men like Saul and Absalom to contend with in life.

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### D. David Flees from Absalom (15:13-16:14)

**15:13** - *“A messenger came and told David, ‘The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.’”*

**15:14** - *“Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, ‘Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword.’”*

**15:15** - *“The king's officials answered him, ‘Your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king chooses.’”*

**15:16** - *“The king set out, with his entire household following him; but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace.”*

David knew that no one was safe who sided with him in Jerusalem. David was not about to leave his parents or brothers along with his officials in Jerusalem to be killed. Anyone who would put his own brother to death would also not stop at killing other family members in order to get what he wanted.

David had full cooperation from those who remained faithful to him. We are not sure why David chose to leave 10 of his concubines to take care of the palace. This opened the door for Absalom to fulfill the prophecy of Nathan ( II Samuel 12:11 – 12) and violate David’s wives (concubines). Absalom was making a definite statement that he was taking over the throne and severing his relationship with his father.

This day had to be more troubling for David than any of the other challenges that he had faced in life. Attacks from those closest to us leave deeper levels of pain. How unfortunate it is when family members turn against one another. It is a battle that is never won. It is a hurt that is seldom healed. May God spare each and every one of us from this type of battle.

**15:17** - *“So the king set out, with all the people following him, and they halted at a place some distance away.*

**15:18** - *“All his men marched past him, along with all the Kerethites and Pelethites; and all the six hundred Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath marched before the king.”*

**15:19** - *“The king said to Ittai the Gittite, ‘Why should you come along with us? Go back and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland.’”*

**15:20** - *“You came only yesterday. And today shall I make you wander about with us, when I do not know where I am going? Go back, and take your countrymen. May kindness and faithfulness be with you.”*

**15:21** - *“But Ittai replied to the king, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be.’”*

**15:22** - *“David said to Ittai, ‘Go ahead, march on.’ So Ittai the Gittite marched on with all his men and the families that were with him.”*

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### D. David Flees from Absalom (15:13-16:14)

David mobilized all of the people who were faithful to him and escaped through the Northeast gate because it was in the opposite direction of Hebron. He took a moment to reflect as he made his way out of the suburbs of Jerusalem. The Kerethites and Pelethites were his personal bodyguards (II Samuel 8:18; 23:22 –23).

It is indeed surprising what we read next. We are told that Ittai the Gittite and his 600 men chose to continue to support David instead of going to Absalom's increasing force. These were men that David picked up at Gath which was a Philistine city. In other words these were Gentiles who are following this Jewish leader. Ittai makes one of the most powerful statements of faithfulness that is found in the scriptures outside of that found in the book of Ruth (cf. II Samuel 15:21; Ruth 1:16).

**15:23 -** *“The whole countryside wept aloud as all the people passed by. The king also crossed the Kidron Valley, and all the people moved on toward the desert.”*

**15:24 -** *“Zadok was there, too, and all the Levites who were with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set down the ark of God, and Abiathar offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving the city.”*

**15:25 -** *“Then the king said to Zadok, ‘Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the LORD's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again.’”*

**15:26 -** *“But if he says, ‘I am not pleased with you,’ then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him.”*

**15:27 -** *“The king also said to Zadok the priest, ‘Aren't you a seer? Go back to the city in peace, with your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan son of Abiathar. You and Abiathar take your two sons with you.’”*

**15:28 -** *“I will wait at the fords in the desert until word comes from you to inform me.”*

**15:29 -** *“So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there.”*

David made his way across the Kidron Valley which would bring him to the Mount of Olives. It was there that David broke down and wept aloud with many of his faithful followers. The people he thought would be faithful to him were not.

Our Lord also took this trip many years later as He entered the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:1). He also wept. Both Jesus and David could truly cry out,

*“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”*

*Luke 23:34*

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### D. David Flees from Absalom (15:13-16:14)

The third part of Nathan's prophecy was soon to be fulfilled in the death of Absalom ( II Samuel 18:5). The fourth and final part would take place in the death of Adonijah (cf. - II Samuel 12:6; I Kings 1).

There were many wonderful psalms of David could have sung during this very troubling time ( Psalm 3, 4, 41, 55, 61, 62). He needed a way to comfort his heart during this time of great sorrow.

Yet David was not willing to allow the ark of the covenant to be used as some good luck charm. He told Zadok and Abiathar to bring the ark back into Jerusalem. All he allowed them to do was to make some sacrifices until every person who left the city had passed by the place where they worshipped the Lord. David had to walk by faith. He placed his life fully in the hands of God. Once again we have the example of Jesus being projected in the life of King David.

*“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”*

*Luke 22:42*

David knew that God would speak through Zadok the high priest. That could've been through the Urim and the Thummin. He also wanted to make sure that the priesthood was properly protected. He was not going to allow their lives to be in danger as Saul had done.

There are times when God allows us to stay in desert places until His word comes forth. We must learn not to try to overstep God's timing or His will. We often cannot see the purposes of God when our soul is troubled.

**15:30 - “But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up.”**

**15:31 - “Now David had been told, ‘Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.’ So David prayed, ‘O LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness.’”**

Here is a wonderful lesson for us all. Set your eyes on the Mount of Olives (a place of deep prayer). The oil of the olive tree is collected through a press. We also need to allow the Lord to put us through a press in order to bring forth the oil of joy from our lives. Don't avoid these precious times. It is here that you will understand whether you have a soul like Saul or a soul like David/Jesus. Let the Lord press you in so he can let you out. It is here that God divides the wise from the foolish.

## V. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABSALOM - II Samuel 13-19:8 (Contd.)

### D. David Flees from Absalom (15:13-16:14)

**15:32** - *“When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head.”*

**15:33** - *“David said to him, ‘If you go with me, you will be a burden to me.’”*

**15:34** - *“But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, ‘I will be your servant, O king; I was your father’s servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,’ then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel’s advice.”*

**15:35** - *“Won’t the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king’s palace.”*

**15:36** - *“Their two sons, Ahimaaz son of Zadok and Jonathan son of Abiathar, are there with them. Send them to me with anything you hear.”*

**15:37** - *“So David’s friend Hushai arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.”*

These were very difficult days for David. The very people he had trusted had turned against him (Psalm 41: 9; Psalm 51:11 – 14). It is during these times that we must continue to pray and worship the Lord.

It is also during these times that we truly need a friend that we can trust. David found that kind of friend in Hushai. He was an Arkite. This means that he also was a Gentile. The town of Arka was in Syria, about 200 miles north of Damascus and found inland about 5 miles from the Mediterranean Sea. David had conquered a considerable portion of land. Yet an even greater victory was leading these Gentiles to serve the true and living God.

This chapter concludes by David setting up a communication system to frustrate the evil schemes of Absalom and his faithful followers. David knew that he could trust Zadok and Abiathar. So he sent Hushai to work along with them and bring back reports to David when it seemed safe and proper to do so.

Have you ever wondered why you have to fight so many battles in life? Why is it the evil continues to fight against good? These battles will continue until God finally casts Satan into his eternal destination of a fiery hell.

Until that time we must make the decision to live like David lived. He was not perfect but he was a man after God’s own heart. A good thing to do is just to try to live a life that imitates the good things that this great king did. A greater thing to do is to imitate our life after that of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.