

THE  
FIRST BOOK  
OF  
SAMUEL

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 1

Vv. 1- 8 *Samuel's simple surroundings.* The father, Elkanah, was a righteous and pious man. He went to the tabernacle regularly. Samuel's mother, Hannah, was despised by Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife.

The evils of polygamy are clearly seen in this situation. One wife, Hannah, was favored. Since she was childless, she was chided by the other wife, Peninnah. Although Elkanah tried to bestow other favors on Hannah, she was still unhappy with her lot. Unhappiness, jealousy and spite are all displayed.

Vv. 9-18 *Hannah's prayer.* Samuel's mother was faithful in her attendance at the house of God. She was sincere in her religious practices, and her prayer arose from such anguish of heart that she did not utter audible words.

The fact that the high priest saw her lips moving and heard no sound led him to believe that she was inebriated. His coming to this conclusion leaves us to wonder if he were accustomed to seeing people at worship in such a condition.

Vv. 19-23 *Samuel's birth.* God was faithful in answering Hannah's prayer. Eli, the high priest, had told her that her prayer would be answered. Samuel was a child of prayer.

Vv. 24-28 *Samuel presented to the Lord.* True to her promise, Hannah brought the child Samuel to God's house and gave him to the Lord. She was faithful in keeping her promise. Her gratitude for her blessings knew no bounds.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Problems call for prayers.* Some situations are more than men can cope with by themselves. Men and women of faith never hesitate to take their burdens to the Lord.
2. *Children are gifts from God.* Life itself is a gift which God has given to men to be passed on from generation to generation. Since they are given to parents as gifts of God, children ought also to be given back to God and His service in one form or another.

#### I. THE JUDGESHIP OF SAMUEL 1:1—12:25

##### 1. The Birth and Infancy of Samuel, 1:1—2:11.

###### *Samuel's Simple Surroundings.* 1:1-8

Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name *was* Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:

2 And he had two wives; the name of the one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, *were* there.

4 And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:

5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the Lord had shut up her womb.

6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb.

# THE FAMILY OF KING SAUL

Aphiah (I Sam. 9:1)

Becorath

Zeror

Maacah = Abiel, or Jeiel (I Ch. 9:35) (Ner? I Ch. 8:33)

Ner

Kish

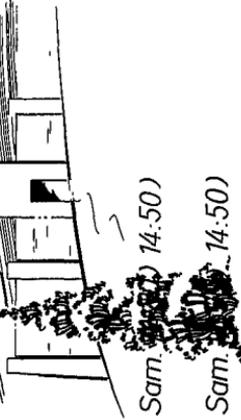
Others (I Ch. 9:36)

Ahimaaz (I Sam. 30:25) 14:50

Abner

SAUL

Ahinoam (I Sam. 14:50)



Jonathan, Ishui, Malchishua, Abinadab, Esbaal (Ishbosheth), Merab, Michal (I Sam. 14:49; I Ch. 8:33-40)

Meribbaal (Mephibosheth) (I Ch. 9:40-44; 8:34-40)

Micah



An air view of the northern section of Old Jerusalem.  
This view shows the north city wall and the Damascus gate \*

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7 And *as* he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? *am* not I better to thee than ten sons?

1. *Who were the parents of Samuel? 1:1, 2, 20*

Elkanah was a descendant of Kohath, who was of the tribe of Levi. Levi, of course, was the ancestor of all who were eligible for the priesthood. Elkanah is also known as an Ephraimite. Ephraim became the name of all the country or the tribes north of Judah. Levi's descendants had no inheritance in the promised land. Their inheritance in the promised land consisted of cities assigned them by the other tribes. Elkanah lived in the land assigned to the tribe of Ephraim. Although he was a Levite, he was also known as an Ephraimite. Samuel's mother was named Hannah. *Elkanah* is from two Hebrew words meaning "whom God has acquired." *Hannah* is from the Hebrew word which means "grace" or "favor."

2. *Was Samuel a priest?*

Samuel was of the tribe of Levi. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites could be priests. The priests were taken from the descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses. Aaron was the son of Amram and Jochebed. He was thus descended from Kohath, who was also one of the ancestors of Samuel. Since Samuel was from the tribe of Levi, many Bible scholars conclude that he was a priest. It would seem better, however, to hold that Samuel was not a priest since he was not descended from Aaron. Samuel did serve as a priest, but his appointment seems unusual. He replaced Eli as the spiritual leader of Israel, but it would be better to think of Samuel as a judge and a prophet and not a priest in the fullest sense of the word.

3. *Where did they live? 1:1, 19*

They were from Ramathaim-zophim. The word *Ramah* means "hill." The word *Ramathaim* means "double hill." The word *Zophim* is a derivative of the word *Zuph*. Hence Rammathaim-zophim means "The double hill of the country belonging to the descendants of Zuph."

Mount Ephraim designates the hill country of Ephraim. Palestine was divided generally into four different sections—the hill country, the sea coast, the Jordan valley, and the Negeb, or the South. The center of the land was hilly, and the highest portion was known as the hill country of Ephraim. Here it is called Mount Ephraim.

4. *Who was Zuph, the Ephrathite?*

Zuph was an ancestor of Samuel's who gave his name to the home, Ramathaim-zophim. The fact that he was called an Ephrathite has led some to believe that his home was south of the land of the tribe of Benjamin and near Bethlehem. Bethlehem is sometimes known as Ephrath (Ruth 1:2). It is apparent from this reference and also the reference in I Kings 11:26, however, that Ephrathite is sometimes used interchangeably with Ephraimite. The importance of his place in the ancestry of Samuel has been lost to us; but when this was written, he was perhaps a well-known ancestor of Samuel.

5. *Who was Peninnah? 1:2*

Peninnah was one of the wives of Elkanah, Samuel's father. Her name comes from a Hebrew word meaning "coral." All we know about Peninnah is recorded here in these verses. No other mention is made of her in the Scriptures outside this place. We are left to wonder if she was the older wife since she is mentioned as having children before any children were born to Hannah.

6. *Was Hannah's barrenness a punishment? 1:2*

There are times in the Scripture when barrenness is called a punishment. Such was the case with regard to the people of Philistia in the days of Abimelech and Isaac. In

this case, however, it seems that barrenness was not a punishment for any wrong which Hannah or Elkanah had committed. It was rather a withholding of blessing.

7. *What was Elkanah's yearly custom? 1:3*

Elkanah went up to the tabernacle to worship and to sacrifice. The institution of the pilgrimage is as old as the existence of the institutions. Although it is not stated that this was the time of the Passover, the Passover was the one great feast of the Jews; and this is probably the feast he attended yearly. Simply because it is not stated that he went up thrice yearly is not grounds for saying that he did not observe the feasts as he had been commanded in the law. He would attend each given feast yearly.

8. *Where was Shiloh? 1:3*

Shiloh was also in the hill country of Ephraim. It was located east of the main road from Jerusalem to Bethel and Shechem. Shiloh itself was situated about five miles north of Bethel. This had been the site of Israel's center of worship from the time of Joshua. The tabernacle had been located here by Joshua, and the tribes had gathered here to receive their inheritance in the Promised Land (see Joshua 13-21). All in all, it was a good choice for a location for the tabernacle. It was centrally located, and quite accessible to all the tribes of the children of Israel. As a priest, Eli was directly descended from Aaron. Aaron had four sons—Nadab, Abihu, Ithamar, and Eleazar. Nadab and Abihu were slain when they offered strange fire before the Lord (see Leviticus 10). The priestly families were thence all descended from Aaron's two sons, Ithamar and Eleazar. Eli was descended from Aaron through Ithamar (Leviticus 10:1, 2, 12). This appears from the mention of Abiathar, who was a descendant of Eli (I Kings 2:27). This man had a son Abimelech, who is expressly stated to have been "of the sons of

Ithamar" (I Chronicles 21:3; cf. II Samuel 8:17). Eli is generally supposed to have been the first of the line of Ithamar to hold the office of high priest (Josephus, *Antiquities*, V, v, 2). His name means "God is high." His two sons were called Hophni and Phinehas, names without particular meanings in the Hebrew language. Phinehas was also the name of Eleazar, the son of Aaron.

9. *Who were the priests? 1:3*

Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's sons, were priests. It is necessary that Eli should be mentioned because he appears in the immediate sequel. By understanding that his sons were priests, we will refrain from indicting Eli for much of what afterwards happens. As priests, they should have been an example to the people of Israel.

10. *What indication do we have of Elkanah's love for Hannah? cf. I Samuel 1:4, 5, 8*

"Whenever Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah, his wife, and to all her sons and daughters, portions: but to Hannah he gave a WORTHY portion; for he loved Hannah." This, together with his statement that he meant more to her than ten sons, showed his love (cf. I Samuel 1:4, 5, 8). Various translations of this passage have been made, showing that Elkanah gave Hannah a double portion, or a portion equivalent to that which he gave to two other persons. All of this would express his love for her.

11. *Meaning of "double portion"? 1:5*

(cf. *Genesis 43:34; Deuteronomy 31:17; I Samuel 1:5*)

The meaning is that he gave more to Hannah because of his love for her. The custom of showing respect to distinguished guests by giving them the largest and best pieces (I Samuel 9:23, 24; Homer, *Iliad* II, 7, 321; 8, 162, etc.) is met with elsewhere. This is done by giving double portions (e.g. the kings among the Spartans, *Herod* 6, 57), and even by fourfold portions in the case of the Archons among the Cretans (Heraclid, *Polit.* 3). Among the Egyptians, the number five appears to have been preferred

to any other (see Genesis 41:34; 45:22; 47:2, 24; Isaiah 19:18). The double portion of Elijah is not the same as the double portion here and in the case of Joseph. This double portion is called a "worthy portion" in the King James Version.

12. *What was Peninnah's attitude toward Hannah? 1:6, 7*

When Elkanah gave Hannah a double portion as an expression of his love for her, Peninnah must have been jealous. Peninnah constantly taunted Hannah to irritate her. She was not necessarily interested in making her angry, but she was wanting to put Hannah into inward commotion and to excite her. Just as Elkanah showed his love to Hannah at every sacrificial festival, so did Peninnah repeat her provocation, the effect of which was that Hannah gave vent to her grief in tears, and did not eat. Peninnah's attitude may be called a habitually scornful treatment. She taunted Hannah about her barrenness. Her treatment was so shameful that she is called Hannah's "adversary" (verse 6).

13. *What effect did this have on Hannah? 1:7, 8*

She wept, and would not eat, and was sore grieved. Hannah no doubt reproached herself with her shortcoming, though it was not voluntary. Her husband exhorts her not to blame herself, which is precisely what she was doing. The Scriptural picture of Hannah is not that of one who with hysteria would continually berate herself and those about her, but rather of one who would carry a heavy burden with meekness. Those who were intimately acquainted with her would know of her grief, and she shared her burden in silent prayer to God. Casual acquaintances would hardly know the nature of her burden. It was very cruel of Peninnah to provoke her about it.

14. *What did Elkanah say to Hannah to comfort her? 1:8*

Elkanah asked a rhetorical question. The first question is followed by a second. All this was said to comfort her, but the very mention of the word "sons" must have started

the springs of grief afresh, because it was for his sake that Hannah wished to bear children. The answer would have been in the affirmative, and otherwise would have been no consolation. Although he asked the question without expecting an answer, he must have asked it in good humor. We smile when we think of a man who thinks he brings more happiness to his wife than a great number of children.

*Hannah's prayer. 1:9-18*

9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord.

10 And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord.

16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18 And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*.

15. *Was eating and drinking normally associated with worship? 1:9*

God had ordained a central sanctuary for Israel (Deuteronomy 12:5-12). He gave them instructions about the nature of their worship, and He said of the place where they were to worship: "There ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households" (Deuteronomy 12:7). They were forbidden to eat the tithe of their corn or of their wine or of their oil within their gates: that is, within the towns where they lived they were not to conduct their worship services. They were further instructed: "Thou must eat them before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose" (Deuteronomy 12:18). On many different occasions people enjoyed a sacrificial meal together (Genesis 31:54; Exodus 18:12). A holy feast was very much a part of Israel's worship. It was this kind of a feast that was enjoyed by Elkanah and his household.

16. *Why is the Tabernacle called the "Temple"? 1:9 b*

The temple proper was not built until the days of Solomon. The Tabernacle itself was more portable and less permanent than the Temple. It was intended to be a temporary place of worship which could be moved about in the wilderness. The Tabernacle was set up rather permanently in Shiloh. Excavations on the site indicate that there were some rather permanent walls erected around the court, and the fact that it was there for a long time made it seem less like a portable place of worship.

All of these rather permanent arrangements led to the Tabernacle being called the Temple. Notices are made in the Scripture that there was a post erected and a seat where the high priest could sit. References to these are made again in I Samuel 4:13 and 18.

17. *What was Hannah's attitude? 1:10*

Hannah is described as being "in bitterness of soul." She "prayed unto the Lord," She also "wept sore." We dare not describe her as being cynical, but she was bitter. Much of her time was spent in prayer. On other occasions she was seen to be weeping. The Hebrew word used to describe the bitterness of her soul is from the same root as the word which Naomi used to describe her condition when she came back from Moab. Naomi had lost her husband and her two sons in Moab. She had gone out as a happy wife and mother and came back to her home in Bethlehem alone except for her foreign daughter-in-law. When the people came out to greet her, she asked them not to call her anymore Naomi but Mara (Ruth 1:20). The word *Naomi* indicates pleasantness, the word *Mara* is best translated as "bitter." This is the same word used to describe Hannah.

18. *What vow did Hannah make? 1:11*

The vow of Hannah stipulated that she would give her son to Jehovah all the days of his life. She intended that he would become a servant around the house of Jehovah (see Numbers 8:19). A vow is a promise to give something to God, or to perform some thing for Him, in case He grants a prayer. An example of this is Jacob's vow (Genesis 28:20-22). She further vowed that he would be reared in a way that reminds one of the Nazarite vows of Samson. The regulations for a Nazarite are found in Numbers 6. He could not shave his head, neither was he to take strong drink or touch a dead body. Hannah mentions specifically the matter of not shaving the head. A married woman could vow a vow only if her husband

approved. Single women could make a vow only if their fathers approved (Numbers 30). Since these limitations prevailed, Elkanah must have known of Hannah's vow and concurred in it.

19. *Did Hannah pray often? 1:12*

The fact that the Scripture says she "continued praying" indicates that Hannah was often in the Tabernacle in prayer. The original language indicates that she multiplied her prayers. This brings to our minds the statement of Jesus that "men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). Jesus set the good example Himself when He went and prayed the same prayer three times in one night. The apostle Paul indicates that he prayed three times that the thorn in the flesh might be removed from him (II Corinthians 12:8). Hannah no doubt prayed repeatedly that God would give her a man child. Her prayer may also have been quite extended. All of this attracted Eli's attention. He noticed especially that she was not saying anything audibly. His attention was thus directed to her mouth. He saw that it was moving, but he heard no sound.

20. *Why would Eli think Hannah was drunk? 1:13*

It was no doubt not uncommon to see women drunken in that day. The specific reason was that "she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." Since he could see her lips moving and could not hear her voice, he supposed that she was drunken.

The fact that he supposed that she was drunk is an indication of the prevalency of intemperance. Had he been more accustomed of seeing women in deep prayer, he would have supposed she was praying silently. Hannah's attitude in prayer gives us an example of prayer that is silent. Even though we make no sound with our lips, we believe that God hears us.

21. *What light does Eli's accusation throw on the moral condition of the Israelites at this time? 1:14*

Eli was evidently so accustomed to seeing the wickedness around about him that he spoke the way he did to Hannah. This would imply that the moral condition of the civilization was bad. The conduct of his sons, the religious leaders of the time, would indicate that the corruption was very generally thorough. It had touched even the worship of God, and morality was not present in the place of public worship.

22. *What explanation did Hannah make? 1:15*

Hannah explained that she was not drunken but that she was of sorrowing spirit. She prayed Eli not to think of her as a vile woman. Greek translators render *men of Belial* by adjectives like *vile, ungodly, senseless, contrary*. It was her hope that Eli would not think of her as one who had fallen to the depths from which few arise.

23. *Who was Belial? 1:16*

The word "Belial" is used in the King James version as if it were a proper name. It seems better not to transliterate it this way but rather to translate it as indicated above. In the New Testament books, the term appears in the form *Belias*, and *Belial*. This term is used in II Corinthians 6:15 for example; and is generally understood as a reference to Satan as the personification of evil. This is a proper way to render this verse. Hannah is saying that she does not want to be counted as a daughter of Satan.

24. *How could Eli say that God would answer Hannah's prayer? 1:17*

No man has the power to forgive men their sins by himself alone. Neither does any man have the right to say what God will or will not do without a revelation from God. Those who know the Scriptures can rest assured that they are true. If they make a prophecy, man can say that it will come true. Eli was announcing what

he knew was right and true. He knew that God hears and answers prayers. He knew that Hannah was sincere in her prayers. Such prayers could not go unanswered. In addition, Eli was anointed of God as high priest. He had charismatic gifts which would enable him to make announcements beyond the normal, and this was also a prayer of his own. He sent Hannah away with his spirit united with hers. He would join her in praying that God would hear her petition. He firmly believed that her prayers would be answered; and as God's anointed high priest, he predicted that they would be answered.

25. *Why did Hannah call herself a handmaid? 1:18*

The term was used quite frequently by women who wanted to describe themselves as being a part of a household. The word does not indicate one who is a slave, but one who had something of the stature of Hagar in the household of Abraham (Genesis 16:1). The same word is also used to describe Zilpah, the handmaid of Leah (Genesis 29:24). Hannah felt that she found a friend in Eli. She did not want to make herself equal to him, but she did want him to look upon her as one of the household of faith, willing to do what the Lord commanded as might be directed by the high priest himself.

*Samuel's birth. 1:19-23*

19 And they rose up in the morning early, and worshiped before the Lord, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the Lord remembered her.

20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the Lord.

21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her

husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever.

23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her. Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

26. *Where was Ramah? 1:19*

Ramah was on the site of the present village Ar-Ram, a hill-top two hour's journey northwest of Jerusalem. People like to live on the tops of hills. This has been true throughout the history of the human family. It is especially true that cities were set on hills. Jesus makes reference to the fact that a city set on a hill cannot be hid (Matthew 5:14b). The word Ramah means "height." Samuel's home was on a high place evidently, and it was a unique place with a couple of prominent spots. For that reason it was called Ramathaim-zophim in the first verse of this chapter. Here it is called only Ramah.

27. *What does "Samuel" mean? 1:20*

There has been a great deal of controversy and doubt surrounding this name for generations. There have been theories proposed and definitions offered such as meaning "name of God" and "asked of God." Some of these are not satisfactory. These different interpretations are due to the falling of the word *samu* from the Israelitish tongue. The original meaning, as borne out by a student of ancient Assyrian dialect, is "name of God." Hannah may have named him this because she had asked him and received him from the Lord. Probably the name means "God-heard," the implication being that his mother realized that Samuel was a direct answer to her prayer.

28. *What were Elkanah's sacrifice and vow? 1:21*

Every Israelite was expected to go to the Tabernacle to make sacrifice. He might make a burnt offering, a peace

offering, a meal offering, a sin offering, or a trespass offering (Leviticus 1-6). In addition to offerings and sacrifices which he was to make, he might perform different vows. He could vow some of his land, his buildings, his servants, his children, or some of his animals (Leviticus 27). These were free and voluntary vows. We are not told what Elkanah's vow was, but he went to the Tabernacle to perform it. It may have been that he was making a sacrifice regularly until such time as he could join Hannah in fulfilling the vow to give Samuel to the Lord.

29. *How long was it before Samuel was weaned?* 1:22

Hebrew children were not weaned as early as modern American children. It was not uncommon for them to be nursed by their mother for several years. Some of these practices are carried over in more primitive civilizations today, and we are led to believe that Samuel stayed at home until he was able to take care of himself with very little help. This is the meaning of his being weaned. We doubt that he would be presented to Eli before he was able to care for himself, to wash, and to dress, and be content away from home.

30. *Why did Elkanah expect the Lord to "establish His word"?* 1:23

Elkanah evidently expected conditions to prevail in such a way that they would be able to fulfill their vow to present Samuel as the Lord's servant. They had only the word of Eli, the High Priest, that the prayer of Hannah would be heard. God had confirmed this benediction of Eli in that Hannah had conceived and borne a son. No doubt Elkanah was anxious that no misfortune befall Samuel and make it impossible for them to carry out their end of the vow.

*Samuel presented to the Lord.* 1:24-28

24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a

bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child *was* young.

25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

26 And she said, Oh my lord, *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord.

27 For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28 Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshiped the Lord there.

31. *Why did they take a bottle of wine? 1:24*

The size of the offering given by Elkanah and his wife when they presented Samuel to the Lord is an indication of the sobriety of the occasion. Their bullocks would be used for burnt offerings (Leviticus 1). The ephah of flour would be used as a meal offering (Leviticus 2). The bottle of wine was not for human consumption but was to be poured out as a drink offering to the Lord (see Genesis 35:14; II Kings 16:13; Ezekiel 20:28).

32. *Why did they slay a bullock? 1:25*

When God described the various offerings to be offered by the children of Israel, He indicated that a burnt offering of the herd should be a male without blemish (Leviticus 1:3). The practice was for the worshiper to bring the bullock to the priest. The priest would then present the blood and sprinkle the blood round about the altar that was at the door of the meeting. They would then flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. The priests would then lay fire on the altar and put the pieces of the sacrifice in order upon the wood. The whole bullock was to be burned on the altar as a burnt offering. It was described as "a sweet savor unto the Lord" (Leviticus 1:9).

This solemn ceremony preceded their presentation of the child Samuel to the high priest, Eli.

33. *Did Hannah fulfill her vow? 1:26*

The vow was fulfilled when Samuel was presented to the Lord. Hannah remained at home and did not attend the yearly feasts until the child was weaned. Ancient custom among the Hebrew women kept the children unweaned until their third year. At that time Samuel was taken to the Tabernacle and probably cared for by one of the women who served about the Tabernacle and regularly worshiped there. When Hannah brought him, she made a sacrifice of three oxen, an ephah of meal, and a pitcher of wine.

The fact that it says she lent him to the Lord did not mean that she did not give him to the Lord. She fulfilled her vow in every sense of the word.

34. *Why did Hannah say that it was this child for which she had prayed? 1:27*

Hannah had no other children. She was not specifying Samuel as the child to be given to the Lord in distinction from any other child which she had. She was emphasizing the fact that it was this very child for which she prayed. On occasions people who had made vows to give children, houses, lands, or other possessions to the Lord might make a substitution (Leviticus 27:10). Hannah was giving the very child for which she had prayed earlier. Although Samuel was her first child and to that time her only child, she was gladly giving him to God.

35. *How could Samuel be loaned to the Lord "as long as he lived"? 1:28*

A man might be a Nazarite for a period of time. Sometimes those who were Nazarites broke their vows and had to begin all over again to live the life of a Nazarite. Samuel, however, was not to be the Lord's for a short time. He was the Lord's completely and wholly for the duration of his life.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### CHAPTER 1 IN REVIEW

1. What was Samuel's father's name? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was Samuel's mother's name? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was Samuel's home? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where was the Ark in Samuel's day? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was the high priest? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What were his sons' names? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Of what tribe was Samuel a member? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In which tribe's land was Samuel's home? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who was the other wife of Samuel's father? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which wife did Samuel's father love more? \_\_\_\_\_

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 2

Vv. 1-11 *Hannah's song.* This grand passage in the Old Testament finds a parallel best in Mary's "Magnificat" in Luke 1:46-55. Both women must have spoken as they were moved by the Spirit of God, and both were expressing their heartfelt thanks for God's blessings in their lives.

Vv. 12-17 *Eli's sinful sons.* A strange contrast is seen between the wicked ways of Eli's sons and the pious ways of Elkanah's household. Perhaps the contrast is greater because more is expected of religious leaders such as the high priests of Israel.

It is nonetheless true that piety can be displayed in the lives of any of God's people. A man does not have to be born into the household of a priest in order to live a godly life. Any man who is willing to trust God and keep his commandments can become a leader in God's kingdom.

Vv. 18-26 *Samuel's service in the tabernacle.* The child Samuel was able to perform many needful tasks around the house of God. Under Eli's direc-

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tions he grew into manhood through years of toil at menial tasks.

Vv. 27-35 *Prophecy against Eli's wicked sons.* An unnamed man of God brought God's message of condemnation against the sinful sons of the old high priest.

Eli had learned of the impious ways of his boys, but his rebukes were not strong enough. Parental indulgences have been the undoing of many a son and daughter of doting mothers and fathers.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Man cannot outgive God.* Hannah might have been tempted to go back on her promise to give Samuel to God, but she did not do it. She faithfully performed her vow and brought the child to God. As a result, ". . . the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters" (I Samuel 2: 21). She who had no child at first was blessed greatly. She gave her first son back to God. God gave her additional sons and daughters as extra blessings.
2. *Unchastened sons are a heaviness of heart to mothers and fathers.* It may have been hard for Eli to correct his sons, but he would have been infinitely better off in the long run to have punished them more severely. His halfhearted rebukes made it possible for them to continue in their sinful ways and eventually led to Eli's being rejected as high priest.

*Hannah's song.* 2:1-11

And Hannah prayed, and said,

My heart rejoiceth in the Lord,  
mine horn is exalted in the Lord;  
my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies:

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

- because I rejoice in thy salvation.
- 2 *There is* none holy as the Lord:  
for *there is* none besides thee:  
neither *is there* any rock like our God
- 3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly;  
let *not* arrogancy come out of your mouth:  
for the Lord *is* a God of knowledge,  
and by him actions are weighed.
- 4 The bows of the mighty men *are* broken,  
and they that stumbled are girded with strength.
- 5 *They that were full* have hired out themselves for  
bread;  
and *they that were hungry* ceased:  
so that the barren hath borne seven;  
and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.
- 6 The Lord killeth, and maketh alive:  
he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.
- 7 The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich:  
he bringeth low, and lifeth up.
- 8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,  
*and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill,  
to set *them* among princes,  
and to make them inherit the throne of glory:  
for the pillars of the earth *are* the Lord's,  
and he hath set the world upon them.
- 9 He will keep the feet of his saints,  
and the wicked shall be silent in darkness;  
for by strength shall no man prevail.
- 10 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;  
out of heaven shall he thunder upon them:  
the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth;  
and he shall give strength unto his king,  
and exalt the horn of his anointed.
- 11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the  
child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest.

1. *What was Hannah's "horn"?* 2:1

Perhaps the figure is taken from the life of animals. An animal with a large horn is thought to be powerful. It is also a mark of full development and beauty. Deer, for example, are prized for their antlers. Other animals use their horns as they fight with others. If this is the meaning Hannah had in mind, she is saying that God has given her a mark of strength and excellence.

2. *Why did Hannah refer to God as a "rock"?* 2:2

Moses spoke of the Lord as the "Rock of his salvation" (Deuteronomy 32:15b). Isaiah chided Israel saying that they had ". . . forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength" (17:10). The steadfastness of God is like a rock to a soul tossed to and fro in the stormy seas of life. This conception of God has been constant among those who have feared Him in all ages. Moses also challenged the heathen nations saying, "Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted" (Deuteronomy 32:37). The Israelites knew that the Lord was not just one god among many. He was the one true and living God. Hannah thus could say: ". . . neither is there any rock like our God" (v. 2b). There was no god like Jehovah, the God of Israel. There was no anchor for the soul like the Lord.

3. *Whom was Hannah warning against arrogance?* 2:3

No doubt Hannah was remembering Peninnah's arrogant speeches against her personally, but her warning is always meaningful and timely for God's people. Too much proud talk is found among the servants of God as they take credit for what is achieved in Christian work. Too much arrogance is found among those whom God has blessed abundantly. All should remember that they will eventually be judged by God, and God knows their weaknesses.

4. *What is the meaning of the "bows of the mighty men being broken"? 2:4*

Hannah is simply suggesting that the first are now last. The last are therefore first. Underneath all this is her great joy over being blessed of God. Before she had been reviled by Peninnah because she had no children. Peninnah thought that she was one of the "mighty men." Hannah would consider herself as being among them that "stumbled." Now Hannah was girded with strength.

5. *Did Hannah have seven children? 2:5*

Personal references seem to abound through this poem of thanksgiving, but we have little evidence of Hannah's having seven children. In verse twenty-one of this chapter, we learn that Hannah did have three sons and two daughters. This would make a total of five children and lead us to believe that she uses the number seven in this reference as an indication that she had received an abundant blessing. The number seven is sometimes used to indicate fullness or completeness. What Hannah says may not only be applied to her own abundant blessing, but it is always true for all those who fully trust the Lord.

6. *What powers did Hannah attribute to God? 2:6-10*

Hannah attributed all power to God. She regarded the Lord as the one who gave life in the first place. She also believed that life ended at His command. Life and death are in His hands. In addition, by His providences man is made poor or rich. He is exalted or abased. Those of low estate are often made to sit in high places. Even the very foundations of the earth were laid by God. The paths of God's saints are directed by God Himself, and no man prevails by his own strength alone. Eventually the voice of the wicked will be silenced, and the Lord's adversaries will be destroyed. Once again Hannah returns to the figure of the "horn" as she speaks of the way in which God will give strength to His chosen leaders. She attributed the following traits to God:

1. The power over life and death
2. The control of wealth
3. Providences that either bring fame or disgrace
4. The rendering of fair judgments on rich and poor alike
5. The direction of the work of His people
6. The eventual judgment of the wicked
7. The creation of the physical universe

7. *In what way did Samuel "minister" before Eli? 2:11*

A lad like Samuel could perform many menial tasks about the Tabernacle. The priests and their Levites had their assigned duties, but others might also be of service. Mention is made in this same chapter of women who "assembled at the door of the Tabernacle" (v. 22; cf. Exodus 38:8). A part of the ministry might also have been in worship; such as a part of the way God's people "minister unto the Lord." Since mention is made of the "lamp of God" (3:3), we are left to wonder if this might not have been a part of Samuel's service. He may have tended this lamp, lighting it when it was to be lit; and extinguishing it when it was to be put out.

2. The Childhood of Samuel, 2:12—3:21.

*Eli's sinful sons.* 2:12-17

12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.

13 And the priests' custom with the people *was, that*, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;

14 And he stuck *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to

roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

16 And *if* any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force.

17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.

8. *What is the meaning of the term "sons of Belial?"*  
2:12

They were "base fellows," meaning "reckless, worthless, wicked." The term used is the masculine equivalent of the feminine form used in 1:16, where Hannah besought Eli not to count her as a wicked woman. The word "Belial" may be used as a proper name; but whatever its origin, it denotes extreme depravity. The wickedness of these men was not so much in what they stole from God, but in the leading of the people to be contemptuous of the sacrifices.

9. *Why did the sons of Eli not know the Lord? 2:12 b*

No doubt Eli's sons were well versed in the Pentateuch. Probably they could recite the Ten Commandments from memory. In order to be priests they were versed in the rituals of the sacrifices. They knew that God had given the Law to His people and must have been familiar with the past history of Israel. Their knowledge of God was "head knowledge." It was not "heart" knowledge. They did not personally follow the commandments of the Lord and thus caused many other people to go astray. They are like the people of Paul's day of whom he said "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28).

10. *What was "a fleshhook of three teeth"?* 2:13

No mention is made of the number of teeth in the fleshhooks when they were first fashioned (Exodus 38:3).

The mention of three teeth in this setting leaves us to wonder if a part of the sin of Eli's sons was greediness. Certainly a fleshhook with three teeth would enable them to secure more meat than a fleshhook with only one prong. We learn that it was customary for them to strike it into the pan, kettle, caldron, or pot. All that the fleshhook brought up was for the priest. We know that the men were of base appetites, for they would not receive the sacrificial meat in the form prescribed by law. They wanted their meat to be given to them before it was roasted on the altar. They wanted raw meat, perhaps to be prepared in a way that would better satisfy their appetites.

11. *Why did all the Israelites come to Shiloh? 2:14*

Shiloh was the location of the Tabernacle. It had been there since the days of Joshua. In keeping with the commandments of God found in Deuteronomy 12, the people brought their sacrifices to this central location. Here is historical evidence of a central sanctuary. Radical critics deny that religion would be developed enough at this early age for people to have one place of worship. It is not because of the lack of evidence that the radical critics make this charge, but it is because of their own religious and philosophical presuppositions. They believe that religion like everything else must have evolved. They think that man began as a nature worshiper and evolved to a worshiper of demons. From demons he went to the place where he did believe in God, but he was a polytheist. To find Israel with one central sanctuary as early as 1,000 B.C. throws their schedule of evolutionary development of religion out of order. Yet we find good solid historical evidence of the fact that all Israel did come to this one central location to worship.

12. *What is wrong with wanting flesh to roast? 2:15*

Eli's sons were so contemptuous of the sacrifices of God that they demanded raw flesh of those who sacrificed.

Evidently they wanted to take this and prepare it in a more tasteful way than would be possible if they followed the directions given to the people in Leviticus 1-6. To demand this raw flesh from the people was to cause them to despise God's ordinances.

13. *Why did some people refuse? 2:16*

Many Israelites must have been willing to stand up for what they knew was right. All had not gone astray. In the times of Judges there were still many who had not given up their faith in the ordinances of God. It was for the sake of these people that changes had to be made in Israel's priesthood. If such conditions were allowed to prevail over a long period of time, hardly any could be found to maintain the faith.

14. *What was the real gravity of the sins of the young men? 2:17*

Hophni and Phinehas were corrupt in their own lives. This is bad enough. They also refused to reason with the worshipers who came to the tabernacle. The gravity of their sin is seen in the fact that they were threatening to inflict corporal punishment upon the people (2-16 b). They threatened to take some of the sacrificial meat by force. When men stoop to force in situations like this, they admit that their reasoning is wrong. The greatest sin lay in the fact that they caused other people to abhor the offering of the Lord. It is a tragedy that man comes to the place where he rejects God's commandments and loathes God's ordinances.

*Samuel's service in the Tabernacle. 2:18-26*

18 But Samuel ministered before the Lord, *being* a child, girded with a linen ephod.

19 Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

20 And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The

Lord gave thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord. And they went unto their own home.

21 And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the Lord.

22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

24 Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress.

25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.

26 And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord, and also with men.

15. *What is a linen ephod?* 2:18

A welcome change comes in the narrative as we read about the child Samuel ministering before the Lord. Earlier we read that he ministered "unto the Lord" (2:11b). His ministry was "before Eli the priest" (2:11b). Here we read that he ministered "before the Lord." All of this would indicate that his real service was unto God and not unto men. At the same time he was under the direction of Eli the priest. Samuel must have ministered conscientiously as one who would minister "before the Lord." The linen ephod which he wore was the distinctive garment worn by the priests. It was a part of the apparel as commanded by God through Moses for Aaron, the first priest and his sons (Exodus 28:4). The ephod was to be made of gold, of blue, of purple, of scarlet, and of fine twined linen with cunning work. It was joined with two shoulder pieces at the edges of it. A band went around

it. On the shoulders of the garment were two onyx stones on which were engraved the names of the children of Israel. The names of six tribes were on one stone and the other six names on the other stone. This was the garment that the high priest was to wear (Exodus 28:6, 12). Eli probably wore this distinctive garment, but the other priests were given ephods to wear. These ephods were something similar to the garments which we call jumpers today. Samuel was given this distinctive garment to wear. It was the sign of the fact that he was ministering as a priest around the Tabernacle.

16. *What kind of a coat did Hannah make for Samuel?*  
2:18

The priests were also commanded to wear a coat. Moses was told to make coats for Aaron and his sons as well as girdles to bind them at the waist. In addition, they wore bonnets "for glory and for beauty" (Exodus 28:40). Since it is not said that Hannah made the ephod for Samuel, we presume that the coat she made was more of a token of her abiding love for him than an effort to equip him in the full regalia of a priest. Her motherly devotion is seen in the fact that she made him a new one each year. As he grew in stature, it would be necessary for him to have a new garment.

17. *What blessing did Eli pronounce upon Elkanah and Hannah?* 2:20

Eli pronounced a blessing upon this devoted couple as they came to the Tabernacle. He prayed that the Lord would give them additional children in exchange for Samuel whom they had "lent to the Lord" (1:28). God visited Hannah as we read in the next verse. She conceived and had three sons and two daughters (2:21).

18. *In what way did Samuel grow?* 2:21

In a later verse (v. 26) we read that "Samuel grew on and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men." This is suggestive in the way in which John the Baptist

grew. Of him we read "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit" (Luke 1:80). Of Jesus it was said "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

19. *Who were the women that assembled at the door of the Tabernacle?* 2:22

When Moses built the Tabernacle, he made the laver of brass out of the "looking glasses of the women which assembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation" (Exodus 38:8).

Jephthah may have devoted his daughter to perpetual service at the Tabernacle (Judges 11:29-40). If he did not actually sacrifice her on an altar as a burnt offering, he may have devoted her to service as long as she lived. Such a dedication to holy service would be reason for the daughters of Israel to go up yearly to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah in a feast for four days in a year (Judges 11:40). When Jesus was born, Hannah the prophetess who gave her whole life to service around the Temple, came up to see the Messiah (Luke 2:36-38). Evidently there were many of these women in the days of Eli. They probably did what they could in service around the Tabernacle. At least they spent their time in prayer and worship. The baseness of the sons of Eli is brought out in the mention of the fact that they committed adultery with these women.

20. *Did Eli rebuke his sons?* 2:23, 24

Eli rebuked his sons, but his rebuke was very weak. When the man of God came to him, he said that Eli honored his sons above God (2:29). When God told Samuel that Eli was to be punished, God said of Eli and his sons that "he restrained them not" (3:13).

21. *What did Eli mean by a "sign against the Lord"?* 2:25

Eli is saying that when one man steals from another there is an earthly judge who renders the verdict. When our transgressions are against our fellowmen, we might

expect that our fellowmen would judge us. If our transgression is against God, God has already pronounced judgment. It is inexcusable for us to sin against the Lord. It would not do for man to plead the case for another man before the Lord. Only the Lord Jesus Christ is our advocate (I John 2:1). Those living under the Old Testament dispensation did not have the hope of the Christian for an advocate before God. They could expect only a certain fearful judgment.

22. *Did God want to slay Eli's sons? 2:25b*

God is not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9). He has laid down certain rules and laws of life. For example, it is written, "correction is grievous unto them that forsaketh the way and he that hateth reproof shall die" (Proverbs 15:10). Since Eli's sons would not listen to the correction of their father, they were doomed to destruction. God would slay them, for they could not be allowed to continue in their rebellion.

*Prophecy against Eli's wicked sons. 2:27-35*

27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?

28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* habitation; and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

30 Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from

me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

32 And thou shalt see an enemy *in my* habitation, in all *the wealth* which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever.

33 And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.

34 And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.

35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that* shall do according to *that* which *is* in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

36 And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left in thine house shall come *and* crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

### 23. *Who was the man of God? 2:27*

Sometimes we labor under the false apprehension that only the men mentioned in the Scriptures are active in the service of God. In every age God has had a great host of people who do His bidding. Some of them are important enough to be mentioned by name; others are anonymous characters that move across the pages of the Scripture and fulfill their ministry without much recognition. Of such nature was this "man of God" who came to Eli and pronounced God's judgment upon Eli's house. He was an unnamed prophet, a servant of God.

24. *Was Eli's father in Egypt? 2:27b*

Eli's father would have lived in the age of the judges. The period of Judges itself covers some three hundred years, and prior to this era was the time of Joshua. Moses preceded Joshua and led the people out of Egypt. The use of the word *father* in this verse must indicate that it refers to an ancestor. Levi was the son of Jacob, the founder of the tribe of which Eli was a member. God spoke to the Levites as they were in bondage in Egypt. He led these predecessors of Eli out of Egypt.

25. *Who was chosen to be priest in Israel? 2:28*

God chose the tribe of Levi to be the priestly tribe. He further selected his priests to be the descendants of Aaron. Aaron himself was the first high priest. Aaron had four sons—Nadab, Abihu, Ithamar, and Eleazar. Two of the sons—Nadab and Abihu—were killed when they offered strange fire before the Lord (Leviticus 10). All the priests were thus descended from Ithamar and Eleazar, the sons of Aaron. These were the men whom God chose to be his priests. Eli was out of this priestly family.

26. *How did Eli kick at God's sacrifices? 2:29*

Eli himself may not have rejected God's sacrifices. We have no record of his making a complaint or "kicking" about what was provided for him. His sons were the ones who abhorred the offerings of the Lord. Since Eli was the high priest, he was responsible for the conduct of all the priests. He was especially responsible for the conduct of his own sons, and he is blamed for what was going on in the priesthood.

27. *What judgment was passed upon the house of Eli? 2:30-33*

God did not mean that he would literally cut off Eli's arms (v. 31), but he meant that the line of Eli would not expand. This would be the end of Eli's house. Those who were not actually to die in the flower of their youth would be removed from the priesthood and caused to beg

as poor people in the street. God had ordained that his priests would be supported through the tithes of the Israelites; but if the priests did not appreciate what He had done for them, He would put them out of their offices. They would then be wishing to have what they had rejected and would say "put me I pray thee in one of the priest's offices that I may eat a piece of bread" (2:36).

28. *What sign did God give Eli that he would be removed from the priesthood? 2:34*

God told Eli that both his sons would die in the same day. This explains partly why Eli took so seriously the announcement of the loss of the Ark and the death of his two sons. He knew that this was the end of his house. God had said that these things would come to pass and gave him a token of their being fulfilled. When the thing transpired, Eli knew that God was fulfilling His word.

29. *Who was the faithful priest? 2:35*

Some people believe that this was Samuel, but it is taken to be a reference to the other line of the priesthood. When Solomon put down the attempted usurpation of Adonijah, he took Zadok out of the priest's office and put Abiathar in his office (I Kings 2:35). Ezekiel makes reference to this change in the priesthood in his book (Ezekiel 44:15) and there is also a reference to it in I Chronicles 29:22. Samuel served as priest in the transition period. David had two priests (II Samuel 8:17; II Samuel 20:23-26) while the change was being made; but the word of God was fulfilled eventually nonetheless.

## CHAPTER 2 IN REVIEW

1. How many children did Hannah bear? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What figure did she use to describe God? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What instrument of war did she say was broken? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What was it that belonged to her and was exalted? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

5. What word was used to describe Samuel's service? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many teeth were in the fleshhook used by Eli's sons? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What was the distinctive garment worn by the priests? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What garment did Hannah make for Samuel each year? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who told Eli his house was doomed? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who was to be killed as a sign God's prophecy was being fulfilled? \_\_\_\_\_

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 3

- Vv. 1-10 *Samuel's call.* The call of Samuel to the place of leadership in Israel is comparable to the call of Moses (Exodus 3 and 4) and the call of Isaiah (Isaiah 6). His natural reluctance is typical of those who are given a vision of the tremendous responsibility laid upon God's servants; but his alacrity is also demonstrated in his response: "Speak; for thy servant heareth" (v. 10b).
- Vv. 11-14 *Doom pronounced on Eli's house.* The earlier message of the unnamed prophet is verified in the revelation given to Samuel. Eli is condemned because he knew of the wicked ways of his sons, but he did not rebuke them strongly enough.
- Vv. 15-21 *Samuel established as a prophet.* Samuel's first message was perhaps his most difficult to deliver. After Samuel had faithfully delivered the message of doom against Eli's house, all the people in Israel knew that God had indeed set Samuel aside in the office of the prophet. From time to time thereafter, God revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh.

## FIRST SAMUEL

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God's need for workers.* When the family of the high priest proved to be unfaithful, God had a need for someone else to lead His people. Through the ages, God has depended on men to carry His message and to perform His work.
2. *Man's need to respond to God's call.* When God calls, man should answer. Although all may be reluctant to take up the work which God has for them to do, they must accept the challenge or the work will go undone.
3. *Faithfulness leads to increased opportunity.* The master in the parable of the talents commended his servants who had been "faithful over a few things" (Matthew 25:21). He made them to be "ruler over many things" (cf. Matthew 25:23). This is a true principle in every day life. It is also true of those who work in God's vineyard.

#### *Samuel's call. 3:1-10*

And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; *there was* no open vision.

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see;

3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God *was* and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*;

4 That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I.

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst

3:1, 2

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.

8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.

9. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

### *1. Why was the word of the Lord precious? 3:1*

It was not easy for the people in Samuel's day to have a copy of the scriptures. Manuscripts were expensive. Some of them were made on vellum in ancient times. Others were made on papyrus. The copies were hand-made and generally they were kept at the center of worship. The copies were made in later times as kings were commanded to do so in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 17:18). In Samuel's day the Word was precious because not very many people listened to it. Not many prophets were active and as the scripture says, there was "no open vision."

### *2. What was wrong with Eli's eyes? 3:2*

One of the very common afflictions of old age is the dimness of eyes mentioned frequently in the scripture. Jacob's eyes became dim so that he could not see (Genesis 27:1). This dimness came quite a number of years before Isaac died. Eli seems to have been afflicted with this same weakness. Some commentaries suggested that this was the kind of affliction we notice when cataracts form. They

did not have the benefit of eye glasses nor surgery to correct this weakness. Eli's being in this condition must have thrown more responsibility on Samuel.

3. *When did the lamp of God go out?* 3:3

The lamp that was in the tabernacle outside the veil near the Holy of Holies was never to go out (Exodus 27:20). Some of the exterior lamps, however, would be put out as activity around the tabernacle ceased. Reference must be made of some of these lamps and it may have been a part of Samuel's responsibility to tend these lamps. This may be a part of his service "unto the Lord before Eli" (3:1).

4. *What vision did Samuel have?* 3:4, 10-18

Samuel had a vision in which the Lord called to him and revealed to him the coming destruction of the House of Eli. Samuel's reaction was that he was afraid to tell Eli. When we read "Jehovah came and stood," we understand that the revelation then was an objectively real affair and no mere dream of Samuel's. No doubt Samuel had first thought that the aged Eli had called him for assistance. Before the communication was over, however, he was undoubtedly sure of what he had heard and seen. A dream is not being described, for Samuel rose and ran to Eli after each call. The prophet heard a voice physically audible. This voice enunciated in articulate words the message which the prophet was to receive. The experience is not a parallel to Jacob who saw and heard God in a dream.

5. *Why did Samuel "not yet know the Lord"?* 3:7

Samuel had not had a personal revelation of the will of the Lord to him. He knew that God was the maker of the heavens and the earth. He must have known of how his mother had prayed to God for him. His own name meant "heard of the Lord." The last two letters of his name—e, l, were an abbreviation of the Hebrew word for God. Although Samuel knew that there was one true and living God, he had not yet been called of the Lord to His ministry.

6. *How many times did he go to Eli? 3:8*

Samuel went to Eli three times, during the course of the vision. On the third time when Samuel came to him, Eli spoke to him and told him that it was the Lord calling to him out of heaven and that he should answer him and say "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." On the fourth time, he came to him in the morning after he had opened the doors of the house of the Lord.

*Doom pronounced on Eli's house and  
Samuel established as a prophet. 3:11-21*

11 And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform against Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision.

16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I.

17 And he said, What *is* the thing that *the Lord* hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide *any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It *is* the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.

19 And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel *was* established *to be* a prophet of the Lord.

21 And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

7. *Did Samuel want to tell Eli what the Lord had told him? 3:15*

Samuel was understandably reluctant to tell Eli the message that God had delivered to him; but when Eli threatened him, he told him all. The formula, "So may God do to thee," is an imprecation originally connected with the ceremony of slaying an animal at the taking of an oath. The parties pray that the fate of the victim may be theirs, if they fail to perform their vows. When Eli heard the message, he quietly resigned himself to the will of the Lord. Although he had been quite indulgent with his sons, we picture Eli as a man personally devoted to the Lord in heart.

8. *What doors did Samuel open? 3:15 b*

The doors of the house of the Lord would be the outer doors through which the people could pass. In later times when the temple was established, there was not only a court for the Jews, but there was a court for the Gentiles. There was also a court for the women. These outer courts could be frequented by many people. Only the priests would go into the tabernacle proper. Samuel must have had the responsibility of opening the gates of the Tabernacle area so that the people coming to worship would have access to the areas which were open to them.

9. *Why did Eli say, "It is the Lord?" 3:18*

Eli knew that what Samuel had told him was the truth. The unnamed man of God had told him these things earlier. He may seem anxious to us as he inquires about the vision given to Samuel. His anxiety would stem from

his realization that these things were to come to pass. No doubt he lived each day in fear and dread of the judgment of God. Eli still had the surrender of will and serenity of spirit to say, "let him do what seemeth him good." His faith in God caused him to realize that God would only be fair and just in His judgments.

10. *What is meant by "let none of his words fall to the ground."?* 3:19, 20

It shows that the people accepted Samuel as the prophet. His words were words of wisdom and truthfulness and they respected his advice and warnings. Jehovah was with him and left none of His words unfulfilled when He spoke through Samuel. By this all Israel from Dan to Beersheba perceived that Samuel was found trustworthy, or approved, as a prophet of Jehovah. These three verses form a transition between the call of Samuel and the account of his prophetic labors in Israel. Many would be the times that men would come to consult Samuel, and many were the times that he rode about throughout Israel to take the word of the Lord to them.

### CHAPTER 3 IN REVIEW

1. How many times did God call to Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who did Samuel think was calling him? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What physical infirmity did Eli suffer? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many times did Samuel go to Eli? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What doors did Samuel open? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Against whom did God pronounce a penalty when He spoke to Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What word was used to describe the word of God in those days? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Was this God's first revelation to Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
9. When did Samuel tell Eli about the revelation? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What two towns were used to describe the extent of Israel's territory? \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 4

- Vv. 1-11 *The loss of the Ark.* Israel's fortunes fell to a low ebb when the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines. This is a fulfillment of the prophecy made by the unnamed prophet (2:27-36) and by the young man Samuel (3:11-14). The things which were happening were enough to make the ears of those who heard to tingle.
- Vv. 12-18 *Death of Eli.* The bad news of the loss of the Ark was a shock to Eli. He had been waiting anxiously to hear news from the battle. When it came, he was overwhelmed by it.
- Vv. 19-22 *Sadness in Israel.* All Israel was affected by the sad news of the loss of the Ark. Typical of this sadness was the name, Ichabod, given to the son of Phinehas. Indeed, the glory had departed from Israel.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God does not abide in symbols.* The Ark of the Covenant was but a symbol of the presence of the Lord. The people of Israel thought that its presence would assure them of victory in battle. Their superstitious enemies, the Philistines also supposed that having the Ark on the battlefield was equivalent to God's being there. The Living God, however, does not dwell in temples made with men's hands. Moreover, He cannot be confined to a wooden box. His spirit is with those who worship Him in spirit and in truth.
2. *Disobedience breeds anxiety.* The aged high priest sitting in the gate of the Tabernacle area and worrying about the safety of the Ark is a pathetic picture of a man who has failed to take proper measures to guarantee

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

God's blessings. If Eli had rebuked his sons in their earlier evil ways, he would have been strong enough to resist their unholy desire to take the Ark of the Covenant to the battlefield. Since he had been lenient on them in former activities, he was in no position to resist them in their final, fatal follies. He was left sitting helpless while tragedy fell.

3. *National calamity brings personal heartache.* Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was caught up in the holocaust of Israel's national disaster. Left alone in the midst of the pains of childbirth which ultimately resulted in her own death, she used her last breath to give a very descriptive name to her son—Ichabod. What was true for the millions of Israel was true for each individual. God had departed from them, because they had departed from God.

The Loss of the Ark and End of Eli's House, 4:1-22.

### *The Loss of the Ark. 4:1-11*

And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ezenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth *between* the cherubim: and the two sons

of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What *meaneth* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood the ark of the Lord was come into the camp.

7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

9 Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

1. *In what way did the word of Samuel come to all Israel? 4:1*

The background of the verb translated *came* indicates that the words which Samuel spoke came to pass. If he predicted certain things would occur, they did occur. Certain judgments which he pronounced were judgments of truth. In this way it is known that Samuel was a prophet. All Israel saw that the things which he spoke were true. None of his prophecies failed. He was speaking as God spoke to him.

*2. Where is Eben-ezer? 4:2*

From later history we learn that Eben-ezer was a spot named by Samuel. It was located between Mispah and Shen. It is quite near the old Roman road that runs northwest out of the city of Jerusalem and is located in the hill country of the tribe of Benjamin. Aphek is farther north and west and was a rallying place for the Philistines whenever they came up to attack Israel. Aphek would be found in the edge of the hill country as it began to slope down towards the Mediterranean sea.

*3. Why did the elders of Israel send for the Ark? 4:3*

They were the old folk; they should have known better. This is an illustration of the old people leading the young people out of the right track. The older people were teaching them wrong. They were corrupt. They had come to trust in the Ark itself as a sort of graven image to deliver them. These elders were afraid of the enemy, the Philistines, and sent for the Ark, thinking that its presence would bring freedom and deliverance to them.

*4. What was this Ark? 4:3*

This was the Ark that went before the people at the invasion of the country and the siege of Jericho. Jehovah and the Ark were very closely identified. It was a chest and it contained the two tables of the Covenant. It was covered with gold and named the Ark of the Testimony. When the command was given for its construction, the following dimensions were laid out: "two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof" (Exodus 25:10b). The same word is used to describe the sacophagus of Joseph (Genesis 50:26) and of the box set by the side of the altar to receive the money contributions of the worshipers (II Kings 12:10). The Ark of the Covenant was made of acacia wood.

*5. What were the cherubims? 4:4*

The cherubims were angelic figures. It is not necessary to spell this word as it is spelled in the King James version.

The form cherubim signifies the plurality of the word. We do often speak of a cherub and think of a cherub as being a little angel. Two of these cherubim were on the mercy seat which was placed over the Ark of the covenant. These cherubim spread out their wings and covered the mercy seat with their faces one to another (Exodus 37).

6. *Why were the Israelites called Hebrews? 4:6*

The Hebrews were descendants of Eber. Eber was a descendant of Shem. Shem is described as the father of all the children of Eber (Genesis 10:21). After Lot was captured by the kings of the East, one of the Canaanites came and told "Abram the Hebrew" (Genesis 14:13). Thus the children of Israel had been known as Hebrews for centuries, and it may have been the favorite name of their enemies, although we find men speaking of the name without being ashamed of it.

7. *Why were the Philistines afraid? 4:7*

The Philistines thought that there was an unusual appearance of God himself. They had heard of the mighty act which God had performed as they mentioned later. They must have remembered that it was the God of the Hebrews who had shaken down the walls of Jericho. It was He who had parted the water of the Jordan and enabled His people to cross over in dry land. Now they found themselves face to face with this God. It was their superstition which brought fear to them.

8. *Did the Philistines think the Israelites had many Gods? 4:8*

They asked, "Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods?" They went on to say, "These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians." Whether they thought that Israel had many Gods or only one, we cannot determine from the wording of the verse. The Hebrew word for God is plural in form. It may be that they were saying, "Who shall deliver us out of the hand of this

mighty God? This is the God that smote the Egyptians." The Israelites had given them no reason to believe that they had many Gods.

9. *When had the Israelites served the Philistines? 4:9*

Israel had been beaten by the Philistines many times in their past history. These Philistines were the perennial enemies of Israel. Samson had brought some deliverance (Judges 13-16), but his deliverance had not been long lived. Sampson himself had died in the prison house in Gaza, one of the principal towns of Philistia.

10. *Were the expectations of the elders realized? 4:10*

The Philistines smote the Israelites, and every man had to flee. 30,000 men of the Israelites fell there. This was 26,000 more than were slain in the first movement, which is described in verse two. Moreover, the Ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli were slain. All of this was accomplished by the unexpected resurgence of courage into the ranks of the Philistines. If the elders of Israel had expected something of courage to come to the men of Israel, they were disappointed. Instead, the courage of despair surged through the Philistines.

*Death of Eli. 4:12-18*

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told *it*, all the city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of

the army, and I fled today out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

11. *Who was the messenger from the battle? 4:12*

Rabbinical tradition makes him to have been Saul. All the Scriptures tell us is that he was a Benjamite. The rabbinical tradition tells quite a story of the manner in which Saul had rescued the tables of the Law from the hands of Goliath and then had run to tell Eli. This Benjamite, who is unnamed is, however, described. He was in deep distress, having his clothes rent and earth on his head. These were the usual signs of grief (see II Samuel 1:2; 15:32); but he still had a task to perform, that of bringing the tidings of the battle to the people at Shiloh and to Eli, the old priest.

12. *Where was Eli and why there? 4:13*

He was at the roadside watching because he was anxious for the safety of the Ark of God. The road would naturally be the one leading to the scene of the battle. Yet the fugitive apparently comes first to the town and afterwards to Eli. If we understand that the gate mentioned is the gate to the Tabernacle, at which he was accustomed to sit (I Samuel 1:9) then we can better understand his position. Though he was blind, his mind was intent upon the road along which news must come. When the bearer of tidings came first to the town, the people shrieked at the news: and Eli heard the outcry before the messenger reached him, although the messenger had not delayed.

13. *Why did Eli have to ask the meaning of the tumult?*  
4:14

As we have already read and as we read again in verse fifteen, Eli's eyes were dim. He could not see. As a man who was blind, he had to ask what the meaning of all the tumult might be. No doubt he was giving expression of his constant anxiety for the safety of the Ark and the fulfillment of God's judgment against his house.

14. *What effect did the news have on Eli and why?* 4:18

He was old and was blind. Eli must have known the Ark was going out, and he must have known that they had done wrong. He realized his own mistakes. Sitting there in the darkness of the so-called black cataract (for this is the description as given and generally is an affliction paralyzing the optic nerves of those who reach a great age) he was trembling for the safety of the Ark. He did not react so much to the news about the death of his two sons; but when he heard of the capture of the Ark, he fell back from his seat and broke his neck and died. The items of the news reach him in a scale of ascendancy: Israel had fled from before the Philistines, there was a great slaughter of the people, Eli's two sons were dead, and the Ark of God had been captured.

*Sadness in Israel. 4:19-22*

19 And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

20 And about the time of her death the woman that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast borne a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard *it*.

21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

22 And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the Ark of God is taken.

15. *What is the meaning of the word Ichabod? 4:21*

The real meaning of the word is, "where is the glory." It is also translated "there is no glory." Phinehas' wife knew that the glory of Israel was gone when the Ark was captured. We can rest assured that the glory of God's people is gone whenever they turn their backs on Him. This is the sad story of many individual lives, many churches and many Christian schools. They have forsaken their first love. The glory of God has departed from them because they have departed from God.

16. *What was the fundamental error in taking the Ark into the battle?*

It was the error of idolatry. Simply because of the fact that the Ark of the Covenant was in the Holy of Holies, and because it had been with the children of Israel in the wanderings of the wilderness and had preserved them, seemingly, these people thought that the Power was in the chest covered with gold, when the strength was in the Lord, who had caused the great deliverance and even commanded the making of the Ark.

It is just the same now, when we take merely a historical Christ outside us for our Redeemer. If we had not Christ, we could never stand. For there is no help in heaven and on earth beside Him. But if we have Him in no other way than merely without us and under us, if we only preach about Him, teach, hear, read, talk, discuss, and dispute about Him, He will no more help us than the Ark helped the Israelites.

## CHAPTER 4 IN REVIEW

1. Where did Israel pitch her camp? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did the Philistines pitch their camp? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did the people take into battle with them? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

4. What name did the Philistines call the Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many Israelites were killed in the first battle? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many Israelites were killed in the second battle? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How old was Eli? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Of what tribe was the messenger who brought news of the battle? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What was the name of Eli's grandson? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To which of Eli's sons was the grandson born? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 5

- Vv. 1- 6 *The Ark in the temple of Dagon.* The Philistines treated the Ark of the Lord as if it were a part of the spoils of war. Since they worshiped the false god, Dagon, they took the Ark to the temple of Dagon. It was installed there as a trophy of war and as a sign of the superiority of their god over the God of the Israelites.
- Vv. 7- 9 *The Ark in Gath.* From the temple of Dagon in Ashdod, the Ark was carried to the city of Gath. This was one of the most important cities in Philistia and is famous in later times as the home of Goliath.
- Vv. 10-12 *The Ark in Ekron.* When an affliction from the Lord came on the inhabitants of Gath, they asked that the Ark be removed from their community. The men of Ekron were horrified when they saw the Ark had been brought to their city. They, too, asked to have it removed.

## FIRST SAMUEL

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God alone is God.* Men have invented many false gods for themselves. All of men's inventions are sheer folly. They are nothing more than the figment of their imaginations or the products of their hands. The prophet Isaiah described the folly of making graven images and molten idols (Isaiah 44:9-20). This foolishness is borne out in the activity in the house of Dagon. God demonstrated His superiority over the god of the Philistines by throwing down the image of Dagon.
2. *Sinners cannot escape from God.* Though sinful men flee from God, their sins will find them out. Though they strive to drive God from their homes and communities, He will pursue them. The repeated afflictions in Philistia were sign enough that God was punishing the Philistines for their mishandling of the Ark.

The Captivity of the Ark, 5:1—7:17.

*The Ark in the Temple of Dagon. 5:1-6*

And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod.

2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

3 And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump* of Dagon was left of him.

5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

6 But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, *even* Ashdod and the coasts thereof.

1. *Where did the Philistines take the Ark? 5:1*

They thought they had captured the God of Israel, and they wanted to place this God by their god and glory in the triumph. As we should expect in the case of a remarkable trophy, they brought it to the temple of Dagon. Dagon was the national god of the Philistines, if we gather anything from his prominence here. The temple alluded to here existed until the time of the Maccabees (I Maccabees 10:83 ff; 11.4).

2. *Who was Dagon? 5:2 (cf. Judges 16:23)*

The nature and attributes of Dagon are not certainly known. He is a god of the Philistines in whose honor a great feast was held (Judges 16:23). If the name is Semite, it may be related either to the word for fish or to a word for corn. The adoration of a fish-god or corn would be at home in the fine grain-growing land of the Shephelah. A bas-relief in Khorsabad, Sargon's Assyrian capital, depicts a figure swimming in the sea. The upper part of the body resembled a bearded man, wearing the ordinary conical tiara of royalty and was adorned with elephants' tusks. The lower part of the body resembled the body of a fish. Since the whole scene is the picture of a battle between the Assyrian king and the inhabitants of the coast of Syria, this is in all probability a representation of the god of Ashdod, namely, Dagon.

3. *What happened while the Ark was in Philistia? 5:3-7*

Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the Ark of the Lord on the first morning. On the second morning, both the palms of Dagon's hands were cut off,

his head was cut off, and the remaining stump was lying upon the threshold of the temple. The visitation of God was not restricted to the demolition of the statue of Dagon, but affected the people of Ashdod as well. The desolation included diseases and also the withdrawal or diminution of the means of subsistence, the devastation of the fields, and such like. From Ashdod, the Ark was sent to Gath, thence to Ekron. There was a deadly panic. No part of the country wanted the Ark deposited in its borders, so they finally decided that something would have to be done about it. The tumult was not caused merely by fear or death, but it was a result of their actual suffering.

4. *Where was Ashdod?* 5:6

Ashdod was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. Together with Gaza, Gath, Ekron, and Ashkelon it formed what was known as the Philistine pentapolis. These cities were at the very height of their power at the time of Saul and continued to be important after the time of David. Ashdod was situated between Ashkelon, a seaport, and Ekron, the city inland on the caravan route east to Lydda and west to Joppa.

*The Ark in Gath.* 5:7-9

7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that *is was so*, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*.

9 And it was *so*, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.

5. *Where was Gath?* 5:8

Gath was also one of the cities of the Philistine pentapolis. The name means "wine press." The site has not been uncovered, and the city probably disappeared because of the disaster hinted at in Amos 6:2. Many archaeologists favor a site at Telles-Safiyeh; ten miles east of Ashdod and ten miles southeast of Ekron. The Crusaders stopped here, and Richard the Lionhearted made his raids on caravans near Beersheba from this point. The city was the nearest of the large Philistine towns to Hebrew territory. It is known as the home of Goliath (I Samuel 17). Achish was king of the city at the time of David and befriended him during Saul's persecution. David later captured the city (I Chronicles 18:1).

6. *What were Emerods?* 5:9

The Hebrew word signifies a tumor (Deuteronomy 28:27). An affliction of emerods was considered a painful disease. It was especially promoted by the sedentary habits of the Orientals and hence very common among them. Although the affliction is rather easily cured by the advanced skill of the Western people, the popular medicine of the East had no cure for it. It was therefore a very terrible visitation. The affliction struck the men in their secret parts and made them very uncomfortable.

*The Ark in Ekron. 5:10-12*

10 Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

12 And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

7. *Where was Ekron? 5:10*

Ekron was about eleven miles from Gath. It had belonged at one time to Judah (Joshua 13:3). It was also possessed by the tribe of Dan (Joshua 19:43). The Philistines had jurisdiction over it in the time of Eli as we see here. The archaeologists have found its site at Akir, ten miles northeast of Ashdod. From what has been found, it has been concluded that the fly god was worshipped here. This is also brought out in the Scripture (II Kings 1:2).

8. *Why did the people say that the Ark would slay them? 5:10b*

Wherever the Ark had gone, the people had been afflicted. The men of Ekron therefore felt that they would all be killed. People are naturally afraid of deities. They may even fear the servants of God. This was the attitude of the widow of Zarephath when Elijah came to her. She felt that Elijah's coming had resulted in the death of her son (I Kings 17:18). The Philistine people were afraid that the presence of the Ark of the Lord in their midst would bring death to them.

9. *Who were the lords of the Philistines? 5:11*

The lords of the Philistines were the kings of the various city-states. One lord would rule in Gath. Another would have jurisdiction in Ashdod. Still another would be the ruler of Ekron. Some of them are known to us. Achish was king of Gath in David's day (I Samuel 21:10). These lords of the Philistines had come to Delilah to offer her money to deliver Samson into their hands. (Judges 16:5). They held a council to decide their strategy; and they were addressed on this occasion by the citizens of Ekron, who asked that the Ark be taken from their city.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 5 IN REVIEW

1. To what city did the Philistines first take the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did the Philistines put the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the name of the Philistine god? \_\_\_\_\_
4. To what city was the ark taken next? \_\_\_\_\_
5. With what affliction did God smite the Philistine men? \_\_\_\_\_
6. To what Philistine city was the ark taken? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What happened to the Philistine idol during the first night? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What happened to the idol during the second night? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What other cities formed the Philistine pentapolis? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which of the cities was nearest to Israel? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 6

Vv. 1-9 *The decision to return the Ark.* Although the Philistines had beaten Israel on the field of battle, they were themselves utterly defeated in their attempt to make a prize of war out of the Ark of the Testimony. As they had moved the Ark about from city to city, its trail had been marked by constant afflictions on the Philistines. In utter dismay, they gave up in their attempts to keep it and made preparations to return it to Israel.

Vv. 10-18 *The Ark returned.* An ingenious plan was devised by the Philistines. By it they were able to determine that God was indeed directing the path of the kine. They knew then that

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Jehovah, the God of the Israelites, had been the source of the plagues brought against Philistia.

Vv. 19-21 *Men of Beth-shemesh smitten.* When the Ark was returned to Israel's territory, the first spot it reached was Beth-shemesh. Some of these men did not have proper respect for the symbol of God's abiding presence; and God smote 50,070 men of Israel on account of this lack of respect.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God's hand is seen in the affairs of men.* The Philistines knew that there was something very unusual about the fact that trouble came wherever the Ark was located. This might have been coincidental if it happened only a time or two; but when it happened again and again, they knew that some supernatural power was behind the occurrences. Since they saw the hand of Almighty God in these events, they rightly decided that they should repent of their wrong actions and make restitution for their misdeeds.
2. *God guides even the beasts of the field.* The natural instinct of the kine was overruled. Naturally, these milk cows would want to stay close to their calves. When the calves were locked in the stall and the cows were hitched to the cart bearing the Ark of the Lord, the cows went directly away from their own calves. Nothing short of the interference of God in the natural instincts of these beasts would cause them to go against their habits. This was a sign to the Philistines that the hand of God was in the whole affair.
3. *Man should have reverence for the things of God.* Only Levites and priests were to bear the Ark of the Covenant. Their duties were assigned to them (Numbers 4).

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The men of Beth-shemesh were quite presumptuous when they "looked into the ark of the Lord" (v. 19). This lack of respect brought punishment upon the people, and the event should be a lesson in reverence for men of all times.

### *The Decision to Return the Ark. 6:1-9*

And the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the Lord? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

3 And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

4 Then said they, What *shall be* the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague *was* on you all, and on your lords.

5 Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

8 And take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him *for*

a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.

9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that *it is* not his hand *that* smote us; it *was* a chance *that* happened to us.

1. *What was the final decision about the deposition of the Ark? 6:1*

The method of disposing of it was of rational order. They were to put a trespass offering beside the Ark. This was to be of five golden emerods and five golden mice. They there were to build a new cart; take two milk cows, upon which the yoke had never been; leave their calves at home; and see if the Lord would guide the cows to remove the Ark from their country. The natural inclination of the mother cows would keep them from going away. The behavior of the cattle would show whether God wished them to return to Israel. Their respect for God is seen in the fact that they prepared a new cart and they selected milk cows upon which no yoke had yet come.

2. *Who were the Diviners? 6:2*

Divination is practiced by many religious people who are without God's revelation. The king of Egypt had magicians whom he called to interpret his dreams (Genesis 41:8). Joseph pretended to divine by the use of a silver cup (Genesis 44:15). Generally speaking, divination was the art of obtaining secret knowledge, especially of the future. It may be considered as the pagan counterpart of Biblical prophecy. A careful study of Scripture reveals that divination is by demon power, whereas genuine prophecy is by the Spirit of God. Many passages in the Bible legislate against such activity as divination (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). The lords of the Philistines evidently had their diviners, and they depended upon them to help them to make decisions.

3. *How did the Philistines know about a trespass offering?*  
6:3

Many false religions contain parallels of the true religion. The trespass offering of the Philistine paganism is an instance of this. God had laid down rules and regulations for the making of a trespass offering (Leviticus 5 and 6). What the Philistines offered was a pagan counterfeit of the true trespass offering. The fact that it is not a Biblical trespass offering is seen from the nature of what they offered—golden emerods and golden mice. Unclean animals such as mice would be an abomination to Jehovah.

4. *Why did they send golden mice?* 6:4

The golden mice were images of the rodents which overran the land and added severity to the plague of boils which afflicted their persons. The pestilence which had accompanied the presence of the Ark was so severe that many of the men had died (5:12). The cry of the city went up to heaven. The men themselves were incapacitated and the pests added increased suffering and hardship to the afflicted people.

5. *How did the Philistines know about the Egyptian bondage?* 6:6

What happened in Egypt was well known throughout all the Mediterranean basin. Immediately after the people of Israel had crossed the Red Sea, they sang a song to celebrate the triumph. In one verse, they said: "The people shall hear and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine" (Exodus 15:14). This news did spread when Joshua led the people of Israel against Jericho. Rahab the harlot said: "We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when you came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites (Joshua 2:10). The people of Philistia also knew that the Egyptians had hardened their hearts. This statement throws some light on the repeated reference made to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

Although it is said in some references that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 10:27; 11:10; 14:4), it is also said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 9:34). The Philistines knew that Pharaoh was responsible for hardening his own heart, and they did not want to harden their hearts against God and be destroyed.

6. *Why were the heifers not broken?* 6:7

Heifers which were not broken would not naturally stand still while they were hitched to the cart. When their calves were penned up, they would not be expected to leave the area. All of this unnatural activity on the part of the kine indicated that God's hand was involved in this procedure.

7. *What were the jewels of gold?* 6:8

The jewels of gold were evidently the five golden emerods and the five golden mice. They are called here a trespass offering and identified as being the jewels. They were placed in the coffer by the side of the Ark. It is doubtful if the Philistines had removed the mercy seat from the Ark, and looked in it. If they had, they would have found the tables of stone and the pot of Manna which had been placed there in the days of Moses, along with the rod of Aaron which budded (Exodus 16:33, Numbers 17:10). All this trespass offering was carefully placed on the cart along with the Ark itself.

8. *Where was Beth-Shemesh?* 6:9

Beth-Shemesh is a place now called Aim Shems. The road to Beth-Shemesh from Ekron runs along a straight smooth bed of a valley in which a meandering brook makes a crooked line through the middle. The name of the town signifies "house of the sun." It was a priestly city (Joshua 21:16) in the tribe of Dan on the northern boundary of Judah (Joshua 15:10). The location would be on the northwest slopes of the mountains of Judah, and pottery remains found there indicate that the city was occupied from about 2000 B.C. through the seventh century of the

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same era. The town was evidently destroyed by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar II.

### *The Ark Returned.* 6:10-18

10 And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home:

11 And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.

12 And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh.

13 And *they of* Beth-shemesh *were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*.

14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where *there was* a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the Lord.

15 And the Levites took down the ark of the Lord, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the Lord.

16 And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day.

17 And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philistines returned *for* a trespass offering unto the Lord; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;

18 And the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five lords, *both of* fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto

the great *stone* of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the Lord: *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.

9. *Was the plan successful?* 6:9-12

The plan was successful. The Philistines knew that it was because the cows took a beeline right through Beth-shemesh, never turning to the right hand or the left. The apparent redundancy is due to the author's desire to make the miracle plain. The lowing of the kine shows their natural desire to return to the calves. The cows stopped in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite. When the men of Beth-shemesh stood in unrighteousness and looked into the Ark, God smote them; the men of Kirjath-jearim were called to take the Ark to their land. It remained here for twenty years.

10. *What time of year was it when the Ark was returned?*  
6:13

It was the time of reaping in the wheat harvest when the Ark came back to Israel. This would be about the height of the growing season in Palestine, and would be in the time we mark as late June or early July. This would permit the people to be out in the fields where they would soon catch a glimpse of the strange sight.

11. *Who was Joshua the Beth-shemite?* 6:14

This man is unknown except for this reference. He is called Joshua the Beth-shemite to distinguish him from Joshua the son of Nun, who was the leader of the people of Israel following Moses (Joshua 1:1). The fact that he owned the field would indicate that he was not a Levite himself, but a farmer in Judah.

12. *What kind of offering did the men make?* 6:15

The fact that they offered the female animals would indicate that this was a peace offering. The specifications of the peace offering are found in Leviticus 3. It is stipulated there that the peace offering might be either

male or female, but it was to be without blemish. If these men offered this sacrifice in an acceptable way, they must have followed the regulations laid down in this chapter.

13. *What was the stone of Abel? 6:18*

The Hebrew word Abel is translated with the phrase "grassy place." We might define it as a meadow. The word is used as a prefix in a number of cases. Here it signifies the marker which located the spot where the offering was made as the Ark was returned. The fact that the stone remained unto the day of writing would indicate that it was there for a number of years—throughout the judgeship of Samuel and into the reign of Saul.

*The Men of Beth-shemesh Smitten. 6:19-21*

19 And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter.

20 And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you.

14. *Why did God smite the people of Beth-shemesh? 6:19*

The people of Israel were glad to have the Ark back within their border. They were evidently overly familiar with the sacred chest, and God smote them. The number slain at this instance for irreverently examining this holy shrine is recorded as 50,070. The fact that the 50,000 is separated from the threescore and ten has caused some to wonder about the total number. But the text enjoys very

good integrity. The sin they committed was very gross, and God punished them accordingly.

15. *Why was the Ark taken to Kirjath-jearim? 6:21*

Kirjath-jearim was not a Levitical city. It was the nearest large town on the road from Beth-shemesh to Shiloh. The people of Beth-shemesh were anxious to get it out of their community and evidently sent to a nearby town for help. The town was in the rugged wooded highland which looked down on the valley of Sorek. The exact site is not known with certainty, but some archaeologists believe it is the present Kuriet Enab to the north of Mount Jearim. Once the Ark was set in this new location, it was off the border line of the Shephelah, and within Israel's proper territory. Here in the fields of the woods it rested until the day David brought it up to Jerusalem (II Samuel 6:2, 3, 12; I Chronicles 15:1-29). cf. Psalm 132.

## CHAPTER 6 IN REVIEW

1. What offerings did the Philistines send back by the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
2. On what conveyance did they return it? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what point in Israel was the ark first brought? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What time of year was it when the ark came back? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the name of the man who received the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Of what tribe was he a member? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What kind of offering did the Israelites make when the ark came back? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What name was given to the place where the offering was made? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many men were smitten when the Israelites looked in the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what point was the ark taken after the tragedy? \_\_\_\_\_

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 7

- Vv. 1- 2 *The Ark in the house of Abinadab.* After the men of Beth-shemesh were punished for their lack of respect, they besought the men of Kirjath-jearim to come and get the Ark. This they did. They brought it into the hill country of Judah and placed it in the house of Abinadab. One of the sons of Abinadab, Eleazar by name, was appointed to take care of the Ark.
- Vv. 3- 8 *Israel purged at Mizpeh.* Periodically throughout their history the children of Israel found it necessary to take stock of themselves and give better direction to their lives. Even the patriarch Jacob himself found it necessary to purge his house of idols when he was returning from his sojourn with Laban in Haran (Genesis 35:2-5). When Joshua was bidding farewell to his people, he urged them to choose whether they would serve Jehovah or the false gods that they had learned about in other communities (Joshua 24:23). This same action was necessary before the people could be united behind the leadership of Samuel.
- Vv. 9-17 *Israel delivered under Samuel.* The judges were not mere interpreters and administrators of the law. They were men upon whom the Spirit of God came when the occasion demanded it. Quite often they were great military leaders who delivered the people when they were attacked by foreign nations. One of Samuel's first acts was to lead the people of Israel in a successful military campaign against the Philistines. When peace and quiet

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were restored to the land, Samuel went from place to place to assist the people in living in peace in the land.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Making peace with God precedes going to war for God.* Before Israel was ready to do battle for the Lord, her inhabitants needed to purge themselves of the graven images and molten idols which had crept into their society. Just as Isaiah did not feel that he was ready to deliver the Lord's message until after his unclean lips had been seared with coals from the altar (Isaiah 6), the soldiers of Israel were not strong enough to carry the battle for God until their weak faith had been bolstered. The individual Christian today feels that he is impotent when the besetting sins of his life have not been ferreted out and forgiven by the grace of God and the advocacy of the Son of God.
2. *God helps His followers to fight their battles.* God fought for Israel. He "thundered with a great thunder on the day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them" (v. 10). In a very real way, the abiding presence of God assists those who wrestle against "principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

#### *The Ark in the House of Abinadab. 7-1, 2*

And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord.

2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.

1. *Who was Abinadab?* 7:1

Abinadab was a very interesting name. It signified "father of generosity." He was evidently a Levite of Kirjath-jearim. It was in his house that the Ark was deposited. Although the Israelites themselves did not gather together to anoint a new priest, the people of the community appointed Eleazar to take care of the Ark. This was not a change of the priesthood as prophesied by God (I Samuel 2:35), but it was the temporary arrangement made by the people to care for the Ark.

2. *Why did the people leave it there for such a long time?*  
7:2

The people of Israel were not very punctual about performing the Lord's duties. The fact that they left the Ark in this strange location for 20 years is an indication of how they failed to do the Lord's bidding. Such an arrangement left the tabernacle itself still at Shiloh, but the main part of the tabernacle furniture at this distant location. It was only when David came to the throne that he began to take care of such neglected matters.

*Israel Purged at Mizpeh. 7:3-8*

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

3. *Why did Samuel exhort the people to return to the Lord? 7:3*

God's people had strayed very far from the road that He wanted them to walk. The wicked priests, Hophni and Phineas, had been allowed to lead the people astray. Their defection ultimately resulted in the capture of the Ark. Once the Ark was back in the borders of Israel, Samuel began a campaign to lead the people back to God. Samuel was addressing the leaders who were in return responsible for spreading his borders throughout the length and breadth of the land.

4. *Who were Baalim and Ashtaroth? 7:4*

They were Mr. and Mrs. Baalim. Baalim is the plural of Baal. Ashtaroth is the plural of Ashtarah. The plural *Baalim* is a general term employed to denote all the false deities, and is synonymous with the expression "other gods." Baal was the chief male deity of the Canaanites and all the nations of Hither Asia and was worshipped by the different nations with peculiar modifications. Therefore, he was designated by various distinctive epithets. Baal was a sun-god, and as such, the vehicle and source of physical life. Ashtaroth is derived from the singular *Ashtoreth* (see I Kings 11:5, 33; II Kings 23:13). In connection with the Sidonian Astharte, this was the general name used to denote the leading female deity of the Canaanitish tribes, a moon-goddess, who was worshipped

as the feminine principle of nature, embodied in the pure moonlight, and its influence upon terrestrial life. It corresponded to the Greek Aphrodite.

5. *In what way did Samuel judge? 7:6*

The judges who governed Israel were strictly God's vice-regents in the government of the people. God himself was the supreme ruler. Those who were thus elevated to the office of judgeship retained the dignity as long as they lived, although no family enjoyed regular unbroken succession to the office. Individuals prompted by the impulse of God's spirit when they witnessed the depressed state of their country were aroused to achieve deliverance. They continued in their office as defenders of religion and avengers of all crimes, particularly idolatry and its attended vices. Edersheim in his work, *Israel and Canaan*, (p. 107), says that the judges ruled only over one or several of the tribes. In such cases as the instance of Samuel it is apparent that he had jurisdiction in all the tribes. The Hebrew word for *judge* signified the effort necessary to settle a dispute and to maintain justice both for the individual and for the people. In the case of the Biblical judges, it has the added idea of liberating or delivering. The judges might be considered to be akin to the Roman consuls. In this particular case Samuel was interested in cleaning idolatry out of Israelite society.

6. *Why did the children of Israel ask Samuel to pray for them? 7:8*

The people knew that Samuel was a man of spiritual strength. Even when they rejected the Lord and Samuel's advice, they wanted Samuel to pray to God on their behalf. It is typical of the conduct of sinful people that they still want God's righteous leaders to pray on their behalf. Men who will not pray for themselves want somebody else to pray for them.

*Israel Delivered Under Samuel. 7:9-17*

9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered *it* for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord: and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

17 And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord.

7. *Where was Mizpeh? 7:9*

Mizpeh was five miles northwest of Jerusalem. The site is on a conical hill overlooking all the surrounding territory. The Philistines would be able to see the children of Israel as they gathered themselves together at this point. Since the Lords of the Philistines had recovered from their

afflictions they were able to come up to battle against Israel. As the children of Israel saw the Philistines, they were afraid. They knew that they had sinned in looking into the ark at Beth-shemesh, and they were afraid to go to battle against the enemy.

8. *Why did Samuel offer a sucking lamb? 7:9*

A whole burnt offering was to be a male without blemish. It could be of the flocks or of the herds, (Leviticus 1:10). It could also be out of the fowls (Leviticus 1:14). Such an offering would indicate the total dependence of the people of Israel on God's mercy.

9. *What was unusual about a great thunder? 7:10*

Palestine had little or no rain during the time of the wheat harvest. This was the time when the Ark was returned, and it would be a source of amazement to the people of Israel. Probably the great thunder would also have been accompanied with a storm which made it difficult for the Philistines to attack. As a matter of fact, the Scripture indicates that it did discomfit the Philistines. God himself fought for men and helped to overcome the attack of the Philistines. Thus the Philistines were stricken before Israel.

10. *Where is Beth-car? 7:11*

The name indicates a sheep house. The fact that it says they came "under Beth-car" indicates that the place itself was on a height with a road at its foot. The situation is not known. This is the only reference to the place to be found in the Scriptures. No doubt the Israelites chased the Philistines back down into their own territory.

11. *What is the meaning of Eben-ezer? 7:12*

This word means "the stone of help." Samuel said, "Hitherto the Lord has helped us." God had brought Israel a long way under Samuel's direction. They themselves were returning to the Lord. God had given them victory over the Philistines. The Ark was returned to

them. Samuel believed that God would help them further along their way. This is a good motto for Christians today.

12. *How was the hand of the Lord against the Philistines?*  
7:13

God did not suffer the Philistines to gain the supremacy over Israel during the lifetime of Samuel. He brought such supernatural phenomenon upon them as the thunder which was a discomfiture in the battle at Mizpeh. On other occasions He indicated to the Israelites when it was time to go into battle. In every way by His good providence on the Israelites He was opposing the sinful ways of the Philistines.

13. *Who were the Amorites?* 7:14

The Amorites were the Canaanites. The two names are used rather interchangeably (Genesis 15:16; cf. Genesis 15:19-21). The word itself literally means "the high ones." It is generally supposed that these were the highlanders (Numbers 13:29; Deuteronomy 1:7). They were probably the most prominent of the Canaanite people and thus their name is sometimes used to signify the Canaanites in general. In the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, *amurri* is the name for Palestine-Phoenicia. This verse indicates that the people of Israel did not have any trouble from the Canaanite tribes dwelling in their land, but their war was against the Philistines who lived along the western border.

14. *How long was Samuel's judgeship?* 7:15

Samuel was a very young man when he came up to Eli at the tabernacle. He probably was not called until he had served some time as an apprentice to Eli. It took some time for him to become known among the Israelite people, but his judgeship was probably not very lengthy. The people soon rejected him, and they wanted a king. Samuel continued to live throughout most of the reign of Saul, and his death is not mentioned until near the end of Saul's reign (I Samuel 25:1).

15. *Where was Samuel's circuit? 7:16, 17*

Samuel did not make his home in Shiloh. He was evidently not a priest as such. He performed the function of a priest, but since Shiloh had lost the ark, Ramah became the center of his service as prophet and judge. The Ark of the Covenant was no longer the center of worship, and Samuel saw no reason to stay in Shiloh with the empty shell of the tabernacle. As has been indicated before, Samuel's home was in the highlands of Benjamin. He was centrally located to all the people of Israel at this point. From this home of his, he went out to Bethel on the north, Gilgal on the east, and Mizpeh on the west. His return was ever to his own home in Ramah.

## CHAPTER 7 IN REVIEW

1. Who was appointed to take care of the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How long was the ark left with him? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What two generic names are given to false gods? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What office did Samuel fulfill in Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where did Samuel assemble Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who attacked Israel while they were assembled? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did the Israelites ask Samuel to do for them? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Samuel offer as a burnt offering? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What new name did Samuel give to the place? \_\_\_\_\_
10. At what places did Samuel judge Israel? \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 8

- Vv. 1- 5 *The people ask for a king.* God had long foreseen the day when Israel would have a king. He had told Abraham that kings would come out of his loins (Genesis 17:6). Moses had received instructions from God to pass along to the Israelites to guide them in the selection of a man to rule over them (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). The people of Israel, however, were presumptuous in demanding a king before it was evident in God's good providence to establish a king over them. Their motive was also quite bad inasmuch as they wanted a king over them ". . . like all the nations" (v. 5).
- Vv. 6- 9 *The Lord instructs Samuel.* God told Samuel to hearken to the request of the people. He also instructed him to protest solemnly and show them the essential nature of a king.
- Vv. 10-18 *Samuel describes a king.* This passage is a classic description of the nature of a monarch. His demands upon the lives of his subjects are spelled out in large letters. Much of what Samuel predicted was fulfilled in the very first king of Israel. Other succeeding kings only verified what Samuel had said.
- Vv. 19-22 *The people persist.* Regardless of the consequences, the people were insistent in seeking a king. They heard all that Samuel had to say, but they were not diverted from their intentions of changing their society from one that has been described as a theocracy to one that is best known as a monarchy.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The pull of the world.* A great deal of pressure is brought upon individuals, communities, and countries as social custom prevails. What others do matters a great deal to all of us. Style of dress is dictated by what everybody seems to be wearing. Moral standards in non-Christian countries fluctuate with the changing social scene. Christian doctrine may also be interpreted differently according to what seems to be the prevailing opinions. It was this desire to conform that led Israel to ask for a king.
2. *The patience of God.* Although God had not instigated this movement towards the monarchy, His great love dictated that the request of the people should be granted. Samuel thought that the people had rejected him from being their judge. God declared that in reality the people were rejecting Him. Still, God did not turn His back upon them and forsake them to flounder in their foolish ways.

The Installation of Israel's First King, 8:1—10:27.

### *The people ask for a King, 8:1-5*

And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.

2 Now the name of his first-born was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were* judges in Beer-sheba.

3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

4. *When Samuel was old, whom did he make judges over Israel?* 8:1

He made his sons judges over Israel. The reasons assigned for the appointment of Samuel's sons as judges stem from his own advanced age. The inference which we might draw from this alone is that they were simply to support their father in the administration of justice and that Samuel had no intention of laying down his office and still less of making the supreme office of judge hereditary in his family. This is still more apparent from the fact that they were stationed as judges of the nation in Beer-sheba, which was on the southern border of Canaan.

2. *What are the meanings of the names of Samuel's sons?* 8:2

Samuel chose very appropriate names for his sons. His firstborn's name means "Jehovah is God." The other one had a name which means "Jehovah is my father." This is some indication of the faith which Samuel had, and it should have been an encouragement to his sons to walk in Godly ways.

3. *What sort of men were they?* 8:3

The sons did not walk in the way of their father. They set their hearts upon gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. All of this was in opposition to the command of God (see Exodus 23:6, 8; Deuteronomy 16:19). One can only marvel that having witnessed the failure of Eli to train his sons Samuel failed to curb the lusts of his sons. It is not enough to say that this is just the common experience of the Orientals. This is just another instance of a good father without the blessing of faithful sons. It is this very failure on the part of Samuel that occasioned the Israelites' demanding a king.

4. *Who were the elders?* 8:4

The elders of Israel were the leaders of the people. They were not elders in the same sense as leaders of the New Testament church (I Timothy 3). Each tribe would have

its appointed leaders. These men represented the tribes as they came to Samuel.

5. *What request did the people make of Samuel?* 8:5

The request was for a king. They used the age of Samuel, and the iniquity of his sons as an excuse. The people were represented by their leaders; and although in I Samuel 5:20 the desire is grounded in a need for a leader in war, the express reason here is the maladministration of justice. Samuel viewed this request as a sinful demand. He knew that the theocracy was the divinely appointed constitution for Israel. The substitution of another form was treason to God.

*The Lord instructs Samuel.* 8:6-9

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

7 And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

6. *What was their real reason?* 8:6-9

They wanted to be like other nations. That is what many are saying today. We have to have a great association with offices and headquarters. Somebody is leading us around. Israel's request was based on a desire to follow the customs and institutions of other nations. These nations had been set aside for destruction when the people entered the land. These Israelites might have reminded

Samuel of his old age, which rendered him less able to attend to the duties of his office, and also of the avarice of his sons and the corruptness of the judges. They might have complained that his sons did not walk in his footsteps and asked God to choose suitable men. If they had done this, there could be no doubt that they would have received a gracious and suitable answer. They did not think of calling on God, however; they demanded that a king should be given them.

*Samuel Describes a King.* 8:10-18

10 And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.

11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and *to be* his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots.

12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters *to be* confectionaries, and *to be* cooks, and *to be* bakers.

14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even* the best of *them*, and give *them* to his servants.

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

16 And he will take your menservants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work.

17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.

7. *What was the king to be like? 8:10-18*

With divine insight Samuel told the people that their king would demand of their best young men for his chariots and his horsemen. He knew that the king would need an army. Captains would be appointed from their midst over thousands and over fifties. Other men would be required to till the ground of the king and to make his instruments of war. Moreover the king would demand young women to serve as his cooks, bakers, and confectionaries. Their property would be confiscated by the king (I Kings 21). In addition to supporting the priests with a tithe, the people would also be required to give another tenth to the king. Samuel foresaw the day that they would cry out for relief, but God ordained that once they had committed themselves to such a form of rule, they would have no chance to return to the former times. God had ordained the theocratic form of government. Their rejection of His ordinances was the same as the rejection of Him, the Author of the ordinances (v. 7). It is rebellion against God to rebel against God's form of government. Church people should be very careful not to make such moves.

*The People Persist. 8:19-22*

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;

20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord.

22 And the Lord said to Samuel, Harken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

8. *In what way had they rejected God? cf. I Samuel 8:20*

They had rejected God in that they wanted to be like all the nations. God had delivered them by judges. Samuel as a judge had delivered them, but they took it upon themselves. They were now saying, "We must have a king." In rejecting the judges, they were rejecting God. God was King. This is the verdict of God. In declaring Samuel incapable, they were founding their arguments upon mistrust in the Lord. In the person of Samuel they rejected the Lord and His rule. They wanted a king, because they imagined that Jehovah their God-King was not able to secure their constant prosperity. Instead of seeking for the cause of the misfortunes that had befallen them in their own sin, they searched for it in the constitution of the nation itself. In such a state of mind their desire for a king was a contempt and rejection of the kingly government of Jehovah.

9. *Why did Samuel rehearse the words of the people in the ears of the Lord? 8:21*

Samuel evidently went before the Lord again and again about the problem. This would be a rehearsal of these things in the ears of the Lord. Samuel's heart was heavy, and he found release in prayer. He was anxious about his people, and he wanted to be sure that he was doing the will of God in this matter. This demand of the people and the subsequent anointing of a king mark a turning point in the history of the people of Israel.

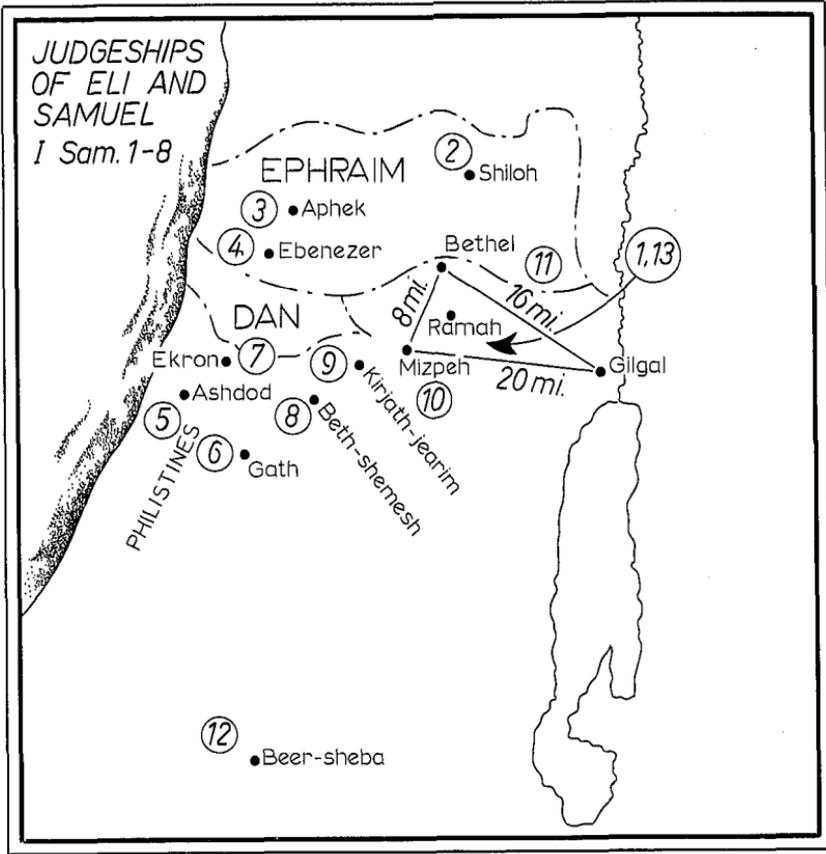
10. *Why did Samuel send the people back home? 8:22*

The elders of the people of Israel had come from various tribes. Some of them had come from across the Jordan in Gilead. Some had come from the far north near the Sea of Galilee. Others had no doubt come from Beer-sheba, the southern city half way down the length of the Dead Sea. Samuel was awaiting the will of the Lord in this matter, and he wanted time for this will to be made known to him. He would call the people again when a

king was picked out for them. The people evidently had respect for Samuel, and were willing to wait until the time was right. We find none of them rebelling openly against this dismissal, but they must have returned with thoughtful steps. What they were doing had brought sadness to the prophet. It had brought a statement from the Lord that forced them on in spite of the warning which Samuel had given them. Some of them may have entertained doubts about their actions as they waited in their home tribes to see what would happen. Much discussion must have transpired. All Israel was agog. The monarchy was about to be born.

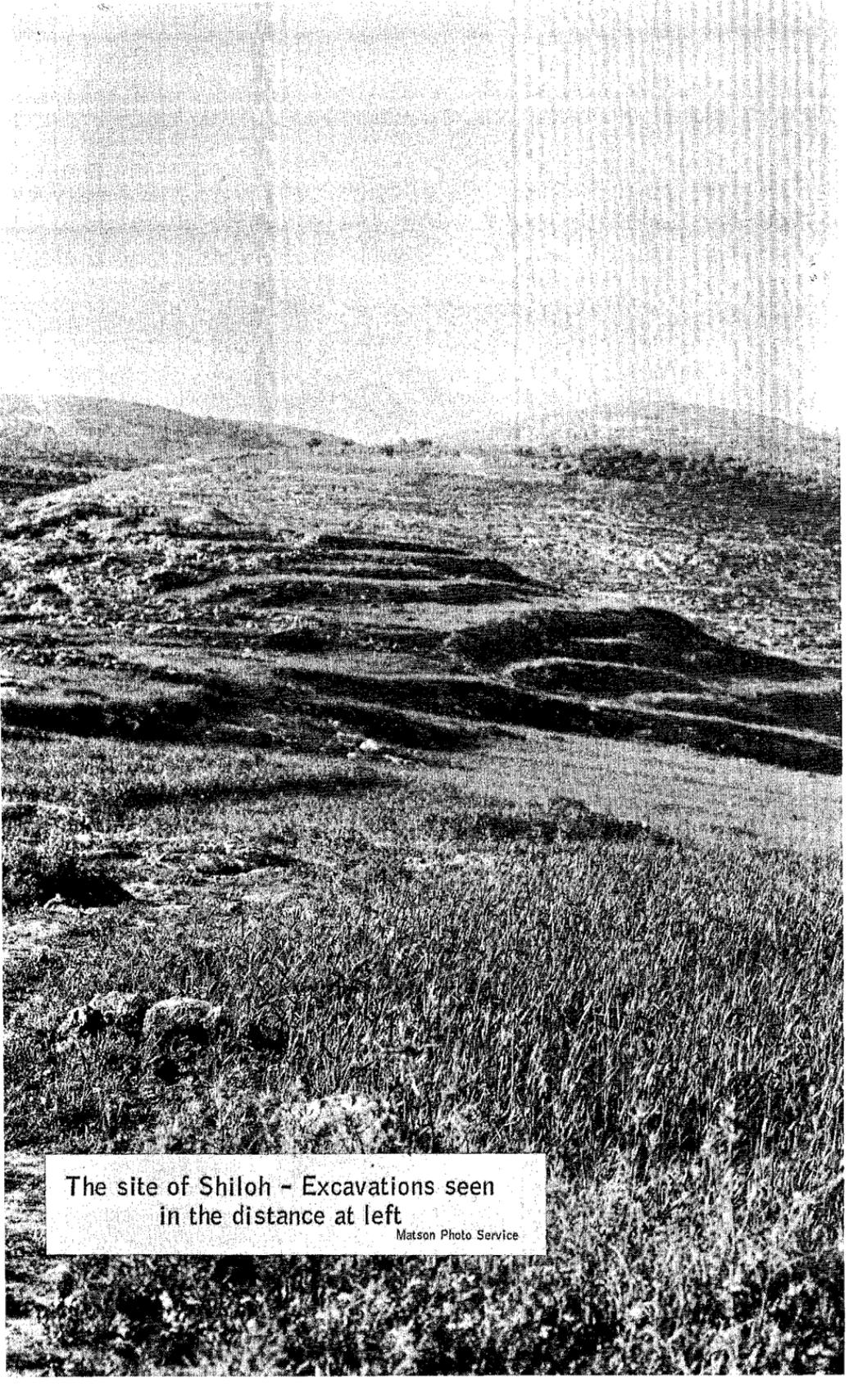
## CHAPTER 8 IN REVIEW

1. Whom did Samuel appoint as judges in Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did these judges reside? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What were the names of Samuel's sons? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What reason did the people give for asking for a king? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the real reason? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What did Samuel say the king would do with Israel's young men? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did Samuel say the king would do with Israel's young women? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Samuel say the king would do with Israel's land? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What portion of their income did Samuel say the people would have to give to support their king? \_\_\_\_\_
10. When Samuel said the people had rejected him, whom did God say they had rejected? \_\_\_\_\_



**JUDGESHIPS OF SAMUEL AND ELI  
I Samuel 1-8**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ramah<br/>Birth of Samuel 1:1-20</li> <li>2. Shiloh<br/>Dedication of Samuel 1:21-2:11</li> <li>3.-4. Aphek and Ebenezer<br/>Defeat of Israel by Philistines<br/>4:1-22</li> <li>5. Ashdod<br/>Fall of Dagon 5:1-7</li> <li>6. Gath<br/>Ark there 5:8-9</li> <li>7. Ekron<br/>Ark there 5:10-12</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Beth-shemesh<br/>Ark sent to Israel 6:1-20</li> <li>9. Kiriath-jearim<br/>Ark remains 20 years 6:21—7:2</li> <li>10. Mizpah<br/>Samuel defeats Philistines 7:3-14</li> <li>11. Bethel-Gilgal-Mizpah<br/>Samuel's circuit 7:15-17</li> <li>12. Beersheba<br/>Samuel's sons judges 8:1-3</li> <li>13. Ramah<br/>Israel requests a King 8:4-22</li> </ul> |
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The site of Shiloh - Excavations seen  
in the distance at left

Matson Photo Service

FIRST SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 9

- Vv. 1- 5 *Saul's search for his father's asses.* God knew of Israel's demand for a king. He also knew where to find a man who would meet the people's requirements as a leader. His background was one of humble nature, but his appearance was impressive. As the reader of the Bible meets him, he is on an expedition to find the lost animals of his father.
- Vv. 6-10 *Saul seeks the seer.* A man who was called a prophet in Israel had formerly been called a seer. The seer was the kind of man who would be able to give answers to all kinds of hard questions. The servant who was with Saul was especially insistent that they employ the services of such a man. They thought he could help find the asses.
- Vv. 11-21 *Saul and Samuel meet.* God had told Samuel that Saul would come to him. The two met as Samuel was in a nearby city to lead the people in a sacrifice. Samuel announced to Saul that he should become king of Israel, but Saul could hardly believe it.
- Vv. 22-27 *Samuel honors Saul.* Samuel gave Saul a place of honor at the sacrifice. The best portion of the sacrificial animal had been set aside. Samuel ordered this to be put before Saul.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Life situations often demand the counsel of a man of God.* God's ministers are servants of all. Like the Master Himself, they should seek to serve and not to be served. Those who are men and women of faith will often seek out these men of God for their good offices. No burden is so great that they cannot be of some

assistance, and no problem is so small that they will not stoop to help.

2. *God exalts the humble.* Saul described himself as being “. . . of the smallest of the tribes of Israel” (9:21). He was amazed that Samuel had intimated that the desire of all Israel was upon him. If he had remained as humble as this, he might have been a great leader. When he lost this humility and disobeyed God, he was rejected as king. When he was humble, God’s prophet exalted him by giving him a place of honor at the feast and prophesying good about him.

*Saul’s Search For His Father’s Asses. 9:1-5*

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

2 And he had a son, whose name *was* Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and *there was* not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people.

3 And the asses of Kish Saul’s father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

4 And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found *them* not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and *there they were* not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not.

5 *And* when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave *caring* for the asses, and take thought for us.

1. *Whose son was Saul? 9:1*

Saul was the son of Kish. The elaborate genealogy of

Kish, the Benjaminite, and the minute description of the figure of his son, Saul, are intended to indicate at the very outset the importance to which Saul attained in relation to the people of Israel. Kish was the son of Abiel (cf. 14:51). I Chronicles 8:33 and 9:39 give Ner as the ancestor of Kish; but the difference there is in naming not the father but the grandfather. *Kish* means a man of property (see Ruth 2:1). The town of Kish was Gibeah of Benjamin. We conjecture that he was a man of some important position in the community.

2. *What was the appearance of Saul?* 9:2

Saul was in the prime of life and strong. He was not in his adolescence nor immature. So long as his father lived, he would be under his authority; and there is no necessary contradiction between the language used here and the later account, according to which Saul had a son already grown. The name of Saul is probably abbreviated from a longer form meaning *Asked-of-God*. In contrast with his father, he would be, of course, a "young man," i.e., in the full vigor of youth. It may even be said that no one equalled him in beauty. "From his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." Such a figure as this was well adapted to commend him to the people as their king. Size and beauty were highly valued in rulers as signs of manly strength.

3. *What occasioned Saul's first meeting with Samuel?*  
9:3-10

Kish's she-asses had strayed, and Saul went with his servants through the mountains of Ephraim in search of the animals. Saul was ready to leave the fruitless search when his servant suggested that they consult Samuel, "the man of God," who was in the vicinity.

4. *Where is Shalisha?* 9:4

Nothing is given to indicate the meaning of the name of the town or its exact location. The context indicates that it would not be right to consult a prophet without a gift

to give him; and he knew that their supplies were exhausted and was without knowledge of what present they might take him. The servant replied that he had a quarter of a shekel of money, a small coin containing about sixty grains of silver. The objection was met, and Saul consented to go to Samuel in the nearby town. Their supplies had been exhausted, but they may have been circling around without going far from home. It was probably near Mt. Ephraim, and the name means "triangular." Reference is made to Baal-shalisha (II Kings 4:42).

5. *Where was the land of Shalim? 9:4 b*

The word Shalim means "foxes." A place is mentioned by this name only with regard to Saul's passing through it in looking for his father's animals. Many commentaries consider this to be a reference to the land of Shual, which was near Ophrah (13:17). Ophrah was the home of Gideon (Judges 6:11), and would be located in the tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan and six miles southwest of Shechem. Suggestions are therefore made that this Ophrah is another form of Ephraim and located in the land of Benjamin (II Chronicles 13:19). The mention of the name meaning "foxes" reminds the Bible reader of the incident of Samson's catching foxes down in Philistia near the territory of Dan (Judges 15:3-6). Although we cannot be sure of the exact location of this place, we are impressed with the fact that Saul wandered back and forth through the center of Palestine looking for his father's lost animals.

*Saul Seeks The Seer. 9:6-10*

6 And he said unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honorable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can show us our way that we should go.

7 Then said Saul to his servant, But behold, *if* we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our

vessels, and *there is* not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we?

8 And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: *that* will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way.

9 (Beforetime in Isarel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *be that is now called* a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)

10 Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God *was*.

6. *Who was the man of God? 9:6*

Saul's servant must have known of Samuel's being in the area. His reference was to Samuel himself, for it was he whom they met when they looked for the "man of God." Evidently they had confidence in his ability to give advice and direction in all kinds of life's situations. To speak of a "man of God" was to refer to a prophet. They were true men of God. Many unnamed prophets are known only in this way (I Samuel 2:27; I Kings 13:1). Even Moses is described by this phrase (Deuteronomy 33:1) as if there were no more honorable title.

7. *Why did they want to bring a present to Samuel? 9:7*

Saul knew that he did not have any kind of victuals to give to the man of God. He evidently did not have any money, for he took the fourth part of the shekel of silver which his servant had to give to Samuel. Such concern indicates that it was customary for the Israelites to give a little something to their prophets. Such a practice helps us to understand the meaning of the priest in Israel who told Amos to go on back to Judah to prophesy and "there eat bread" (Amos 7:12). It has ever been God's ordinance that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. It was not right to muzzle the oxen which tread the grain (Deuteronomy 25:4; I Corinthians 9:9; I Timothy 5:18).

8. *What is the meaning of the two words for a prophet?*  
9:9

The Hebrew word used most often to describe a prophet is a word that means "to announce" or "to declare." The primary idea of the prophet is one who utters a communication. A popular definition of a prophet is "one who speaks for another." Two other Hebrew words are used to name the prophet. Both of these mean "one who sees." In this verse one of these other two words is used and is translated "seer." The three words occur together in I Chronicles 29:29, where they seem to be in contrast with one another. When the book of Samuel was written, the word prophet was most common, but earlier the other word had been used quite often. Radical critics take this to be an indication of the fact that the book was not written until a long time after the events had happened. A man's lifetime is long enough for different words to come into popular use. In less than a generation a word may fall into disuse, and this is not evidence enough to take the authorship of the book away from Samuel and give it to a later author. The two words help us to understand the functions of a prophet. Saul evidently went to the man whom he thought could "see" and tell him where he could find his father's asses.

*Samuel and Saul Meet. 9:11-21*

*Samuel and Saul Meet. 9:11-21*

11 *And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?*

12 *And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you; make haste now, for he came today to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people today in the high place:*

13 *As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straight-way find him, before he go up to the high place to eat:*

for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him.

14 And they went up into the city: *and* when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.

15 Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

16 Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him *to be* captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house *is*.

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I *am* the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me today, and tomorrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

21 And Saul answered and said, *Am* not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

9. *Did Samuel know Saul was coming? 9:11-17*

On the day before the meeting, Jehovah had told Samuel that the man whom he was to anoint as captain over his people was coming to him. God in His overruling provi-

dence directed Saul's way so that he came to Samuel. God's displeasure at the desire of the people was really a displeasure with the state of their heart from which the desire had sprung. Since the Philistines were making fresh attacks upon Israel, God was directing the affairs of His kingdom so that a strong deliverer would be raised up from among them.

10. *What was the high place? 9:12*

The name of the town Ramah means "a high place." About three miles north of Gibeah and six miles from Jerusalem a high hill rises from the right side of the road. This is crowned with the village called Er Ram. This is taken to be the site of ancient Ramah. Israel's Canaanite neighbors had high places where they planted groves and set up images and idols. There is no evidence that Israel was falling into these idolatrous practices, but no doubt they would build an altar in a prominent place. It thus would be known as "high place."

11. *What city was this? 9:14*

Samuel evidently did not live in the town where Saul met him. He had only come to it in order to hold a sacrificial feast as he did in Bethlehem (I Samuel 16:1). This is true even though Samuel did honor Saul by having him as his guest. They appeared to sleep under the same roof, but both were probably guests in another man's home. Some commentators assume that he had a house at his command for any time that he might be in the area, such as was provided for Elisha (II Kings 4). The town where Saul met Samuel was probably southwest of Bethlehem.

12. *Why was Saul anointed king? 9:16*

God had told Samuel that he was sending a man to him. This man was to be anointed "captain" over Israel. God was doing this in order to save His people out of the land of the Philistines. This makes Saul's call to the office of king similar to the call of Moses to be the leader of his people when they were in captivity in Egypt.

13. *Why was Samuel in the gate of the city?* 9:18

The prophet was evidently greeting the people who came to the city for the sacrificial feast. The custom of the people was to congregate in the broad area near the entrance of the city. Much of their business was conducted here, and many incidental and providential meetings have occurred here (Genesis 19:1).

14. *How did Samuel prepare Saul for the anointing?*  
9:18 ff.

At the feast that night, Saul was Samuel's guest and greatly honored. As they retired, Samuel promised that on the morrow he would tell Saul all that was on his heart. This included more than the safety of the animals for which he had been seeking, inasmuch as Samuel told Saul all these things immediately. As they talked, Samuel asked a perplexing question that brought a humble answer from Saul. Samuel said, "To whom belong the desirable things of Israel? It is not to thee and to thy father's house?" Saul replied that he was a member of the least of Israel's tribes and that his clan was least among his tribesmen. All this must have caused Saul a sleepless night pondering all that had taken place.

*Samuel Honors Saul. 9:22-27*

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them in the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which *were* about thirty persons.

23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee.

24 And the cook took up the shoulder, and *that* which *was* upon it, and *set it* before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left! *set it* before thee, *and* eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

25 And as they were come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

27 *And* as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may show thee the word of God.

15. *Why did Samuel reserve a piece of meat for Saul?*  
9:23, 24

Samuel had already addressed Saul as the most outstanding Israelite of his time. To signify his honor for Saul he had reserved the best part of the sacrificial animal for Saul. Some understand this reference to that "which was upon it," to that broth which was poured over it. No doubt it was that which was attached to it. A strange interpretation has made this to be the kidney and that which was over it, but the kidney was to be burned upon the altar in the case of all the slain sacrifices (Leviticus 3:4). Only the flesh of the animals offered in sacrifice was used in the sacrificial meal. What was attached to the leg must have been the fat upon the flesh. The leg is the largest and best portion and was a piece of honor for Saul (Genesis 43:34).

16. *Why were they on the top of the house?* 9:25

Palestinian houses had flat roofs. They were places for retirement for private conversation (Deuteronomy 22:8). It was while he was on the housetop that Peter received a vision to go to the Gentiles (Acts 10:9), and many other references are made to activities of this kind on the roof of the houses.

17. *Why was Samuel secretive about anointing Saul?* 9:26

Samuel wanted Saul to get away early in the morning. Boaz had urged Ruth to leave his threshing floor "before one could know another" (Ruth 3:14). Samuel did not allow Saul's servant to hear the conversation. Samuel may have entered into private conversation concerning the moral degradation of the people, their clamor for the king, the oppression of the heathen, the inability of the Israelites to stand against their foes, the necessity for a conversion of the people and the need for a leader who was devoted to God. Such discussions are best conducted in secret when they concern only two particular individuals.

## CHAPTER 9 IN REVIEW

1. Whose son was Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Of what tribe was Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was Saul's home? \_\_\_\_\_
4. For what was Saul searching when he met Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the old name for a prophet? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did Samuel know Saul was coming to meet him? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Was Samuel in his home when he anointed Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who was with Saul when he met Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
9. On what kind of occasion was Saul anointed? \_\_\_\_\_
10. In what part of the house were Samuel and Saul when they conversed? \_\_\_\_\_

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 10

- Vv. 1- 8 *Saul anointed by Samuel.* The priests were anointed (Leviticus 8:10). The prophets of Israel were also set aside to their office by this solemn ceremony (I Kings 19:16). The king was also to be set aside to his office by a divine service.
- Vv. 9-16 *Saul among the prophets.* This saying became a proverb in Israel, and is used often to express amazement at a person's being in unusual company: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (I Samuel 10:12 b). His meeting the band of prophets and the change of heart which came upon him had been foretold by Samuel when the two parted company. His change of heart was typical of those charismatic leaders upon whom God's spirit came as they entered into their offices.
- Vv. 17-27 *Saul acclaimed by the people.* Samuel called the people to a solemn assembly. He issued grave warnings to them about the nature of a king, even writing the manner of the kingdom in a book and laying it up before the Lord to be preserved for future generations (v. 25). He proceeded then to implement the establishment of the king in his office. In prayerful spirit, the people shouted: "God save the king" (v. 24 b). As in most political situations, there was not complete unanimity of opinion; but it was only the "worthless fellows" who opposed Saul's coronation (v. 27).

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The blessing of the spirit of God.* When God raised up judges to deliver His people, He sent His spirit upon

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them (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19). When the Spirit of God came upon Saul, he prophesied among the prophets. Although Christians today are not to expect miraculous manifestations of the Spirit of God in their lives, each Christian has the gift of the Holy Spirit to rest and abide in his life as he becomes an obedient child of God (Acts 2:38). God's Spirit bearing witness with his spirit enables him not only to begin a Christian life but to bring forth the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-26).

2. *The fellowship of the faithful.* Hardly any situation in everyday life finds a great number of people to be of unanimous opinion. The sharpest division of opinion and purpose occurs between good men and evil men. Those who are in a position of leadership in God's work ought not to grieve too much that there are wicked opponents of their good work, but they ought to give thanks daily for those who join with them in the good work they are doing. When Saul was anointed king, ". . . there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched" (10:26). Those whose hearts have been touched by God will uphold God's leaders today.

### *Saul Anointed by Samuel.* 10:1-8

Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *Is it* not because the Lord hath anointed thee *to be* captain over his inheritance?

2 When thou art departed from me today, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulcher in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?

3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying

three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:

4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two *loaves* of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands.

5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where *is* the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:

6 And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shall be turned into another man.

7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, *that* thou do as occasion serve thee; for God *is* with thee.

8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do.

### 1. *When was Saul anointed king at first? 10:1*

On the morrow after the feast which Samuel and Saul celebrated together, Samuel called Saul from his bed early in the morning. As they went toward the edge of the town, Samuel told Saul to send the servant on ahead. Samuel then took a vial of oil and poured it upon Saul's head and kissed him. This anointing with oil was a symbol of endowment with the Spirit of God. Hitherto there had been no other anointing among the people of God than that of the priests and the sanctuary. Thus the monarchy was inaugurated as a divine institution. Now the king was set apart from the rest of the nation as "anointed of the Lord." The kiss bestowed by Samuel must have been only a mark of personal affection, for kissing is nowhere an act expressive of fealty to a king.

*2. Where was Rachel's sepulchre? 10:2*

According to Genesis 35:16, Rachel's sepulchre was on the way from Bethel to Bethlehem, only a short distance from the latter place. Jerome mentions a tradition of the tomb being located here. This traditional site is northwest of Bethlehem, and west of the road between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Saul's passing by the tomb is another indication of the fact that he was not anointed by Samuel in Ramah. If he were southwest of Bethlehem when he met Samuel, he would naturally pass near Rachel's tomb on the way to Gibeah in Benjamin. He would have no need to pass by Rachel's tomb down in Judah if he were in Ramah when he was anointed. To go from Ramah to Gibeah, he would pass only through the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.

*3. Where was Zelzah? 10:2 b*

The expression "in the border of Benjamin" does not make it impossible for Saul to be traveling from near Bethlehem to his home. The traditional site of Rachel's tomb is several miles away from the southern border of Benjamin. The mention of Zelzah helps us to understand what is meant by the mention of the border and would be superfluous otherwise since Rachel's tomb was unquestionably a well-known place. Zelzah must have been up between Rachel's tomb and the south border of Benjamin. It is otherwise an unknown location, but it should not be translated by the phrase "in great haste." It is undoubtedly a reference to a place and not a Hebrew word to describe Saul's manner of traveling.

*4. Where was the plain of Tabor? 10:3*

Elsewhere the word translated plain in this verse is translated with the word *oak*. It is simply mentioned here as one of the points on the homeward journey of Saul. The place is nowhere else mentioned, and nothing further can be determined concerning it other than it stood by the road leading from Rachel's tomb to Gibeah. It no

doubt meant a great deal to Saul as a point of reference, but it has little meaning for us today.

5. *What was the hill of God? 10:5*

This is not a high place of God, a place dedicated to God's worship, but rather a reference to Gibeah, the native place of Saul. Gibeah is sometimes called the high place of Saul (11:4; 15:34; II Samuel 21:6). It is called the hill of God here because of the sacrificial height which rose within or near the town (10:13), and which may have possibly have been more famous than any other such heights. Here the Philistines had a military post. It was a seat for the school of the prophets (II Kings 2:3).

6. *Who were the company of the prophets? 10:5 b*

"Bands," or "schools," of the prophets were the men of God. They were active in Israel from this time forward to the time of Amos, who said he was not a prophet nor a "son of the prophets" (Amos 7:14). No definite reason is assigned to their going in the direction opposite to Saul at this time, other than that they had been in the high place for worship.

7. *Did they use instrumental music in their worship? 10:5c*

These prophets had with them a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe, and a harp. As far back as we have any record of music in worship, we find reference to instruments connected with the worship. God has never prohibited the use of these instruments, and there is even indication of different kinds of music in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:19)—both accompanied and unaccompanied.

8. *What signs were given to Saul to substantiate his appointment? 10:2-7*

Saul was told that he would meet two men in the vicinity of Rachel's tomb, and these men would tell him of his father's concern for his safety. This would substantiate the seer's announcement concerning the animals and also

raise Saul's thoughts to concern for his new work. The second sign was his meeting three men going up to God to Bethel, carrying three kids, three loaves of bread, and a bottle of wine. Saul was told to accept their inquiry concerning his welfare and their proffered gift of two loaves. The third sign concerned Saul's meeting a group of prophets who were to be coming down from Gibeah, his home town. As Saul met these men, it was prophesied that he too would be filled with the spirit of God and begin to prophesy as did the prophets.

9. *Where was Gilgal?* 10:8

Gilgal was one of the towns on Samuel's circuit (7-16). The people of Israel had been circumcised there immediately after they had crossed Jordan into Canaan under Joshua's leadership (Joshua 4:19). The spot was located in the border of the tribe of Benjamin and would be found between Jericho and the Jordan river. Some evidence is seen for there being another location by this name in the hill country of Ephraim (Joshua 9:6; 10:15), but the former location seems more appropriate to the narrative here. No doubt Samuel wanted to meet Saul at Gilgal as he made his next appointed visit on his circuit.

*Saul Among the Prophets.* 10:9-16

9 And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.

10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

11 And it came to pass, when all that knew him before-time saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What *is* this *that* is come unto the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets?

12 And one of the same place answered and said, But who *is* their father? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is Saul also among the prophets?*

13 And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

14 And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? and he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that *they were* no where, we came to Samuel.

15 And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you.

16 And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

#### 10. *What is the meaning of the proverb? 10:13*

Saul was known as the son of Kish, the man of Benjamin. He was evidently acquainted with rural life, and his father had sent him out to look for his lost she-asses. To find Saul among the prophets of God was an unexpected experience. Those who knew Saul were surprised to find him in such company. They asked, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Whenever we find someone in a group to which he is not accustomed, we often ask the same question. This is especially true when one is found in the company of those who are generally considered to be of a higher class. The proverb was evidently used this way in Israel in ancient times.

#### 11. *Who was Saul's uncle? 10:14*

Saul was introduced as the son of Kish (9:1), the son of Abiel (14:51). Abner became Saul's captain, and they were very closely associated throughout the reign of Saul. This constant association would indicate that they might have been reared in the same community. Such a condition would point to Ner's being the uncle mentioned in this account of Saul's return to his home.

12. *Why was Saul's uncle anxious to know what Samuel said? 10:15 b*

Here is an indication of how the people did not let any of Samuel's words "fall to the ground" (3:19). Whatever Samuel had to say was of interest to the people of Israel. It would be hard to imagine that Ner would have any idea that his nephew would be chosen king. His inquiry undoubtedly was one of general curiosity and wholesome interest in any pronouncement of the man of God. Saul did not mention anything about his being anointed king of Israel or his relationship to the kingdom which the people were wanting to see established. The latest developments along the line of setting up the monarchy may have been a part of the uncle's interest; but Saul did not divulge what had happened to him in this respect. Josephus indicates that Saul kept this secret because he did not want to arouse unbelief or envy. Others believe that it was probably because of his unambitious humility.

*Saul Acclaimed by the People. 10:17-27*

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpeh;

18 And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppressed you:

19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands.

20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.

22 Therefore they inquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

13. *Where was Saul anointed a second time? 10:17-27*

Saul was anointed publicly at Mizpeh. It is quite appropriate that the anointing take place here, because it was at Mizpeh that the Israelites repented and defeated the Philistines. It was here also that the judges had met to make many decisions and to worship. Here at Mizpeh Saul was chosen by lot. First the tribe from among the twelve tribes was selected, then the family from within the selected tribe, the household within the family, and finally the man from within the household. God thus guided them in the selection. When Saul was singled out, he hid

from the people because of his modesty. Had he only kept this attitude, his affairs would have had a different ending.

14. *Who was Matri? 10:21*

Matri is a Hebrew name meaning Rainy. He was evidently a Benjaminite and head of the family to which Saul, the king of Israel, belonged. The mention here is the only mention in the Scripture, but this would place him considerably earlier than 1020 B.C. The fact that he was so unimportant has caused his name to drop out of the genealogies. First Chronicles gives evidence that many of the genealogical lines may be incomplete. As has been generally concluded before, the genealogies in the Scriptures list only the important people in most cases.

15. *Why did Saul hide? 10:22*

Saul spoke very humbly of himself when he first met Samuel. He said that he was a member of the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest in all the land. He also said that his family was the least of all the families within this tribe (9:21). The task of reigning over the people may have seemed overwhelming to him. In his humility he ran and hid. Without accusing Saul of mistrusting God, we can believe that he was not willing to step out and take God at His word. He need not trust in his own strength alone, and this reluctance must have been largely born out of humility.

16. *How could Samuel say that God had chosen Saul?*  
10:24

God had told Samuel that He would send a man to him to be anointed king. God indicated that the man was Saul as he came to Samuel seeking information about his lost animals (9:17). In this way God had chosen Saul and sent him to Samuel. The people were the ones who were anxious to have a king, yet God had chosen the man to fill the office. He met the qualifications given in the Law (Deuteronomy 17:14-20), and in addition he was bigger

than any other man in all the land. He made a striking appearance and was a popular choice.

17. *What was the meaning of the shout? 10:24*

In the Authorized Version, the phrase is translated: "God save the king." The American Standard Version has this: "Long live the king." The literal meaning of the original language is as follows: "Let the king live." It is typical English usage to make the phrase to be the equivalent of the idiom, "God save the king." It is really a prayer that the king might enjoy long life and prosper as the leader of God's people. By this shout the people acclaim Saul as their ruler and pledge their allegiance to him.

18. *What opposition did Saul have? 10:27*

None seemed to oppose the monarchy on the grounds that it was against God's will. The people had rejected God's will. The people had rejected God, but in His mercy He led them to select and appoint an acceptable ruler. As in every major crowd, there were some who were unwilling to see Saul in the office of king. They are described as worthless fellows, sons of Belial. Satan was at work even in the early days of the monarchy. The fact that these evil men did not bring presents to Saul indicates that the other people did bring tokens of their love and esteem. Some of their presents may have been to support him through the critical years of the infancy of the monarchy.

## CHAPTER 10 IN REVIEW

1. With what was Saul anointed? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What mark of personal affection did Samuel bestow on Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
3. By what memorial did Samuel tell Saul he would meet two young men? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What kind of musical instruments did they have? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How many men going up to Bethel was Saul to see? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What items of offering were they to have? \_\_\_\_\_
7. To what town was Saul to go to meet Samuel again? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what unusual activity was Saul to participate after God's spirit came upon him? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who was Saul's uncle? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where was Saul anointed a second time? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 11

- Vv. 1-3 *Jabesh-gilead attacked.* Israel was seldom free from oppression and opposition. This may have been the meaning of the spies who said, "The land, . . . , is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof" (Numbers 13:32). Many of the attacks came from neighbors nearby, and the Ammonite people were such neighbors.
- Vv. 4-11 *Jabesh-gilead delivered.* The Spirit of God came upon Saul, and he took immediate steps to rescue the Trans-jordan residents of Jabesh-gilead from the clutches of their attackers. His kindness on their behalf made them his lifelong friends.
- Vv. 12-25 *The kingship of Saul renewed.* Samuel called the people to an assembly at Gilgal. Saul was again presented to the people, and some called for the punishment of those who had rejected the kingship of Saul when he was first crowned king. Saul's magnanimity prevailed, and the worthless fellows who had opposed him at the first were spared. This happy solution to the situation caused all Israel to return to their homes with joy.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Christian living is never easy.* The Israelites may have thought that their life in the promised land of Palestine would be without hardship. It was, indeed, often described as a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8). The land, however, was a political football; and from the south the Egyptians often attacked it. From the north came the Assyrians. From the east came the Ammonites and Moabites. Besides these hostile peoples, there were the Edomites, Amalekites, and Philistines. These are typical of the enemies of Christians—the materialists, secularists, atheists, and hedonists.
2. "*There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*" (Proverbs 18:24 b). When the tribes of Israel demanded that the men of Benjamin deliver up the criminals of Gibeah, the Benjaminites refused (Judges 20:13). As a result, a civil war was fought; and Benjamin was nearly destroyed. The remnant of the men of Benjamin found wives in Jabesh-gilead (Judges 21:14). We are left to wonder if Saul might have been descended from one of these. At any rate, he moved swiftly to deliver the inhabitants of the city in his day. As a result, these people were ever after indebted to him. They showed him the final kindness of taking his gibbeted body from the walls of Beth-shean (I Samuel 31:11-13). Christians today should be grateful for their lifelong friends in the church and especially thankful that they can sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus."

Samuel's Retirement from the Judgeship, 11:1—12:25.

#### *Jabesh-gilead Attacked.* 11:1-3

Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make a *covenant* with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* a reproach upon all Israel.

3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

1. *Who was Nabash? 11:1*

Nahash was the king of the Ammonites. The Ammonites were descendants of the younger daughter of Lot by Lot himself (Genesis 19:38). These people settled in the land east of the Jordan near the north end of the Dead Sea. They became a very idolatrous people and worshiped a false god named Molech. Although the people of Israel had been told not to fight against them when they came out of Egyptian bondage, these people were quite often among Israel's warring neighbors and enemies (Judges 11:12).

2. *Where was Jabesh-gilead? 11:1 b*

Jabesh-gilead was an Israelite town east of the Jordan river and north of the Jabbok river. It was an important town in Gilead, somewhat closer to the Sea of Galilee than to the Dead Sea. Wives had been found among the citizens of Jabesh-gilead for the men of Benjamin after the other tribes had nearly exterminated the Benjamites (Judges 21:8-15). It may have been that some of Saul's ancestors were citizens of this community.

3. *Why would Nabash's cruelty be a reproach on Israel? 11:2*

For all the men of one city to be maimed in such a terrible way would be a sign of reproach to any people. They would be looked upon as rather helpless cripples. The fact that an enemy had been able to do this to them would also indicate that they were weak and unable to

defend themselves. The loss of the right eyes of all the men in the town would be a terrible price to pay for peace. No honorable group of people would allow such a penalty to be exacted from them. It would be quite a victory for Nahash if he were able to exact this ransom from the men of Jabesh-gilead, but a reproach on Israel.

*Jabesh-gilead Delivered.* 11:4-11

4 Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What *aileth* the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

6 And the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying; Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

8 And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, Tomorrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and showed *it* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, Tomorrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

11 And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites

until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

4. *Why did Saul return to the farm? 11:5*

There was no kingdom as such; that is, there was no army, no court, no palace. Saul again demonstrates a very wholesome attitude inasmuch as he was content to return to his father's house and to his former way of life. When he heard of the oppression of the Ammonites, his anger was aroused; and it is even connected with the Spirit of God, inasmuch as he was rightly indignant that such an act was to be committed. He sent word to Nahash, as the custom of war would be; but it would further take Nahash off his guard, making it possible for the Israelites to attack unawares while the enemy was lax with its night guard.

5. *In what way did the Spirit of God come upon Saul?*  
11:6

Nothing is said about the manner in which the Holy Spirit came upon Saul. On the Day of Pentecost the coming of the Spirit was attended by certain outward signs which were visible and audible (Acts 2:3, 4). God's spirit came upon the judges throughout their three-hundred-year history, but nothing is said in any of their cases to indicate that there were such manifestations to be tested by the senses. Generally, it was stated that "the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him (Judges 14:6). The coming of the Spirit in such a case enabled Samson to perform feats of unusual strength. In the case of Saul it appears that God's spirit helped him to have the courage he needed to take the necessary action. The spirit of God incited him to such righteous indignation that he determined not to let the king of the Ammonites go unpunished for his threatened cruelty.

6. *Why did Saul dissect his oxen? 11:7*

By sending a piece of his oxen to each of the twelve tribes of Israel, Saul demonstrated in a dramatic way that their help was needed in the war against Nahash. He told them that if they did not come forth to fight with him and Samuel against Nahash, their oxen might well be hewn into pieces by the enemy. It was in this way that the Levite had called all Israel as one man to punish the sinners of Gibeah after they had misused and killed his concubine (Judges 19:29, 30). The dramatic action served its purpose in Saul's case, and the fear of the Lord came upon the people. They came out to battle with a unified purpose.

7. *Where was Bezek? 11:8*

Bezek was one of the first towns conquered by the Israelites after the death of Joshua (Judges 1:4). The location is indefinite, but it must have been near the border of Benjamin and Judah. This was a good place for the men of Israel to meet before they crossed over the Jordan to attack Nahash.

8. *Why was a difference made between Israel and Judah? 11:8*

Judah had been given the preeminence by his father Jacob (Genesis 49:8-12). Judah had been the leader as the people marched through the wilderness under Moses' guidance. In many ways he was always separate from the rest of the people of Israel. Saul's numbering revealed that there were 30,000 men of war ready to go up to battle out of Judah. The other eleven tribes totaled only 300,000. Judah had been the largest tribe in both the numberings in Moses' day (Numbers 1 and 26). Since there were only 330,000 between the two at this time, only one-half of Israel's fighting force must have been involved in this campaign. At the first numbering in the wilderness, there were 603,550 men twenty years of age and over, thus able to go to war (Numbers 1). At the second numbering

there were 601,730 (Numbers 26). The fact that there is a division made between Judah and the rest of Israel is not an indication of this book's being written after the schism in the days of Jeroboam (I Kings 12).

9. *Why did the men of Jabesh-gilead send a message to Nahash? 11:10*

The men of Jabesh-gilead said that they would come out to Nahash on the following day. They indicated by this that they were coming out in order that he might put out their right eyes. Such a message of seeming surrender would throw the king off his guard and make him less watchful. It would also give the necessary time for Saul's army to make a forced march all night and come upon the Ammonites by surprise.

10. *What was Saul's strategy? 11:11 .*

Saul divided his people into three companies. They would thus be able to attack from both sides of the city and from the front or the rear. Since he came on them in the morning watch, it was before the heat of the day when the Ammonites were expecting the men of Jabesh-gilead to surrender. Such strategy took the Ammonites completely by surprise. They were separated from each other and could not join forces to do battle. The victory was complete for the men of Saul.

*The Kingship of Saul Renewed. 11:12-15*

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; and there they

sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

*11. How did Saul demonstrate his wisdom? 11:12, 13*

After the rout of the Ammonites, many of the people of Israel thought they should punish those evil men who had opposed Saul's becoming king. Saul had now demonstrated that he was an able military leader and the populace thought that those who distrusted him should not be allowed to continue their propaganda against him. Saul was very wise in not seeking vengeance. He decreed that there would not be any man put to death in Israel during the time of victory celebration. He would do nothing to mar the complete victory which belonged to the people. Saul was also very wise in attributing the victory to the power of the Lord. He said it was the Lord who had wrought salvation in Israel.

*12. In what sense was the kingdom renewed? 11:14*

Samuel called the people to go again to Gilgal. He wanted to emphasize the fact that the kingdom was now firmly established. Saul had proved himself to be a capable leader, and Samuel thought it was wise that the people reaffirm their allegiance to the new king. The place that he chose was very significant. At this place the covenant of circumcision had been renewed by the people of Israel when they crossed the Jordan under Joshua (Joshua 5:1-9). It was necessary to renew the kingdom because it was much firmer after the united effort against the Ammonites than it had been at any previous time. Now, too, the people of Israel were ready to give thanks for the victory and the many blessings they had received from God's hand.

*13. Why did they offer sacrifices at Gilgal? 11:15*

The sacrifices mentioned here are peace offerings. In a sense they were thank offerings and were usually connected with a sacrificial meal. People offered these on

joyous occasions, for they were feasts of rejoicing. Israel had many things for which to be thankful, and it was quite appropriate that they offer such sacrifices. Samuel again demonstrates that he is serving as a priest in leading the people to make such offerings.

## CHAPTER 11 IN REVIEW

1. Who was the king of the Ammonites who died? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What town of Israelites did the Ammonites attack? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In what area was the town located? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What influence came to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What animal did Saul dissect and distribute? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did Israel assemble to go to battle? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many men of Israel went to fight? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many men of Judah went to battle? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who won the battle? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where did Israel meet for a sacrifice? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 12

- Vv. 1- 5 *Samuel reviews his career.* Although Samuel had many more years of service to give to his people, they had rejected him as being their most prominent leader. They had demanded and received a king. Samuel took advantage of an opportunity to rehearse his manner of life among them. It is a man of sterling character who can say, “. . . ye have not found ought in my hand” (v. 5).
- Vv. 6-15 *Israel's history reviewed.* While Samuel was speaking to the people, he reminded them of their heritage. God had been with them throughout many thrilling experiences. In no

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

case had they found God to be unfaithful to them. They had been unfaithful to God.

Vv. 16-25 *Samuel rebukes the people.* God worked a wonder among the people that caused them to tremble. They realized that they had been ungrateful to God and to His chosen servant, Samuel. As they repented, they asked Samuel to pray for them; and the unswerving love of Samuel for his people prompted him to reply that he would without fail remember them in prayer.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The blessing of good leaders.* Debates rage over the question as to whether times make men or men make times. Great leaders are demanded in perilous times. Opportunities and occasions may bring out the best in great men. In this passage of scripture, however, the emphasis is laid on the true value of faultless leaders. Samuel was one of these, and his career had been a blessing to his people.
2. *The challenge of a rich heritage.* People dare not rest on their laurels. To do so is to decay. They can take courage from what has been accomplished. Israel should have done this. God had amply demonstrated that He was with them. This fact should have encouraged them to remain faithful to God.
3. *The power of prayer.* When the people asked Samuel to pray for them, Samuel replied that it would have been a sin against God for him to cease to pray for them. Regardless of their attitudes toward him, Samuel ever had the best interests of his people at heart. Nothing could cause him to stop praying for them. Good leaders of God's people must always be in prayer for God's blessings to be upon both people and their leaders (I Timothy 2:2).

*Samuel Reviews His Career. 12:1-5*

And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons *are* with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

3 Behold, here I *am*: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand.

5 And he said unto them, The Lord *is* witness against you, and his anointed *is* witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness.

*1. How could Samuel speak to all Israel? 12:1*

Samuel could not find a place where all the millions of Israelites could gather. His message must have been given to leaders from various tribes. His message would then be carried back to the many thousands in each tribe. On occasions great numbers did gather at one place. They were expected to come to the Tabernacle on the three annual feast days. Samuel's address may have been given at one of these times.

*2. What was Samuel's appearance? 12:2*

Samuel describes himself as being gray-haired. He must have been a venerable man. His appearance would have commanded respect. The dignity that goes with a venerable, silver-thatched man was his; and in addition his godly life would have won him the admiration of all good men.

3. *Was Samuel without fault? 12:3*

Samuel asked a series of questions which, perhaps purposely, are cast in rhythmical form with assonance at the end of each question in the Hebrew forms. These are the questions:

1. Whose ox have I taken?
2. Whose ass have I taken?
3. Whom have I oppressed?
4. Whom have I maltreated?
5. From whose hand have I taken a gift that I might blind mine eyes with it?

The tendency of the prophets to cast their oracles in poetic form is illustrated elsewhere. The questions asked by Samuel all refer to judicial honesty which has always been rare in the East. Samuel was not without sin, but his work was irreproachable.

4. *Who was the Lord's anointed? 12:5*

The king was the Lord's anointed. Samuel himself had anointed Saul to be king, and Samuel knew that Saul was not taking over the leadership in Israel because he found fault with Samuel's judgeship. God Himself could testify to the good work of Samuel, and the people were impressed with the sacred testimony which they were bearing to him on this occasion.

*Israel's History Reviewed. 12:6-15*

6 And Samuel said unto the people, *It is* the Lord that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

7 Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers.

8 When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the Lord, then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.

9 And when they forgat the Lord their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.

10 And they cried unto the Lord, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.

11 And the Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

12 And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God *was* your king.

13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, *and* whom ye have desired! and, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you.

14 If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the Lord your God:

15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

5. *Why did Samuel rehearse Israel's history? 12:6-9*

History is a great teacher. It has been facetiously said that the only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn from history. Many people forget their past history and make the same mistakes that their forefathers made. Those who are wise will look into their past and see mistakes which have been made. They will profit by good examples which have been set for them. In review-

ing their history they learn how to live in the present and to lay plans for the future. Samuel's use of Israel's history was of such nature as to remind them that their forefathers turned their backs on God. God sold them into the hand of such people as Sisera and into the hand of the Philistines, as He did in the days of Samson. When Israel was reminded of these things, they would learn from the experiences.

6. *When had Israel been delivered into the hand of the king of Moab? 12:9*

The Moabites were descendants of Lot's older daughter by Lot himself. Israel had only recently been engaged in a war with the Ammonites, descendants of Lot by his younger daughter (11:1). The Moabites had afflicted Israel in the days of Ehud, a judge from the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 3:12). Since Saul, their new king, was from Benjamin, this reminder of how they were oppressed in the days of a Benjamite judge would be a particularly helpful lesson to the Israelites.

7. *Who was Bedan? 12:11*

Bedan is a name of one of Israel's former leaders. His name is not given in this form in any of the canonical history. Jerubbaal is another name for Gideon. Jephthah is a later judge in the history of Israel. Since Bedan occurs between the two names, it is generally concluded that this is another name for Barak. Barak had helped Deborah in their war against Sisera (Judges 4:6). The earlier mention of Sisera by Samuel in this passage lends credence to the belief that this is a reference to Barak.

8. *What additional reason does Samuel give for their asking for a king? 12:12*

The reason emphasized the most by the Israelites was that they wanted to be like all the other nations. They had excused themselves by saying that Samuel was old and that his sons were not following in his good ways.

The ascendancy of Nahash to a place of prominence on Israel's eastern border evidently aggravated their request for a king. Nahash threatened the national security of the people. They had this added reason for asking for a military and political leader under whose authority they might unite.

9. *What was the condition of their future prosperity?*  
12:14, 15

Samuel solemnly threatened the people that they would prosper only if they obeyed God, served Him, and feared Him. God's voice would be made known to them through those prophets who spoke for God. Israel already had many ordinances and statutes to keep as they served God in regular worship. Their fear of the Lord would be reverence for Him and His appointments. Samuel warned them that if they rebelled against the commandments their national existence would be threatened. The king was not exempt from these conditions. He was another man in the sight of God and would be subject to the same frailties as the others. He would be expected to fear God, serve Him, and obey His voice.

*Samuel Rebukes the People.* 12:16-25

16 Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes.

17 *Is it* not wheat harvest today? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.

18 So Samuel called unto the Lord; and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.

19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.

20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart;

21 And turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go after vain things*, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain.

22 For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.

23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

24 Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great *things* he hath done for you.

25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

10. *Why did Samuel ask for a sign? 12:16-18*

Miracles were performed throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament in order to attest either the message or the messenger. When a truth pronounced by a prophet was in doubt, God often vindicated it by a sign. On other occasions a sign was given to authenticate a messenger of God. As Samuel was bidding farewell to his people, he asked them to stand still and see the great thing which the Lord would do for them.

11. *What was the effect of the sign? 12:17, 18*

Very little rain fell in Palestine during harvest time. Seasons were marked by dry periods and wet periods. The temperature did not vary a great deal. Rain falling in harvest time would be very unusual. The people realized this. The thunder they heard and the rain that fell caused the people to fear the Lord greatly. They also stood in awe and reverence of Samuel.

12. *Why did the people think that they would die?* 12:19

A great number of the people had died when they had shown improper respect for the Ark as it was brought back to Beth-shemesh (6:19). When Manoah saw the angel of the Lord, he said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (Judges 13:22). One of man's natural reactions upon the realization of his own guilt and the complete holiness of God is to realize that sin cannot abide in the presence of God. Since he is a sinner, he wonders that he is able to stand in God's presence (Psalm 24:3). As the Israelites realized their sinful nature they believed that they would perish in the presence of the Holy God.

13. *Why did Samuel reassure the people?* 12:20-22

God will not reject the broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). The people of Israel had repented completely of their iniquity. They admitted that they had the wrong motives for asking for a king. Samuel sensed this repentant spirit and reassured the people that God would pardon them. Throughout the ages God had not forsaken His chosen people. He had threatened to destroy them in the days of Moses when they made a golden calf and Moses had interceded for them asking God to blot his name out of the book of life, but to spare the people of Israel (Exodus 32:32). Moses prayed that God would not forget His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (32:13). God did not forget His covenant, and Samuel reassured the Israelites that the Lord would not forsake His people.

14. *Why would it be a sin to cease praying for them?*

12:23

Samuel would have demonstrated a reprehensible degree of selfishness if he had prayed only because he was an official. Once he was not serving as a judge, he assured the people that he would be faithful in remembering them in prayer. He would be concerned for them as long as he

lived. In addition to praying for them, he would continue to teach them as a faithful prophet. Samuel stands as a good example for a model preacher.

15. *How is this a tribute to Samuel?*

Every local minister could study Samuel's Farewell Address with profit. Every leader of any congregation in quest of a preacher might well use him as an example. This is the sermon outline which has been suggested by this chapter:

### THE IDEAL PREACHER

#### I. Blameless in character (Vv. 1-5)

##### A. He speaks concretely of besetting sins

1. He knows well the pitfalls
2. He knows the misdeeds of his own ministerial sons, as well as those of Eli's boys

##### B. He has not otherwise abused the powers

1. He has never yielded to the lure of money
2. He doesn't have to assure his friends that he has never stolen any man's wife, or dallied with any woman's affections

##### C. He is free from the following:

1. Ambition
2. Greed
3. Lust

#### II. Gifted as a teacher (Vv. 6-18)

##### A. The ideal preacher teaches all day

1. Cherishes the ideal of a teaching
2. Like Ezra, he set his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances

##### B. He wants these things for his hearers:

1. To get every hearer right with God

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2. To lead everyone in doing the will of the Most High

C. His sermon is a model

1. He uses facts, facts, facts

2. He makes clear what they mean

3. He appeals to the head and to the heart

D. He speaks with authority—"Thus saith the Lord"  
*ill.* George Whitefield, upon being asked for a copy of the sermon that had made such an impact, said that he would upon one condition—the hearer and inquirer must supply the lightning and thunder that had driven home the message of the hour.

III. Mighty in prayer (Vv. 19-25)

A. He was the son of a woman who prayed and the pupil of a man who interceded

1. He relied chiefly on prayer

2. He had also taught the most spiritual-minded of them to pray

3. Many are fearful of the future, but not a true man of God

B. In the hour of dread concern about the unknown morrow the eyes of those deluded mortals were opened

1. They could see their sin

2.. They understood why their asking for a king made Samuel grieve

Conclusion

1. A test of the minister's work is in seeing how many of them seek him out to ask for prayer

2. The secret lies largely in learning to pray

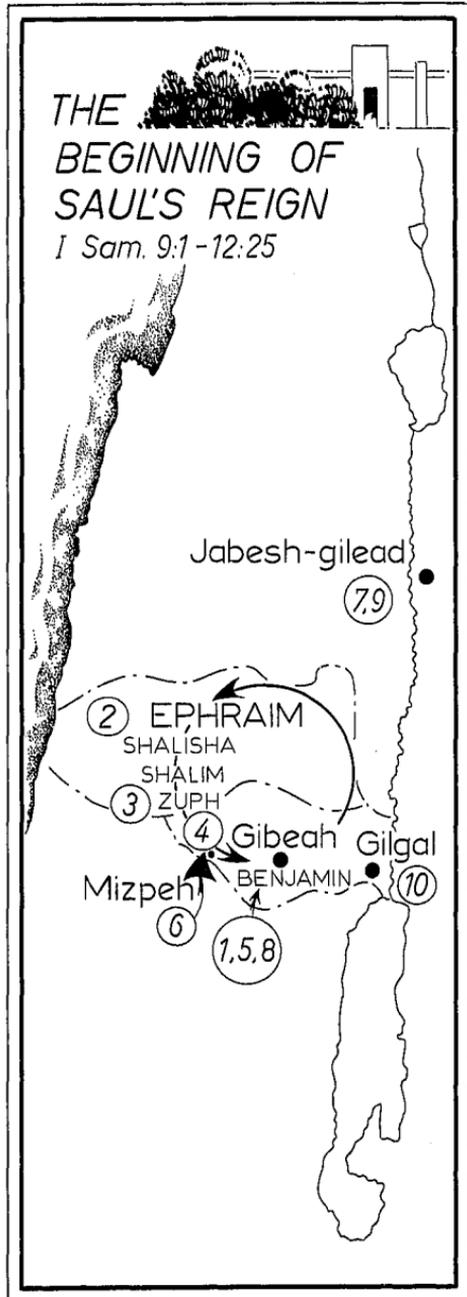
3. This is the ideal-blameless in character, gifted in teaching, mighty in prayer!

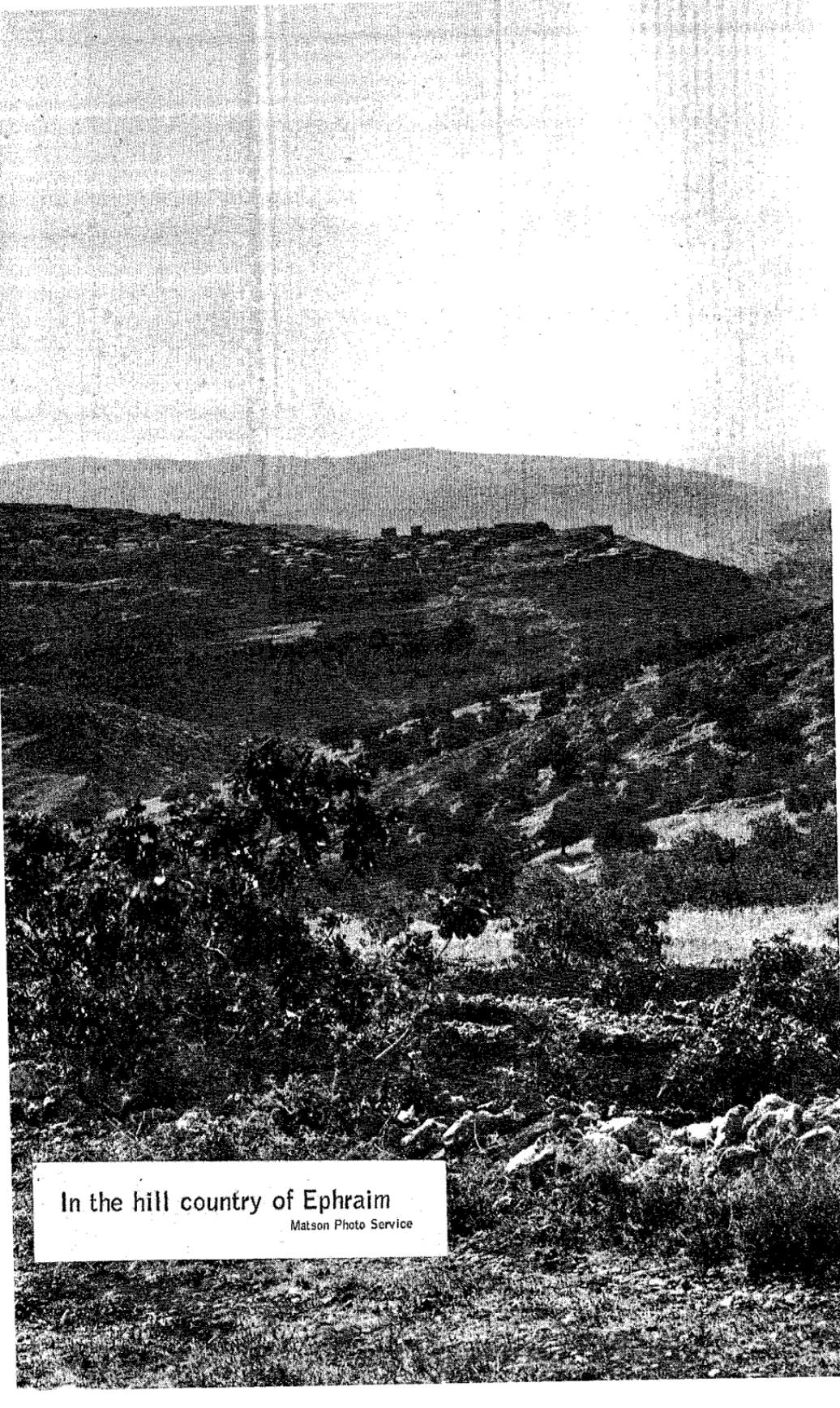
STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 12 IN REVIEW

1. How many questions did Samuel ask the Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What color was Samuel's hair when he stood before them? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What two leaders did Samuel mention as leading Israel out of Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is another name for Jerub-baal? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is another name for Bedan? \_\_\_\_\_
6. The rise of what king had prompted Israel to ask for a king? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What three things was Israel to do in order to receive God's blessings? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What sign did Samuel call for to substantiate his word? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What time of year was it? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What did they ask Samuel to continue to do for them? \_\_\_\_\_

**THE BEGINNING  
OF SAUL'S REIGN**  
I Samuel 9:1 - 12:25

1. Gibeah  
—Saul sent to seek asses;  
9:1-3
2. Ephraim, and lands of  
Shalishah and Shaalim;  
—seeking asses; 9:4
3. Land of Zuph  
—Meeting with Samuel,  
and anointing of Saul;  
9:5-8
4. Between Zuph and Gibeah  
—Saul meets three groups  
of men.  
—fulfilling Samuel's  
prophecies; 10:9-13.
5. Gibeah  
—Saul is questioned by his  
uncle; 10:14-16
6. Mizpah  
—Saul publicly proclaimed  
king; 10:17-27
7. Jabesh-Gilead  
—Attack by Nahash the  
Ammonite; 11:1-5
8. Gibeah  
—Saul gathers army;  
11:6-10
9. Jabesh-Gilead  
—Saul defeats Ammon;  
11:11-13
10. Gilgal  
—Samuel's address to  
Israel; 11:14—12:25





In the hill country of Ephraim

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PART TWO

THE  
REIGN  
OF SAUL

13:1—31:13

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 13

- Vv. 1- 4 *Saul's campaign against the Philistines.* The initial victory over the Ammonites at Jabesh-gilead must have given the Israelites courage to go against their chief oppressors, the Philistines. Jonathan won the first battle, and the Philistines were infuriated.
- Vv. 5- 7 *The counter-attack of the Philistines.* The weapons of war used by the Philistines indicate that they enjoyed a rather highly developed civilization. To this point in history, we know of Israel having only weapons for foot soldiers, there being no references of their use of chariots and other military equipment. At this particular time, they were largely subjugated by the Philistines and had hardly any weapons at all.
- Vv. 8-10 *Saul's presumptuous sacrifice.* Samuel had made arrangements to meet Saul at Gilgal and to lead the people in a sacrifice to God. Saul tarried a minimum amount of time and then took things into his own hand. He had no right to do this. He was not a priest in any sense of the word. He committed a grave sin.
- Vv. 11-16 *Samuel's rebuke of Saul.* Once again it was Samuel's task to pronounce judgment against Israel's leader. As he had received a message of doom to pronounce against Eli, he now pronounces God's judgment against Saul, Israel's first king.
- Vv. 17-23 *The battle pitched.* The Philistine policy was to divide their host and attack the two companies of Israelites. Their superiority in equipment is brought out in the fact. ". . . that

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there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found" (v. 22).

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *A minimum is not enough in God's service.* It is evident from the text that Saul waited until the seventh day for the arrival of Samuel. He did not wait until the seventh day was completed. He was not patient in waiting for God's servant to perform his part of the covenant. His failure to be thorough brought the announcement that his dynasty would not be long-lived.
2. *The folly of trusting in man's strength.* The history of Israel is filled with examples of God's people going out to battle against their enemies with overwhelming odds in favor of their foes. In many of these instances they were nonetheless victorious. When they trusted in God, they found that they had nothing to fear.

### THE REIGN OF SAUL. 13:1—31:13

The early days of Saul's reign, 13:1—14:52.

#### *Saul's Campaign Against the Philistines, 13:1-4*

Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

2 Saul chose him three thousand *men* of Israel; *whereof* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

3 And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it*. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

4 And all Israel heard say *that* Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

1. *How old was Saul when he began to reign? 13:1*

Saul already had a son Jonathan who commanded a division of the army. Saul himself was hardly less than forty years of age, and Jonathan hardly less than twenty. Israelites did not go to war until they were twenty (Numbers 1:3). No number is in the Hebrew text in the first part of this verse, and the translation in the authorized version is a bit awkward. It is hard to understand the impact of such a statement as is made here. All we learn from it is that he reigned one year and then he reigned another year. The normal way of introducing a king was to give his age and then to tell how long he reigned (II Kings 15:1-5). We are left to wonder if this is the intention of the author here.

2. *What was the purpose of the 3,000 men chosen by Saul? 13:2*

Saul was attempting to check the advance of the Philistines. He took the advance position himself in Michmash, a prominent overlook in the mountains of Ephraim near Beth-el. Beth-el was the famous spot where Jacob had seen a vision of the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder set up on the earth (Genesis 28:10-22). A thousand men were with Jonathan back in Gibeah, the home of Saul. Saul evidently felt that it was not necessary to keep the 330,000 men away from their homes and normal occupations. He sent the rest of the army home and manned the outposts with only a few soldiers.

3. *Where was Michmash? 13:2 b*

Michmash is the present village of *Mukbmas*. The village is in ruins and lies on the northern ridge of the *Wady Suweinit*. Although it is only some ten miles north

## FIRST SAMUEL

of Jerusalem, it is difficult to reach and takes a person some three hours and a half to make the journey on foot. Beth-el is northwest of this point, and it is some two hours' journey away by the road if one were to walk. The mountain of Beth-el cannot be identified exactly. Beth-el itself was located on a very high ground, but the location is surrounded by heights.

### 4. *Why did Jonathan make his attack? 13:3*

Jonathan was closer to the garrison which the Philistines kept in Gibeah. Jonathan was a very brave man and won the respect and admiration of all the Israelites by his daring exploits. By winning this initial skirmish, Jonathan gave courage to the rest of the people. Saul took advantage of the situation and publicized the victory widely.

### *The Counter-attack of the Philistines. 13:5-7*

5 And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the seashore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven.

6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

7 And *some of* the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

### 5. *Why were the people so alarmed? 13:6*

The armies of Israel were caught in a trap. The Philistines came against them with their 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and innumerable foot soldiers. Caves, thickets, rocks, high places, and pits afforded the people the only safety. Some of them even went across the Jordan into

the land of Gilead in order to get as far away from Philistia as possible.

6. *Why did Saul go to Gilgal? 13:7*

Gilgal was on the very eastern border of western Israel. It was the farthest rallying point from Philistia. In addition to being rather inaccessible to the Philistines, the spot was hallowed by the many events which had transpired here in Israel's earlier history. Moreover, Samuel had told Saul that he would meet him there when Saul was anointed by Samuel (10:8).

*Saul's Presumptuous Sacrifice. 13:8-10*

8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

7. *What was Saul's first act of disobedience? 13:8-14*

Samuel had made an appointment with Saul when Saul was anointed king (10:8). It was Samuel's intention that Saul should call the people together at Gilgal again and keep them there until he could arrive. Saul impatiently took matters into his own hand and sinned greatly by offering sacrifice himself. Since he was not a priest, he was openly disobeying the Law of God. At that time, Samuel told Saul that there would be one chosen who would obey God. There was no personal conflict between the two men other than that which comes when God's representative is treated disrespectfully. Saul's refusal to heed Samuel's injunctions was tantamount to rejecting the commands of God.

*Samuel's Rebuke of Saul.* 13:11-16

11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord, hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the Lord commanded thee.

15 And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people *that were* present with him, about six hundred men.

16 And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people *that were* present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

8. *What was the purpose of the offering?* 13:12

No doubt the Israelites were wanting to beseech God for His help in the battle. Saul said that he had not made supplication unto the Lord. The Hebrew original gives the idea of entreating the face of the Lord. Saul may have been wanting to know the will of the Lord with regard to this battle. No doubt it was the custom of these people to make a sacrifice before they went into battle. Before Jephthah went into battle he vowed a vow to the Lord (Judges 11:30, 31).

*9. In what way had Saul done foolishly? 13:13*

It was not wrong to make a sacrifice. Saul had sinned in that he had not kept the commandment of the Lord. Samuel had told Saul to wait until he came to him before he made a sacrifice (10:8). To disobey the commandment of the prophet, was to disobey the commandment of the Lord. Saul had sinned against God. As a result the kingdom was not to be longlived.

*10. What is the meaning of "after his own heart"? 13:14*

Saul had been a very popular choice. He was in effect a man after the peoples' hearts. Saul had failed. He had rationalized and depended upon his own strength in such a way as to make him unacceptable to God. The man who was to be after God's own heart was David. David is described in this way in Acts 15:22. David was not perfect; when he sinned he repented. He was more completely devoted to God and was thus a man after God's own heart.

*11. Why did Samuel go to Gibeah? 13:15*

Gibeah was a well-known assembly place for the people. In addition, it was Saul's home. Jonathan had stayed with the garrison here and made the first attack against the Philistines. It was a high place, a place where Samuel could offer an acceptable sacrifice to God.

*12. Why did Saul return with such a small army? 13:15 b*

Saul had not accomplished his avowed purpose in sacrificing. He had said that he thought the people would be scattered from him and for this reason had forced himself in offering a burnt offering. When he was at Michmash, he had 2,000 men with him. Jonathan had another 1,000 with him. Now Saul had only 600. The people themselves must have revolted against Saul's impertinence in offering a whole burnt offering. They must have known of the judgment of Samuel and were unwilling to follow Saul.

*The Battle Pinched. 13:17-23*

17 And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way *that leadeth* to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual:

18 And another company turned the way *to* Beth-horon: and another company turned *to* the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make *them* swords or spears:

20 But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.

21 Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads.

22 So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that *were* with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.

23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

*13. Where was Beth-horon? 13:18*

Two towns bear the name of Beth-horon. One is known as the "upper," and the other "nether" (Joshua 16:3, 5; I Chronicles 7:24; II Chronicles 8:5). They lie off the road from Gibeon to Azekah (Joshua 10:10, 11) on the way to the Philistine plain. These locations lay on the boundary lines between Benjamin and Ephraim (Joshua 16:3, 5; 18:13, 14). They were assigned to Ephraim and given to the Kohathites as Levitical cities (Joshua 21:22). Reference is made to an enlargement of these locations in later Israelite history (I Chronicles 7:24). The building referred to was not the establishment, but the rebuilding and enlarging. Sherah was no doubt an heiress who had

received these places as her inheritance. The road running between the two Beth-horons is one of the roughest and steepest in Palestine, but is still used as the road from the coast. In effect, the road is a key to the country. The Philistines naturally used this road as an access against Israel.

14. *What had become of the smiths? 13:19*

The Philistines had made it illegal for a blacksmith to practice his art. Many of them had no doubt been taken out of the country. Some may have been slain. The Philistines forced an Israelite to go down into their country to sharpen his plowshare and the coulter of his plow. Even his ax and his mattock had to be sharpened by the Philistine lords. The only tool left for the Israelite to use was a file. He could use this instrument to keep an edge on his mattocks, coulters, pitchforks, axes, and goads. When the edge was worn away, however, he had to depend upon his captors to repair his tools and implements. This kind of regulation would keep an Israelite from forging swords and spears.

15. *How were Saul's men armed? 13:22*

Only meager implements were in the possession of the Israelites. They could defend themselves only with such tools as were normally used in peaceful pursuits. Some of them probably had axes; others used goads and forks. Only Saul and Jonathan were equipped with normal weapons. These verses describe a people that are completely beaten. It explains why the loss of the Ark was such a catastrophe and indicates how low Israel had been brought by the Philistines. As a matter of fact, this period in Israel's history is known as the "captivity of the land" (Judges 18:30). This condition prevailed all the time until Saul began to win some decisive and permanent victories. The victories were not complete in the days of David, and it was left to him to be a man of war and firmly establish the Israelite kingdom in Palestine.

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CHAPTER 13 IN REVIEW

1. How old was Saul when he began to reign? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many men did Saul take into battle? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many were with Jonathan? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where were Saul and his men? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where were Jonathan and his men? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where were the Philistines whom Jonathan attacked? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many chariots did the Philistines have? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Where did Saul go to make a sacrifice? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How long did he wait for Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who were the only two men who had spears in Israel? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 14

- Vv. 1-23 *Jonathan's surprise attack on the Philistines.* Jonathan and his armor-bearer devised a startling plan of going against the enemy by themselves. Evidently the Philistines thought that their position was impregnable and that the Israelites were so poorly equipped that they had nothing to fear. The skirmish started by Jonathan and his armor-bearer started such confusion that the Philistines attacked their own men, and a great victory was won for Israel.
- Vv. 24-46 *Saul's ill-advised oath.* King Saul had ordered that his men were to fast as they went into battle. Although Jonathan was unaware of his father's order, Saul threatened to punish him for tasting a little honey. Only the intercession of the people saved Jonathan.
- Vv. 47-52 *Saul's other battles and his family.* Saul was a great warrior, and his campaigns took him against Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria, as well

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as Philistia. His wife, sons, daughters, captain, and father are all mentioned at this point in his career.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Trust in God overcomes fear of men.* Although Israel was in a dire strait, Jonathan was not afraid to do what he knew was right. With a full trust in God and using the good common sense with which he was endowed, he devised a strategy that gave victory to God's people.
2. *Rash oaths should not be kept.* Under ordinary circumstances, an oath should be very sacred and kept if at all possible. When oaths are made in rashness, however, it is better to repent for making the oaths rather than to keep them. Herod beheaded John the Baptist, although he was "exceeding sorry" (Mark 6:26). He went ahead and performed the dastardly deed ". . . for their sakes which sat with him" (Mark 6:26 b). He was afraid of what the people would think of him if he went back on his oath. Saul was evidently determined to go ahead and carry out the penalty he had pronounced against any soldier who ate anything, even though it meant the slaying of the hero of his own army, even his own son.

#### *Jonathan's Surprise Attack on the Philistines. 14:1-23*

Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that *is* on the other side. But he told not his father.

2 And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron: and the people that *were* with him *were* about six hundred men;

3 And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh,

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wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

4 And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

5 The forefront of the one *was* situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah.

6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for *there is* no restraint to the Lord to have by many or by few.

7 And his armor-bearer said unto him, Do all that *is* in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I *am* with thee according to thy heart.

8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto *these* men, and we will discover ourselves unto them.

9 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.

10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us; they we will go up: for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand: and this *shall be* a sign unto us.

11 And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.

12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armor-bearer, Come up after me: for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel.

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13 And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armor-bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armor-bearer slew after him.

14 And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were a half acre of land, *which* a yoke of oxen might plow.

15 And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.

16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down *one another*.

17 Then said Saul unto the people that *were* with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer *were* not *there*.

18 And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel.

19 And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that *was* in the host of the Philipines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand.

20 And Saul and all the people that *were* with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and *there was* a very great discomfiture.

21 Moreover the Hebrews *that* were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites that *were* with Saul and Jonathan.

22 Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle.

23 So the Lord saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven.

1. *Why did Jonathan fail to tell Saul of his plan? 14:1*

Saul would probably have opposed such a daring enterprise. In the first place, he would be reluctant to see his son risk his life in such an expedition. In the second place, he had lost a great deal of his courage because of the stunning announcement of judgment which Samuel had made to him. The same fear and trembling which had come upon the people had affected their leader.

2. *Where is Migron? 14:2*

Migron is a locality which has been lost to modern geographers. Indications in the narrative would point to a place on the north side of Gilbeah and a different place from the Migron on the northwest of Michmash (Isaiah 10:28). Saul felt this was a good place to wait and observe the activities of the Philistines. Since it is called the uttermost part of Gibeah, it is taken to be in the vicinity. Saul still had only 600 men with him.

3. *Why was Abijah not at Shiloh? 14:3*

When the Ark was taken from Shiloh, the place was no longer regarded as the center of worship. Later David fled from the presence of Saul, and the Tabernacle itself was at Nob (21:1). The Ark was still in the house of Abinadab in Kiriath-jearim on the west side of the border of Judah near Philistia. A priest would hardly be safe at that point, and his services were needed by Saul.

4. *What was the advantage of the two campsites? 14:4*

Israel was on one crag, and the Philistines were on the other. The site of this valley is almost impenetrable. One can hardly go down into the valley on horseback. About a mile eastward of the line between these two promontories the valley is so narrow and so deep that the opposite heights are less than a mile apart. The two armies would

keep each other under observation without fearing a frontal attack at this point.

5. *On what did Jonathan rely? 14:6*

Jonathan was convinced that Israel was the nation of God's own choosing and that God would preserve them in every situation. He did not know for sure that God would give them success in the particular venture that they had in mind, but he hoped that He would. He knew that it did not make any difference whether there were a few men or many in an army. As he said: "For there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few" (v. 6 b).

6. *What was so frightening about Jonathan's attack?*

14:7-15

Things in Israel were rapidly coming to a sorry state. Samuel had returned to Gibeah because Shiloh had been forsaken. Saul came with just a few men because all the people were of a mind to desert and many had done so already. There were no smiths for making of weapons since they required iron work. The two enemy armies were at the time separated by a mile-long valley between two high crags, one some 50 feet of sheer rock, the other about 100 feet of sheer rock. Jonathan relied entirely upon the guiding hand of Jehovah, not even mentioning the expedition to his father. More than likely his father would never have permitted him to go. Hence when he suddenly appeared in the camp of the Philistines it was terribly unexpected and actually frightened them beyond measure. If the Philistine soldiers were really valiant, they would come down after Jonathan and his armor-bearer; if they said, "Come up," they were lazy, cowardly, and careless. This would indicate to Jonathan the advisability of continuing his attack.

7. *Why is mention made of what oxen might plow? 14:14*

Rural people would measure things by standards to which they were accustomed. A "furrow" of land was what could be plowed with a yoke of oxen in one day. It is

like the Roman *jugum*, or *jugerum*, containing some 28,000 square feet. The area where the battle was fought is described as the furrow of an acre of land, because the length only of an half-acre was to be given and not the square footage.

8. *Why did the Philistines tremble? 14:15*

The situation was reversed. The Israelites had trembled when they saw the mammoth Philistine host coming out against them. After Jonathan and his armor-bearer surprised the Philistines, the Philistines were afraid. The very fact that they did not expect two men to climb the cliff alone led them to relax their vigil. Two men coming upon them in an unexpected way confused them and frightened them.

9. *Why did Saul call for the Ark? 14:18*

The Ark had led the Israelites into battle on a number of occasions. Priests carried the Ark into the Jordan River when Israel crossed over into Palestine (Joshua 3:6). Moses refused to send the Ark into the ill-fated battle against the Canaanites (Numbers 14:44). When Israel was walking in God's paths, the Ark was a symbol of His presence. When they were rebelling against God, the fact that the Ark was with them did not guarantee a victory for them. This truth was demonstrated in the days of Eli's sons as the Ark was captured by the Philistines. Saul could hardly have forgotten this lesson, and he surely would not have risked losing it again. His decision to call for the Ark must have been prompted by his desire to find out the Lord's will with regard to the battle. He must have thought his having the Ark with him would have helped him to learn this will.

10. *Was the ark again brought into the camp? 14:19*

Saul commanded Ahijah the priest to fetch the Ark; but while he was conversing with the priest, the noise and confusion in the Philistine camp was brought to his attention. The way was then clear. It was up to the Israelites to pursue the enemy and there was no need to command,

"Withdraw thy hand." There would be no need for the priest to give any further order or to make any further move towards fetching the Ark. Even though there is mention of some Israelites who had not joined with the men of Saul but rather had joined with the Philistines, the Israelites won a victory and pursued the Philistines first to the north and then to the west.

11. *Who were the Hebrews with the Philistines? 14:21*

These men were defectors and captives. Notice that they are called Hebrews, while the people of Saul were called Israelites. Living had become so difficult in Israel that these people had sought asylum with the enemy even at the risk of calling down the wrath of their own people upon them. David fled to Achish, king of Gath, in order to escape the murderous intentions of Saul (I Samuel 21:10).

12. *Where was Beth-aven? 14:23*

Beth-aven was near Ai. Ai lay near Beth-el on the road which ran from Jerusalem to Shechem. It was east of Michmash. The Philistines fled westwards from Michmash to Aijalon (v. 31). If we bear in mind the fact that the camp of the Philistines was on the east side of Michmash before Beth-aven (13:5), the fact that the Israelites attacked it from the south explains the extent of the battle. As the main body of the Philistines fled as far as Ajalon, they were pursued to that place by some of the Israelites.

*Saul's Ill-advised Oath. 14:24-46*

24 And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food.

25 And all *they* of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground.

26 And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.

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27 But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand, and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.

28 Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food this day. And the people were faint.

29 Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey.

30 How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?

31 And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were faint.

32 And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew *them* on the ground: and the people did eat *them* with the blood.

33 Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day.

34 And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay *them* here, and eat; and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew *them* there.

35 And Saul built an altar unto the Lord: the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord.

36 And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatso-

ever seemeth good unto them. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God.

37 And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day.

38 And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day.

39 For, *as* the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But *there was* not a man among all the people *that* answered him.

40 Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee.

41 Therefore Saul said unto the Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped.

42 And Saul said, Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.

43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and*, lo, I must die.

44 And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.

45 And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: *as* the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall on the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.

46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

### 13. *What was the purpose of Saul's prohibition? 14:24*

To forbid a fighting man to eat is to cut down his efficiency. Saul must have been more interested in demon-

strating kingly zeal than to care for his men. Fasting had its place as a man is disciplining his spirit but it could hardly serve a useful purpose in the field. The only possible practical reason for the prohibition would be to save time, but this value would be lost in the decreased efficiency of the soldiers.

14. *What is the meaning of "his eyes were enlightened"?*  
14:27

Partaking of a little food gave increased energy to Jonathan. Honey is a well-known quick-energy food. Jonathan was strengthened physically; and since the loss of strength is noticeably reflected in the eyes, this was the primary center of the resurging energy. His eyes would be keener and his hand would be stronger.

15. *How had Saul troubled the land?* 14:29

Saul had disobeyed Samuel and brought a pronouncement of judgment on himself. He had issued a foolish order to his troops in the midst of a situation which might have resulted in total victory for Israel. The king had demonstrated a lack of courage in staying behind in the battle. In all these things Saul had caused trouble among his people.

16. *Where was Aijalon?* 14:31

Aijalon was on the west slope of the hill country of Judah. A modern spot named *Yalo* (see Joshua 19:42) is pointed out as the most likely location. This site is about three miles southwest of Michmash. Joshua had been fighting the armies of the southern coalition at this point when he prayed for the sun to stand still and give the Israelites the needed extra hours (Joshua 10:12).

17. *Why were the people so faint?* 14:31

The people were weak from hunger since Saul had forbidden them to eat until evening (v. 24). The sight of the booty was too much for them and they seized sheep, oxen, and calves. Without proper care for dressing the animals, they devoured them where they were. Animals

which were slain were left lying on the ground and were saturated in their own blood. The famished soldiers ate the flesh along with the blood which adhered to it. By doing this they sinned against the law in Leviticus 19:26 and the earlier prohibition given by God to the post-diluvian world (Genesis 9:4).

18. *Why did Saul call for a stone? 14:33*

Saul requested a stone to be provided as a place for slaughtering the animals. In this way the blood would run off properly on the ground. The flesh would be separated from the blood, and the people could eat without committing sin. The hungry people could thus satisfy their overwhelming appetites.

19. *Why did he build an altar? 14:35*

Saul had learned his lesson about offering sacrifices when he was ineligible to act as a priest. His purpose in erecting an altar was hardly to provide a place for a sacrifice. This altar was to be a memorial of the presence of God. If this is the first altar he ever built, it is evidence of his irreligion. More devoted people, such as Abraham, build altars on many occasions and never allow their devotion to lag (Genesis 12:8, 18).

20. *Why did Saul think that someone had sinned? 14:38*

Saul had asked counsel of God about going down in pursuit of the Philistines. He wanted to know if God would deliver the enemy into his hands, but God did not give him an answer. He concluded that someone had sinned and prevented God from giving him an answer.

21. *Why was Saul willing to slay Jonathan? 14:39*

When the breach of a commandment such as that given by Saul is revealed, the guilt has to be expiated. The law of the ancient Oriental kings was inviolable, and no law-breaker was exempt from the wrath of the monarch. Saul had proudly boasted, "though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die" (v. 39). When he found out it was Jonathan who had violated his prohibition, he was forced

to carry out his threat to prevent losing prestige among the people.

22. *What prompted Saul to exact such a penalty?*

Although the king had made a decree that no one was to eat during the time of the battle, Jonathan had put forth the rod that was in his hand and dipped a little honey to his mouth to eat. When Saul asked God to direct him in his activities, there was no answer; and Saul concluded that someone had sinned. When the lot was cast, it fell upon Jonathan. Jonathan confessed his crime; and Saul was willing to exact the penalty by slaying his own son. He knew that as a ruler he was setting an example. He was also exerting the authority that was his, and those who witnessed would have greater respect for his authority. The people, when they saw this, were willing then that Jonathan be spared; and by their earnest entreaty Saul was led to withdraw his order. Thus it is said that the people rescued Jonathan that day.

23. *How did the people rescue him? 14:45*

The objection of the people was so conclusive that Saul was obliged to yield. Justice would demand that Jonathan be spared. He had done nothing wrong in itself. Jonathan had not heard the oath which his father had imposed on the people. He did not consciously or intentionally go against his father's commandment. The divine lot had revealed to Saul that Jonathan had tasted a little honey. The sentence of death was not thereby pronounced by God. Judgment was in the hands of Saul, and he was wise to listen to the desire of the people to spare Jonathan.

*Saul's Other Battles and His Family. 14:47-52*

47 So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself he vexed *them*.

48 And he gathered a host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.

49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchi-shua: and the names of his two daughters *were these*; the name of the first-born Merab, and the name of the younger Michal:

50 And the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host *was* Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

51 And Kish *was* the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of Abiel.

52 And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

24. *Over what kingdoms did Saul have victory? 14:47, 48*

Saul won victories over practically all of the surrounding kingdoms. Those specifically mentioned include Moab, the land just east of the Jordan river; Edom, the kingdom of the descendants of Esau, being the land lying in the south of the Dead Sea, Philistia, the land bordering along the Mediterranean Sea, and extending from the River of Egypt to the Bay of Acre along the west of the land allotted to the twelve tribes; Zobah, the land lying in and around the Lebanon Mountains; and the Amalekites, the land lying in the wilderness to the west of the land of Edom. The people could with propriety sing, "Saul has slain his thousands" (18:7).

25. *How many sons did Saul have? 14:49*

Only three sons of Saul are mentioned in this early part of his reign—Jonathan, Ishui, and Melchi-shua. From later history and references in genealogies, we learn that he also had a son named Ish-baal (Esh-baal in I Chronicles 9:39) or Ish-bosheth. It was Ish-bosheth who was made king over Israel with his capital at Mahanaim in Gilead

after Saul's death (II Samuel 2:8). Ishui is called Abinadab in I Chronicles 9:39 and in I Samuel 31:2. The three older sons of Saul were killed with him in the battle on Mount Gilboa, leaving only Ish-bosheth as a survivor and a claimant of the throne.

26. *How many daughters did Saul have? 14:49b*

Daughters are not often mentioned in the Bible unless they enter into important events. Of Adam it was written that he begat sons and daughters (Genesis 5:5b), but only the sons—Cain, Abel, and Seth—are named. Jacob's daughter, Dinah, was named along with his twelve sons (Genesis 30:21); but probably this was because she occasioned the unhappy experience at Shechem (Genesis 34). Two of Saul's daughters are mentioned. Merab was the older of the two. She should have been given to David as his wife; but when the time for the marriage was fulfilled, Saul gave her to be another man's wife (I Samuel 18:19). Michal, Saul's younger daughter, loved David, and Saul did give her to be David's wife (I Samuel 18:27).

27. *Who was Saul's wife? 14:50*

Saul's wife was named Ahinoam. As far as the Scripture narrative describes his marital relations, there is mention of only this one wife. He did have a concubine whose name was Rizpah (II Samuel 3:7). Ahinoam is identified as the daughter of Ahimaaz, but nothing more is known of her father or the other members of the family. Ahimaaz is a rather common name for a man in Israel, and in later history the name was given to one of the sons of the priests (II Samuel 17:17). Saul called his wife a perverse and rebellious woman (I Samuel 20:30), but we do not have any knowledge of why he should call her this except our understanding that Saul was almost insanely jealous and selfish. Probably she was a good woman.

28. *Who was the captain of Saul's army? 14:50b*

Abner, the son of Ner, was the leader of Saul's army. He was a cousin of Saul, since Kish and Ner were brothers.

In I Samuel 9:1 Kish is identified as also being the son of Abiel. Ner, the father of Abner, was the son of Abiel (I Samuel 14:51). The family appears to have been rather closely related to one another, since it was Saul's uncle who made inquiry about the search for the asses of Kish when Saul and his servant returned from their meeting with Samuel (10:14). Abner remained with Saul throughout his reign and upheld the honor of the family after Saul's death by placing Saul's son on the throne of Israel (II Samuel 2:8). He entered into negotiations with David in an attempt to put David on the throne of all the tribes; but he was killed by Joab, who thought Abner should have spared Asahel (see II Samuel 3:27). David respected Abner and called him a prince and a great man (II Samuel 3:38).

29. *What was the nature of Saul's reign?* 14:52

Most of Saul's time on the throne was spent in battle. The war against the Philistines was described as being "sore"; and when he ascended to the throne, he went out to battle against the Ammonites (I Samuel 11:1-15). His failure to slay the Amalekites had brought about his being rejected as king (I Samuel 15:1-35). Samuel had warned the Israelites that the king would take their sons to fight in his army (I Samuel 8:11); and this had come to pass as "when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him" (v. 52b).

## CHAPTER 14 IN REVIEW

1. Who went with Jonathan to make a surprise attack on the Philistines? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where was Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the name of the priest with him? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Whose son was the priest? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where were the other priests? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What did the priest have with him? \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

7. What did Saul ask the priest to fetch? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What had Jonathan eaten? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What did Saul threaten to do to him? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What was the name of Saul's wife? \_\_\_\_\_

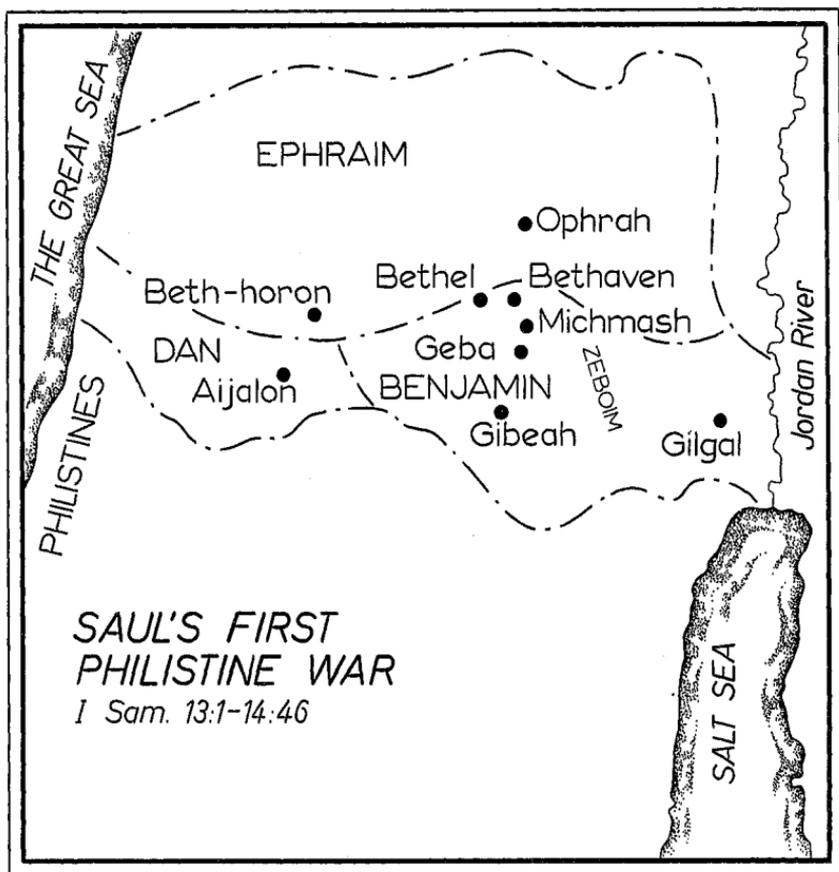
### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 15

Vv. 1- 6 *Saul sent against the Amalekites.* The children of Amalek had been constant aggressors against the Israelites. They were the first nation to attack Israel when they left Egypt (Exodus 17:16). At that time God instructed Moses to write an account of the conflict in a book and note that their aggression would not go unpunished. Saul was thus ordered to utterly destroy the Amalekites.

Vv. 7- 9 *Saul's incomplete obedience.* Saul destroyed most of the men of Amalek, but he spared the king. He also spared some of the best of the animals. He excused his failure by saying that they were to be used as sacrificial animals.

Vv. 10-23 *Samuel delivers the Lord's message of condemnation.* Once again it was Samuel's hard lot to deliver a message to judgment from the Lord. This time the message was one of complete rejection. When Saul had presumptuously offered sacrifice, Samuel announced that Saul's kingdom would not continue for long. After Saul failed to destroy the Amalekites, Samuel announced that God had rejected Saul himself.

Vv. 24-35 *Samuel and Saul parted permanently.* Saul begged Samuel to stay with him, even seizing Samuel's robe and ripping it. Samuel did stay with Saul long enough for Saul to summon



## SAUL'S FIRST PHILISTINE WAR

### I Sam. 13:1-14:36

1. Saul gathers 2000 men at Michmash, and Jonathan 1000 at Gibeah. (13:1-2)
2. Jonathan smites Geba. (13:3)
3. Saul goes to Gilgal and makes a foolish sacrifice. (13:4-14)
4. Saul goes to Geba with 600. (13:15-16)
5. Philistines camp at Michmash, and send out raiders toward Beth-horon, Ophrah, and Valley of Beboim. (13:17-23)
6. Jonathan and armorbearer climb the pass between Geba and Michmash, and smite Philistines. (13:24-14:15)
7. Saul's troops join in and smite Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon. (14:16-23-31)
8. Jonathan is saved from Saul's curse about eating. (14:24-30, 32-46)



## The village of Michmash

Matson Photo Service

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

Agag. Samuel then slew Agag, after first worshipping with Saul. Finally, Samuel left Saul, never to see him until the day of his death.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Sin cannot go unpunished.* Israel defeated the Amalekites in battle when they first met, but the defeat was not complete. Though the Amalekites might have thought they had escaped rather intact, God had declared that He would “. . . utterly put out of the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” (Exodus 17:14). Men today who resist God and His word should expect no happier end.
2. *“To obey is better than sacrifice”* (v. 22). This eternal principle needs to be burned into the hearts of men today. It is better to do God’s will in the first place than to expend great amounts of time, money, and energy in an effort to make atonement for failure to follow God’s leading.

#### The Lord’s Rejection of Saul, 15:1-35.

##### *Saul Sent Against the Amalekites.* 15:1-6

Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee *to be* king over his people, over Israel; now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord.

2 Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.

5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

6 And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

1. *Why did Samuel remind Saul that he had anointed him 15:1*

Samuel wanted Saul to place current events in the proper perspective. Saul had seemingly lost his way. He had presumed to offer a sacrifice when he had no right to serve as a priest. He had grown fainthearted in battle and placed a useless curse on his people. Samuel must have felt that he could not help Saul unless Saul were to return to his former humble self. By remembering his origins, Saul might be able to understand the error of a proud man's way.

2. *How could the Amalekites be doomed to destruction? 15:2*

There was a quarrel that Israel had with the people of the Amalekites. It was this quarrel that was to be avenged and since the Amalekites were completely reprobate, they were appointed of God to utter destruction. The Kenites who were ordered out were kinsmen of Moses' wife. They had come along with Judah into Canaan; but when the land was allotted to the children of Israel, the Kenites had returned to the desert. We are unable to locate Havilah and Shur with certainty, but they were quite evidently the two extremities of the country of the Amalekites. God had predicted the fall of Amalek when they first attacked Israel in the days of Moses (Exodus 17:14).

3. *Was God cruel in ordering the slaughter of all? 15:3*

The people of Amalek had been given more than 400 years in which to repent of their opposition to God's people. They had attacked Israel when Israel first came out of Egypt, around 1447 B.C. While Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness, Amalek made no effort to make amends for her senseless attack. As Israel had settled in the promised land, there were still no overtures from Amalek. In fact her opposition to Israel had been constant. While the judges led Israel through a three-hundred-year period, Amalek still made no attempts to live at peace with God's people. God had finally called a halt to the rebellious ways of the Amalekites. It is an eternal principle that any nation who falls to the depths in which Amalek was wallowing must perish before a people who are roused by a vision of a higher destiny. To allow even the women to continue in such a life would not be mercy. Infants growing up in such a society would have no hope beyond that of a reprobate. God was attempting to work an act of mercy through the sword of Saul.

4. *Where was Telaim? 15:4*

Telaim comes from a Hebrew word which means, "young lambs." A form very close to this is a word *Telen*. Telen is a town in the southern border of Judah (Joshua 16:24). It lay between Ziph and Bealoth. The gathering of Saul's army at this point is the only important event which transpired there according to Bible history. Once again the men of Israel were separated from the men of Judah. The proportion was still ten to one, with Judah making up one-tenth of the number of soldiers in Israel.

5. *What kindness had the Canaanites shown Israel? 15:6*

Hobab was a Canaanite. He is known as Moses' brother-in-law. As the people of Israel departed from Mt. Sinai, Moses invited his brother-in-law to accompany Israel through the wilderness. He promised Hobab that they would share their blessings with him and his people. At

first Hobab declined to go along with them, but as Moses insisted he must have yielded and served as a scout for the hosts of Israel (Numbers 10:29-32). No doubt this is the kindness which the Canaanites showed Israel in the wilderness as mentioned here.

*Saul's Incomplete Obedience 15:7-9*

7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah *until* thou comest to Shur, that *is* over against Egypt.

8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

6. *Where are Havilah and Shur? 15:7*

Shur was in Negeb, the land lying south of Beer-sheba. Generally speaking it is territory to the west of the south end of the Dead Sea. Havilah was on the edge of the Negeb. Another region by the same name was encompassed by the Pison branch of Eden's river (Genesis 25:18) and reached into north Arabia (Genesis 2:11).

7. *Who was Agag? 15:8*

Agag is the common name for all the Amalekite kings similar to the name of Pharaoh, the name of the kings of Egypt, or like Caesar, the common name of the rulers in Rome. Balaam makes mention of Agag in his prophecy (Numbers 24:7). His reference implies that the king was a leading monarch at that time or else that he was the first one to attack Irsael when they came out of Egypt. This particular ruler was evidently no better than his predecessors and he was to be slain, but Saul spared him.

8. *What else did Saul spare?* 15:9

Saul spared the best of the sheep, the oxen, and the lambs. As a matter of fact, he did not destroy that which was good. Only that which was vile and refuse was destroyed. Saul was senseless in disobeying God's commandment in this way, but he gave a feeble excuse when he was confronted with his sin.

*Samuel Delivers the Lord's Message of Condemnation.*

15:10-23

10 Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying.

11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night.

12 And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed *be* thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.

14 And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?

18 And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord.

20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

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

22 And Samuel said, Hath the Lord *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou has rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

9. *Why was Samuel grieved at Saul's action? 15:11*

Samuel loved Saul. Those who try to make Saul's being rejected a jealous act of Samuel miss the gist of the entire story. Samuel regretted the action which Saul had taken. What Saul had done was nothing small; he had completely changed from the humble fellow he was when he was chosen king. He had elevated himself and the people had elevated him until he had lost his modesty. When he disobeyed, he was unfaithful to God. In one sense, he had almost carried out God's orders; but yet he had failed to carry out the order directly and was certainly culpable. The narrative shows how he tried to shift the blame from himself to the people, and his whole unmanly character comes out.

*10. Where was Carmel? 15:12*

The most famous Carmel is Mt. Carmel, the mountain which juts out into the Mediterranean Sea on the west coast of Israel along the northern border of the tribe of Manasseh. Samuel was not usually in this area, and it is doubtful that this reference here is to this northern Carmel. The name itself signifies a "fruitful field." Another Carmel is a name given to a town in the hill country of Judah (Joshua 15:55). This was the home of Nabal (I Samuel 25:2). One of David's wives is known as "Abigail, the Carmelitess" (I Chronicles 3:1). It was doubtless here that Saul set up a marker for his partial victory over Amalek.

*11. How could Saul say he had performed God's commandment? 15:13*

Saul had evidently lost his understanding of truthfulness as well as humility. He had partially fulfilled the commandment of the Lord, but he had openly and blatantly disobeyed God's commandment to destroy utterly the Amalekites. This loss of his ability to discern between truth and falsehood is indicative of the sad condition into which Saul had fallen.

*12. What was Saul's excuse for his disobedience? 15:15*

As Saul had excused himself for offering a sacrifice by saying that he was afraid the people were going to leave him, so he once again blamed the people for his disobedience of God's commandment to destroy the Amalekites. He said the people had spared the best of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord. He took partial credit for having destroyed the rest, but he took no blame for saving the best.

*13. Why did he call the Lord Samuel's God? 15:21*

Saul had a great deal of impudence to argue with Samuel with regard to his disobedience. Samuel reminded him of how God had blessed him when he was little in his own sight. He reviewed the circumstances which had led to

the giving of the commandment to destroy the Amalekites. Samuel openly confronted Saul with his disobedience, but Saul persisted in excusing himself. When he made reference to the Lord, he called him Samuel's God. Saul may have come to the place where he could not accept God as his own personal God. He was completely reprobate.

14. *What is the meaning of Samuel's question? 15:22*

Samuel clarified the issue. He drew a distinction between burnt offering and sacrifices and the obeying of the voice of God. Saul was excusing himself for sparing the best of the flocks and herds by saying that he was going to give them to God as a sacrifice. Saul was attempting to reason that it was all going to be given to God in the end and that it really made no difference whether he had obeyed God's voice or not. Samuel made it clear that it is far better to obey than to sacrifice. It is better to hearken to God than to offer Him the fat of rams.

15. *What added penalty was pronounced on Saul? 15:23*

Samuel taught Saul that rebellion against God is the sin of witchcraft. Saul put out the witches from the borders of the people of Israel, but he himself rebelled against God (I Samuel 28:9). Saul's stubborn heart was an iniquitous heart. Although he had not openly worshipped another God, he had made himself God and was as sinful as if he were an idolator. As a result, God rejected Saul personally from being king. This was a much more severe sentence than was passed on him when he offered his presumptuous sacrifice. At that time God simply said that the kingdom would be taken away from Saul's house and given to another. On this occasion, Saul himself was personally rejected as being fit to rule. On other occasions of rejection, God tempered His judgments by announcing that what He had predicted to come to pass would not come to pass in the lifetime of the one who had sinned. This might have been the penalty for Saul.

If he had not sinned again, Saul might not have lived to see the end of his dynasty. He himself might have been allowed to die in a good old age, but now he himself is to be punished.

*Samuel and Saul Parted Permanently.* 15:24-35

24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord.

26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

28 And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, *that is* better than thou.

29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he *is* not a man, that he should repent.

30 Then he said, I have sinned: *yet* honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God.

31 So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshiped the Lord.

32 Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.

33 And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul.

35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

16. *What was Saul's final confession? 15:24*

Saul finally came to the place where he said, "I have sinned." Before, he had tried to pass all the blame onto the people. At last he admitted that he was a transgressor. He said that he had transgressed the commandment of the Lord. He apologized to Samuel for disobeying his commandments, saying that he had transgressed the words which Samuel had spoken to him. He still blamed the people partially and excused himself by saying, "I fear the people and obey their voice." As far as the record is concerned, we have no evidence that the people caused Saul to spare Agag. Neither do we have any notice of their demanding that some of the best of the flocks of the herds be spared for sacrifice. This is a rationalization of a man's sin by the man himself.

17. *Why did Saul want Samuel to worship with him? 15:25*

Perhaps Saul wanted to offer a trespass offering or a sin offering. He was not eligible to offer the offering himself. He knew that Samuel was God's spiritual leader, and he wanted his presence with him. His repentance was too late. If he had been totally sincere about it, he could have gone to the Tabernacle and offered a sacrifice there under the leadership of the priests. His plea seems to be more of an outpouring of the spirit of the moment. It was not a longlasting nor deepseated repentance.

18. *Why did Saul tear Samuel's skirt? 15:27*

In his desperation Saul grabbed the skirt of Samuel's mantle and tore it. This is typical of the action of a man who is beside himself with emotion. Had he learned self-

control in other matters, he might not have gone to this extreme in his demonstration of his grief. Joel found the Israelites making a great show of their repentance in his day and he told them to "rend their hearts" and not their garments (Joel 2:13). Samuel seized upon this drastic action of Saul's and used it as a sign of God's judgment. He said that God had torn the kingdom of Israel out of Saul's hands on that day and had given it to a neighbor of his. He describes the neighbor as being better than Saul, but he does not identify him by name.

19. *Who is the Strength of Israel? 15:29*

Samuel used the title, the Strength of Israel, to describe God himself. Many different names are given to God throughout the Old Testament. Abraham described him as the Judge of the whole earth (Genesis 18:25). God told Moses to tell the people of Israel that his title was "I Am" (Exodus 3:14). The everlasting God is the strength of His people.

20. *Why did Samuel finally yield to Saul's entreaty? 15:31*

Samuel did turn again with Saul, and Saul worshipped the Lord. Samuel did not do it for Saul's sake. When Saul asked him to honor him before the elders of his people and before all the people of Israel, Samuel acquiesced. Samuel yielded, but not for the personal entreaty of Saul himself.

21. *Why did Samuel slay Agag? 15:32*

Agag came into Samuel's presence "delicately." Agag thought that he had been spared for good. He evidently thought that he was safe and the danger of dying was past. He walked with a spring in his step. His gait was mincing. He may have even been flippant, but Samuel brought upon Agag's head a punishment similar to that which he had brought upon others. He hewed him in pieces. Some critics of the Bible accuse Samuel of being sadistic and unnecessarily cruel. If Samuel took only one swing of the sword and decapitated Agag, the Amalekite's body was

hewed into pieces—two pieces at least. Samuel at least showed alacrity and thoroughness in executing God's command, qualities which Saul did not demonstrate.

22. *What prompted God's repentance? 15:34, 35*

The action of Samuel in slaying Agag did not stimulate this feeling on the part of God. Because of his extreme wickedness, Agag was slain by the prophet. Samuel thereafter looked upon Saul as one in whom God had found only that which was displeasing and visited him no more. We understand that it repented God that He had made Saul king when we look upon the act as man would look upon it. This is what we call an anthropomorphism—putting things in the form that man can understand. Most certainly we do not look upon the occurrence as a mistake on God's part. God was grieved on account of Saul's failure. Inasmuch as grief is a part of our repentance, God's attitude resembles this part of repentance.

## CHAPTER 15 IN REVIEW

1. What people was Saul sent to destroy? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What people lived among them? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what place did Saul gather Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many men did Saul have with him? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many men were from Judah? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who was the king of the people Saul attacked? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Where did Saul meet Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
8. With what sin did Samuel compare rebellion? \_\_\_\_\_
9. With what sins did he compare stubbornness? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What title did Samuel give to God? \_\_\_\_\_

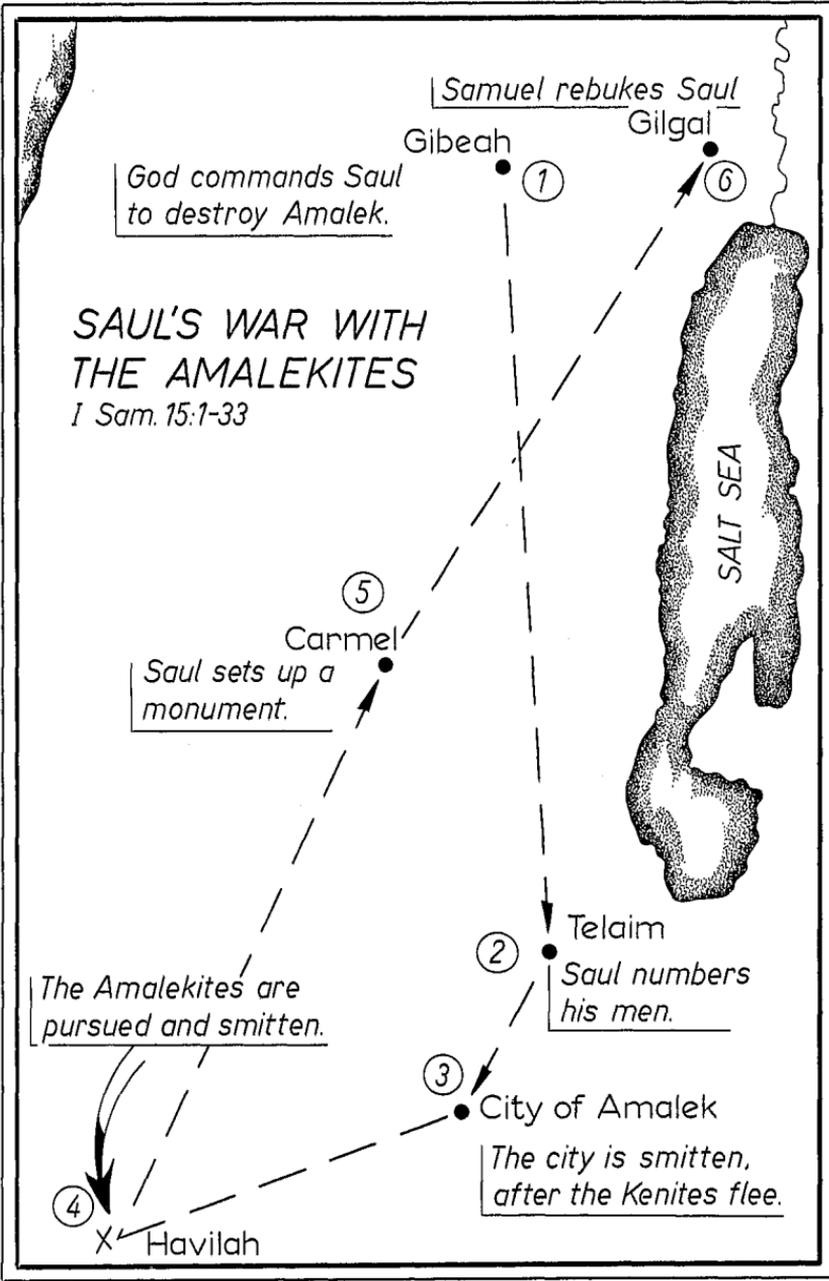
## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 16

- Vv. 1-6 *Samuel goes to Bethlehem.* Bethlehem was south of Samuel's home in Ramah, and located in the heart of the land of the tribe of Judah. His arrival in the city aroused the curiosity of the people and might easily incite the wrath of the king, but he informed the people that he was on a mission of peace and summoned them to a sacrifice.
- Vv. 7-13 *Samuel anoints David.* Jesse, a man of Judah and a resident of Bethlehem, was called to the feast. Samuel sought a replacement of Saul from among his sons, but it was only when David was called from the fields that the Lord made known to Samuel that David was to become the Lord's anointed. Samuel then poured oil from his anointing horn, thus signifying that David was God's chosen vessel.
- Vv. 14-18 *Saul seeks a musician.* In fits of acute melancholia, afflicted as he was with an evil spirit, Saul sought the soothing effects of music. His courtiers knew of David's ability in this realm and suggested that he be summoned to the king's court.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Man looketh on the outward appearance*" (v. 7a). Eliab, Jesse's oldest son, made a striking appearance. This was one of Saul's chief qualifications for the office of king. Saul stood head and shoulders above all the other men in Israel (I Samuel 9:2). When Samuel saw Eliab, he thought surely this was the man for the job. Samuel did not know Eliab's nature (see 17:28). He did not know that he was not suited to the task.





A stream from Elisha's fountain  
close to ancient Jericho

Matson Photo Service

2. "*The Lord looketh on the heart*" (v. 7b). God knows a man's motives. He can know his thoughts. These count much more than the size of his physical frame. Often God chooses things that the world would despise to be vessels of His power and grace (I Corinthians 1:27-29). For that reason, man must be careful lest he be found fighting against God when it is evident that the choice has been made.

David chosen as Saul's Successor, 16:1-18.

*Samuel Goes to Bethlehem.* 16:1-6

And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.

3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.

4 And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed *is* before me.

1. *Why did Samuel mourn for Saul?* 16:1

Samuel loved Saul. Samuel had addressed Saul with love when he first saw him (I Samuel 9:19 ff). He had des-

cribed Saul as the one for whom all Israel desired (I Samuel 9:20). The very coronation of Saul was filled with emotion. Samuel had felt rejected by the people. God had assured Samuel that the people had rejected God himself. Samuel had promised to pray for the people. He had anointed Saul, and it was very natural that he should be grieved at the ignominious failure of the first king.

2. *Whose son was David?* 16:2

David was the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite. The name, Jesse, belongs to this man alone in the Old Testament. Its etymology is obscure. Bethlehem is a well-known town of Judah, and it was located five miles south of Jerusalem on a site where a town still flourishes under its ancient name. David had seven brothers, all of whom were considered by the prophet as he came to select one for anointing king over Israel. At the close of the Book of Ruth, a note is made that David was a great-grandson of Ruth. In this passage we note that Boaz, the husband of Ruth, begat Obed; Obed begat Jesse; Jesse begat David (Ruth 4:18-22).

3. *Why was Samuel afraid of Saul?* 16:2

Saul was still king and could execute his enemies. His nature had changed. He was no longer the humble young man who had hid himself in the baggage when the people came to anoint him king. He was more like King Herod, whose nature was such that all Jerusalem was afraid when the wise men had caused the king to fear (Matthew 2:1 ff).

Saul might be possessed of evil spirits and seek to kill Samuel even as he later threw his javelin a number of times at David. Samuel loved Saul, and Saul had clung to Samuel when they parted. There was no way for Samuel to know, however, if Saul would be kindly disposed towards him.

4. *Did God tell Samuel to lie? 16:2b*

Samuel was afraid of going to Bethlehem to anoint David as king. He was afraid that Saul might try to kill him as he later tried to kill David. Edward J. Young, in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, says that it might appear that the Lord (16:2) commanded that Samuel tell a lie as to his purpose in going to Bethlehem, but Samuel was, as a matter of fact, going to Bethlehem to sacrifice. There was no need to tell the entire truth upon this occasion. If Samuel had been asked, "Are you going to Bethlehem in order to anoint David as king," and in answer had said to Saul, "I am going only to sacrifice, then Samuel would have been guilty of dissimulation and so also would be the Lord. Such, however, was not the case. There is a vast difference between dissimulation or acting under false pretenses and not telling the entire truth. There was no point in Samuel's revealing at this time the principal object of his mission. Dr. Young goes on to quote a passage from Calvin's *Commentary* where Calvin said that there was no dissimulation or falsehood in this since God really wishes his prophet to find safety under the pretense of the sacrifice. The sacrifice was therefore really offered, and the prophet was protected, thereby so that he was not exposed to any danger until the time the full revelation arrived. Once we admit, as we are compelled to, the genuineness of the Lord's intention for Samuel to sacrifice, the difficulty disappears. It is of the very nature of God not to lie. God himself cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18), and God never commands any of His servants to lie. God can kill and has on a number of occasions struck people dead. God may command His servants to kill their enemies, but He never will command His servants to lie. God himself does not lie, and He does not wish those who believe in Him to lie.

5. *Where was Bethlehem? 16:4*

Bethlehem was in the hill country of Judah. It was about ten miles south of the city of Jerusalem. It lay on a hill that made it visible for miles around as travelers came to it. Later it was the place of the inn where Mary gave birth to the Christ-child. It was the home of Naomi, who had gone with her husband, Elimelech, to the land of Moab when it was a time of famine in their own land in the days of the judges (Ruth 1:1 ff).

Bethlehem was the home of Boaz, who married Ruth, the widow of Mahlon, and daughter-in-law of Naomi. It was Ruth who gave birth then to Obed by Boaz, and Obed was the father of Jesse. This is the old home of the family of David.

6. *Why were the elders afraid? 16:4b*

The elders of the city came out to meet Samuel, and they were trembling. They asked him if he were coming in peace. These elders would be afraid because a visit from the judge of Israel might mean that there was trouble stirring. When Elijah went to the widow of Zarephath, she accused him of coming to bring her sins to remembrance (I Kings 17:18). This is a natural reaction of sinful people when they stand in the presence of one who is righteous and holy. Quite often the judge or the prophet would come to a community to pronounce judgment upon them. This must have been the thought of the elders of Bethlehem when they came out to meet Samuel.

7. *In what ways did Samuel sanctify Jesse and his sons?*

16:5

God's people never enter lightly into an act of worship. When the people of Israel came to Mt. Sinai under the leadership of Moses, they were given three days to prepare for the receiving of the law. On that occasion we read, "And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third

day: come not at your wives" (Exodus 19:14, 15). Not every occasion would be as filled with meaning as the receiving of the Ten Commandments, but every act of worship is a time to meet the Holy God; and it should not be entered into lightly. No doubt Samuel urged the men of Jesse's house to prepare their hearts, minds, and bodies for the sacrifice which they were to offer. The preparations may well have included the washing of their garments and even the abstaining from connubial relations. When the people of Israel were preparing to cross over into the promised land under the leadership of Joshua, they were given a similar three-day period in which to prepare vic-tuals themselves (Joshua 1:11). Of course, it would be necessary for the household of Jesse to prepare the sacri-ficial animals as they were getting ready for the sacrifice. All of this would be a part of "sanctification" of Jesse and his sons.

8. *Who was Jesse's oldest son?* 16:6

Eliab was the name given to Jesse's oldest son in the book of Samuel. In the book of I Chronicles (27:18), however, he is called *Elibu*. The word *Elibu* means, "He is my God," and the name is given to a number of different people in the Old Testament, including one of Job's friends (Job 32:3). *Eliab* is a word meaning, "God is father." It is generally supposed that the name Elihu is given to him after he became known and officially recognized as the head of the tribe of Judah. This is noted in the passage of Chronicles.

This oldest brother of David made such a good appear-ance that Samuel thought surely this one was the one whom God had chosen. He is quite active in the later history recorded in the Bible. He was contemptuous of David when David went down to the camp of the army (I Samuel 17:28). His daughter, Abigail, married her second cousin, Rehoboam, and bore him three children (II Chron-icles 11:18, 19).

9. *What is the meaning of the "Lord's anointed"?* 16:6b

The Greeks translated this word with the word which is the background for the English word *christ*. It would not be amiss to say that this is the Lord's christ. God had exalted the kingship by anointing the kings as the priests had been anointed earlier. Later we find that the prophets were anointed. These are the chosen men of God, and point forward to Him who is indeed the Lord's Anointed—Prophet, Priest, and King.

*Samuel Anoints David.* 16:7-13

7 But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the Lord seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

10, Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen these.

11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

10. *Who were Jesse's seven sons? 16:10*

Eliab was the first to pass before him, and in I Chronicles we learn that Abinadab and Shammah were also sons of Jesse. So were Nethanel, Raddai, Ozem, and David himself. These are listed in I Chronicles 2:13-15. According to I Samuel 17:12, Jesse had eight sons. This count in Chronicles, which agrees with that in I Samuel 16:8-12, may be reconciled with the enumeration in I Samuel 17:12 on the supposition that one of the sons died without posterity, hence he was not listed in the passage in Chronicles.

11. *Who was anointed to take Saul's place? 16:11*

Samuel was sent to David. After the seven sons of Jesse had been presented, and the Lord had not pointed out any one of them as the chosen one, Samuel was prompted to ask if these were all. David was absent, having been sent into the field to tend the flock. A full description of his person is given as the narrator tells of his entrance. The adjective "ruddy" is used at times to denote the reddish color of the hair, which was regarded as a mark of beauty in lands where the hair is generally black. All that is said of him indicates how eminently he was fitted, so far as his looks and his figure were concerned, for the office to which the Lord had chosen him. Along with the anointing, the Spirit of Jehovah came upon David from that day forward.

12. *What did Samuel experience in selecting the one to be anointed? 16:12*

Samuel came to Bethlehem and was met by the elders of the city. He sanctified Jesse and his sons. In attempting to find the son God had chosen to anoint king, all seven of the sons of Jesse were brought before Samuel. Having been told by the word of God that none of these seven was the right one, Samuel asked Jesse if these were all of his sons. He was informed that there was one more, the youngest, who was watching over the sheep. Samuel told

Jesse to fetch him, and that they would not so much as eat until he had come. When David was brought to Samuel, Samuel was told of God that this was the right one. 13. *Did David's brothers know he was to be king? 16:12, 13*

There is nothing recorded concerning any words of Samuel to David at the time of the anointing and in explanation of its meaning, as in the cast of Saul (10:1). In all probability Samuel said nothing at the time, since, according to verse two, he had good reason for keeping the matter secret, not only on his own account, but still more for David's sake; so that even the brethren of David who were present knew nothing of the meaning and the object of the anointing, but many have imagined that Samuel merely intended to consecrate David as a pupil of the prophets. Immediately following the account of the anointing, we read this brief note, "So Samuel arose and went to Ramah." At the same time, we can hardly suppose that Samuel left Jesse and even David in uncertainty as to the object of his mission and of the anointing which he had performed. He may have communicated all this to both of them, without letting the other sons know. It by no means follows that because David remained with his father and kept the sheep as before that his calling to be king must have been unknown to him. In the anointing which he had received he did not discern either the necessity or obligation to appear openly as the anointed of the Lord. After receiving the Spirit of the Lord in consequence of the anointing, he left the further development of the matter to the Lord in childlike submission, assured that He would prepare and show him the way to the throne in His own good time.

*Saul Seeks a Musician. 16:14-23*

14 But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.

15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

16 Let our lord now command thy servants, *which are* before thee, to seek out a man, *who is* a cunning player on a harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

17 And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me.

18 Then answered one of the servants and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord *is* with him.

19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, *which is* with the sheep.

20 And Jesse took an ass *laden* with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent *them* by David his son unto Saul.

21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armor-bearer.

22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight.

23 And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

14. *What was the evil spirit which came upon Saul? 16:14*

Jamiesson says that he had lost everything and was irritable. Matthew Henry said that he grew fretful and peevish and discontented, timorous and suspicious, ever and anon starting and trembling. Josephus says that he was as if he had been choked or strangled, and a perfect demoniac by fits. This made him unfit for business, precipitate in his counsels, the contempt of his enemies, and

a burden to all about him. The affliction was a divine visitation, apparently mental perturbation. It is described as an "evil spirit from Jehovah." It is difficult to discover the exact idea. There is no trace of a belief in the existence of evil spirits, in our sense of the word. We conclude that the spirit thought of as the agency of evil is a higher evil power, which took possession of him, and not only deprived him of his peace of mind, but stirred up his feelings, ideas, imagination, and thoughts. It is from Jehovah, because God sent it as a punishment.

15. *What was Saul's reaction to the servants' suggestion?*  
16:17

Saul's servants, seeing him in such an evil state, suggested that he secure a musician to render such music as would bring him comfort. Music was known as a remedy, and the courtiers recommended that he seek a skillful harpist. The powerful influence exerted by music upon the state of mind was well known even in earliest times so that the wise men of ancient Greece recommended music to soothe the passions, to heal mental diseases, and even to chuck tumults among the people. Saul approved his courtiers' plan, and David was mentioned by one of Saul's attendants. Saul sent for David; and coming to court, David speedily established himself in the favor of the king.

16. *How could David be called a man of war?* 16:17, 18

The description of David as a "mighty man" and a "man of war" does not presuppose that David had already fought bravely in war, but may be perfectly explained from what David himself afterwards affirmed respecting his conflicts with lions and bears (17:34, 35). The courage and strength which he had then displayed furnished sufficient proofs of heroism for any one to discern in him the future warrior.

17. *Why did Saul send for David?* 16:19

Saul sent for David to be his attendant. David's name means "beloved," and he had a bubbling personality with

a great deal of talent. His name does not mean "chieftain," as some evidence from the Mari letters may indicate. Saul was not looking for a chieftain as some translations would suppose. He was looking for a man to play the harp before him, and to calm his troubled mind when the evil spirit came upon him.

18. *What presents did Jesse send to Saul? 16:20*

David's father sent an ass laden with bread, a bottle of wine, and a kid to Saul. The Septuagint translation does not show an ass laden with bread, but rather a bushel of bread. This change of translation was made in misreading a Hebrew word for a beast of burden as a homer, and ancient Israelite measure. The circumstances point to David's taking a beast of burden for these various provisions rather than his carrying such a load himself. Such humble gifts to a king indicate that Saul's court was very crude.

19. *What was Saul's attitude toward David? 16:21*

Saul was attracted to David from the first time he saw him. He had no idea that David had been anointed to succeed him. Had there been no jealousy, Saul would have loved David as his own son. It was only when he saw his real potentiality and popularity that Saul was afraid of David and jealous of him. These verses explain how the two men met for the first time. David hardly looked at Saul as a man to replace. He was simply conscientious about his work. His being in the court afforded him the opportunity to learn the responsibilities of a leader of the state. At the same time he was in a position to demonstrate his abilities and talents and thus prepare for the time when he would take over the full responsibilities of the government.

20. *Why did Saul want David to stand before him? 16:22*

Radical critics attack this verse and charge that it was interpolated. There is absolutely no reason for taking this verse out of the text. Its meaning affects the narrative

considerably. Saul evidently called David before him and gave him a short trial period of service. He passed the first examination with flying colors. Saul was attracted to David and loved him. Saul therefore sent word to Jesse and asked him to consider David his servant permanently. Here is an example of the kind of thing which Samuel said would happen when the people got a king. Samuel said that he would take their sons and appoint them for himself (I Samuel 8:11). Saul was not despotic but rather made a request of the father.

21. *What was David's service?* 16:23

David's principal services to Saul consisted mainly of his being with Saul when the evil spirit came upon him. This last verse indicates that his services were needed repeatedly. The Septuagint translates the verb in the way that lends itself to giving the idea of repeated activity. David did not have to do this only once when he was first called to administer to Saul. His services were needed repeatedly, and he was the means of sustaining Saul in his activities.

## CHAPTER 16 IN REVIEW

1. To what town did God send Samuel to find a king? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was David's father? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Of what tribe was he? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which purpose of his mission did Samuel announce? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was David's "home town"? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who was David's oldest brother? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which other two of David's brothers were named? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many brothers did David have altogether? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where did Samuel go after anointing David? \_\_\_\_\_
10. On what musical instrument did David play? \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 17

- Vv. 1-11 *Goliath's challenge.* Once again Israel and Philistia were at war. On this occasion, the battle was pitched farther south; and the battlefield was in the land belonging to the tribe of Judah. The conflict reached a stalemate when a champion, Goliath, came out to challenge the best to be found in the armies of Israel. No champion was found at first in the camp of Saul.
- Vv. 12-27 *David bears Goliath's challenge.* When Saul went to battle, David returned to his father's house in Bethlehem. Since Jesse's three oldest sons were in Saul's army, Jesse sent David to the battle to inquire about his sons' well-being. It was while David was on this errand for his father that he heard Goliath's challenge. David was not afraid to answer the challenge.
- Vv. 28-37 *Saul sends David to meet Goliath.* David based his judgment on his past experiences with the power of God. By faith in God he had been able to defend his father's sheep when they were attacked by lions and by bears. This courage impressed Saul, and he sent David out to do battle against the Philistine.
- Vv. 28-54 *David slays Goliath.* David did not use Saul's personal armor with which Saul had clothed him. He took only his tried and trusty sling and five smooth stones for it. He had used this kind of weapon, and he felt confident with it. After he had hit the giant with a stone, he beheaded him with the sword which he had taken out of Goliath's sheath.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

Vv. 55-58 *Saul inquires about David's background.* One of the rewards promised to any who would slay Goliath was the hand of the king's daughter in marriage (v. 25). He had also promised that his father's house would be made free in Israel (v. 25b). Although David had formerly been in Saul's court, the king now made definite inquiry concerning his ancestry and background.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *We should use the equipment we have.* David said that he had not proved Saul's armor (v. 39). They were not his own. He did not know how to use them. We likewise should not try to do things in the same way another might have devised. We should be ourselves and use the talents and abilities which God has given to us.
2. *To do battle in the name of the Lord is to be victorious.* Ultimate victory is promised to those who do battle for God. The gates of Hell will not prevail against the Lord's church (Matthew 16:18).

### *Goliath's Challenge.* 17:1-11

Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

3 And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and *there was* a valley between them.

4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of

the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span.

5 And *he had* a helmet of brass upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass.

6 And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.

7 And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

8 And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array? *am* not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

10 And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

1. *Where were Shochoh, Azekah, and Ephes-dammim?*  
17:1

These places are in the Valley of Elah, now called *Wady es Sunt*. This valley begins a few miles northwest of Hebron and runs in a northerly direction between the mountains of Judah and the lower hills of the Shephelah forming the border of the Philistine Plain. Shochoh, now called *Suweikeh*, is about nine miles down the valley. This spot was on the Philistine side of the valley, the western side. To meet the description of the Scripture text, modern-day explorers look for a place which has on each side a mountain slope suitable for the camp of an army. It would need to be a valley wide enough to give room for Goliath's daily advance into it with his challenge.

Finally, a brook must flow along the valley where smooth, round stones could be found nearer Saul's side of the valley than the Philistines' side. J. W. McGarvey, in his *Lands of the Bible* (page 260), says that just such a point was found by him. He found it a short distance north of Shochoh. Above the spot, the valley was too narrow and the hills too steep, while the brook was either in the middle or too near the western side. At the point he located, however, the western hills have a moderate slope. They recede to a kind of amphitheater. A sloping ridge stands on the opposite side with a valley on each side of it. No doubt here were stationed the two armies with something more than a quarter of a mile of space between them. The brook, a raging torrent in the winter, but dry in the summer, flows within sixty or seventy yards of the eastern side of the valley. David, in advancing, was compelled to cross it. The bed is full of smooth, round stones from one to six inches in diameter. With scarcely a moment's hesitation David could have picked up five of these stones to suit his purpose. Mr. McGarvey and his companions picked up five apiece, any one of which would be the very thing with which to knock down a giant! The word "Ephes-dammim" comes from the root which means "boundary of blood." It is called Pas-Dammim (I Chronicles 11:13). No doubt the bloody contest between Israel and the Philistines gave the place its name. Probably this was a name for the valley where the battle was pitched. Azekah comes from a root meaning "tilled." It is known as a town in the plain of Judah (Joshua 15:35). It seemed to be a place of considerable strength (Jeremiah 34:7), and it had suburban villages in later times (Nehemiah 11:30). The southern coalition of the Canaanite kings were defeated at this place by Joshua, and their army destroyed by an extraordinary shower of hailstones (Joshua 10:10, 11). This location must have been farther down the valley and to the north of the battle field.

2. *Who was Goliath?* 17:4

Goliath was a survivor of the famous race of Anak (Numbers 13:28). The spies compared them to the Nephilim or "giants" of Genesis 6:4. The home of Goliath is named as being Gath, one of the chief cities of the Philistines. His height was six cubits and a span, which is, according to the calculations made by Thenius, about nine feet and two inches. The armor of Goliath corresponded to his stature, his coat of mail not being made of rings worked together like chains, but a coat made of plates of brass, lying one upon the other like scales. Upon his feet were greaves of brass, slung over his back was a small shield, and carried before him was a huge shield. The object of this description is to show how impregnable the man seemed to be. Added to all this is a description of his offensive weapon, a spear whose shaft was like a weaver's beam and whose head weighed some seventeen pounds.

3. *What challenge did he hurl at the armies of Israel?*  
17:8-10

It was, and is, the Arab custom for a warrior to vaunt his own prowess and to satirize his enemies, as a challenge to single combat. Goliath offers himself as a sample of his nation and bases his challenge upon the uselessness of general engagement when the single combat would settle the whole matter. The whole issue of the war was to be staked on the duel, and the challenge became a taunt, when no one was brave enough to accept it. At his words, all Israel, even Saul, were dismayed and greatly afraid; because not one of them dared to accept the challenge to fight with such a giant.

*David Hears of Goliath's Challenge.* 17:12-27

12 Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

13 And the three eldest son of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

14 And David *was* the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.

15 But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem.

16 And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.

17 And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched *corn*, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;

18 And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of *their* thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

21 For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

22 And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard *them*.

24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will enrich

him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

26 And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

27 And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

4. *Where was David at the time and what was he doing?*  
17:14, 15

David had been dismissed by Saul at the time; and having returned home, he was feeding his father's sheep once more. At this point, the household of Jesse is again described so far as is necessary to the present purpose. Jesse himself is too old to go to the war (v. 12), and David is regarded as too young. Three of the sons are in the ranks, but what has become of the other four is not told. Since David was too young at this time, we presume that he was not yet twenty years old; for Israel's men of war were to be men who were twenty years old and older (Numbers 1:3).

5. *How did it happen that he was at the battle?* 17:17, 18

His father sent him to see how his brethren fared and to take them some food. The presents sent by Jesse in the hands of David when he first went to Saul's court suggest how simple were the customs of Israel and in the court of Saul at that time. When he went to the camp, David again carried provisions and gifts. The parched corn was ears of wheat or barley plucked just before they were ripe and roasted for provision for travelers or soldiers. The army evidently had no regular commissary. To this provision were added ten of the round flat loaves of the *fellabin*. David was also to take ten cheeses to the captain of the thousand, to ask his brothers of their welfare, and to "take

their pledge." What this means is uncertain, but no corruption of the text is apparent. Possibly some token had been agreed upon which they were to send instead of a letter.

6. *What was the "trench"?* 17:20

The place of the wagons was back from the field of battle. This would be the center of the location of the material for battle. Supplies of various natures would be kept here. Any group of people demands certain provision when they stay for awhile in one place. Saul had hid himself in the baggage when he was first introduced to the people for a public anointing (10:22). The trench mentioned is no doubt a rampart which was thrown up to protect the baggage so that the enemy could not break through and destroy the victals. The American Standard Version translates this word trench with "place of the wagons." They did not fight battles in the same manner as those fought in World War I, when the foot soldiers were compelled to dig trenches and face the enemy across a no-man's land. Neither was it the kind of trench which would be dug in World War II, as so many of the armies directed their men in the field to dig slit trenches to protect themselves in times of bombings and strafings.

7. *How was the battle put in array?* 17:21

The battle was pitched as described in the first part of the chapter. One army was on the hill to the west of the valley of Elah; the other army was on a hill to the east of the same valley. A brook ran through the midst, but there was an open place where Goliath could come to make his challenge. Probably the men did march towards each other and stand in lines drawn in array, but none dared attack the other because of the challenge that was left unanswered and the impregnable position occupied by the enemy. This stalemate continued for forty days (v. 16).

8. *Where was Gath? 17:23*

Gath is a Philistine town with the name meaning "wine press." The importance of this city is seen in the fact that it makes so many different appearances in the Scripture narrative. David's ultimate conquest of Philistia resulted in his taking control of their leading city of the Philistine pentapolis, and people from the city were prominent even in David's army. One of David's chief military men was Ittai the Gittite (II Samuel 15:19). David also had with him a great number of men among the Cherethites and Pelethites, known as the Gittites. It is expressly stated that these men came from Gath (II Samuel 15:18). Goliath was a Philistine champion from a very important Philistine town.

9. *What rewards were promised to one who would slay Goliath? 17:25*

The men of the army understood that the man who killed Goliath would be enriched with great riches. Saul must have promised that he would give the man his daughter in marriage. As an additional enticement he promised to make his father's house free in Israel. A man's house which was freed would have to pay no taxes. His sons would be freed from military service, and his daughters would not be taken as confectionaries and maids.

10. *What was David's reaction to Goliath's challenge? 17:26, 27*

When David heard the words of Goliath's challenge, he made more minute inquiries from the bystanders about the whole matter and dropped some words which gave rise to the supposition that he wanted to go and fight with the Philistine himself. David was making clear that Goliath had to fight not with men, but with God—and this with a living God, and not with an idol. In other words, David was not afraid; and when he continued speaking to different groups after this manner, he was finally brought into the presence of Saul.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### *Saul Sends David to Meet Goliath. 17:28-37*

28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

29 And David said, What have I now done? *Is there not a cause?*

30 And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

31 And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul: and he sent for him.

32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

33 And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

35 And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36 Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

37 David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee.

11. *What was the attitude of his brother Eliab? 17:28-29*

David's eldest brother was greatly enraged at his talking courageously among the men, and he reproved David. It was his opinion that David was not contented with his lowly calling, but that he aspired to lofty things and took great delight in watching the bloodshed. The eagerness of a lad to see the battle needs no comment; the boys among Mohammed's followers at Medina wept when they were pronounced too young to go to war. Eliab was charging his brother with the very things of which he was guilty—presumption and wickedness of heart. David showed his purpose all the more by calmly answering his brother as he had formerly answered the other men.

12. *What were David's first words to Saul? 17:32*

When David was brought into the presence of Saul, he said, "Let no man's heart fail on his account: thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." To Saul's objection that he was a mere youth and the Philistine was a man of war from his youth up, David replied that as a shepherd he had taken a sheep out of the jaws of a lion and a bear and had also slain them both. David's courage rested upon his confident belief that the living God would not let His people be defied by the heathen with impunity. Saul then desired for him the help of the Lord in carrying out his resolution and commanded him to put on his own armor. David began to accept the proffered equipment, but he was not accustomed to such paraphernalia. He returned the armor to Saul and went forth armed only with his trustworthy sling and his dauntless faith in God.

13. *Why did David call Goliath an "uncircumcised Philistine? 17:36*

The covenant of circumcision was made with Abraham before Isaac was born. This covenant extended to Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar. It also extended to Abraham's descendants through Keturah, including such people as Midianites. Philistines were descendants of Ham, the

brother of Shem. Shem was the ancestor of Abraham's descendants, but the Hamitic line had received no covenant of circumcision. The Philistines were direct descendants of Cush (Genesis 10:8-14). To call a man an uncircumcised Philistine was to cast reflection upon his heritage. An uncircumcised Philistine was not under the covenant of God. He could not expect the spiritual blessings from God. It was as odious an epithet as David could think of to hurl at Goliath.

14. *What was Saul's final decision? 17:37*

Saul's final decision was that David should challenge Goliath. He raised objections about it, but was finally convinced that in the desperate situation there was no one else to meet the challenge. As he sent David forth, he pronounced a heartfelt blessing upon him: "Go, and the Lord be with thee." No better prayer could be offered for one being sent on a dangerous mission.

*David Slays Goliath. 17:38-54*

38 And Saul armed David with his armor, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39 And David girded his sword upon his armor, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him.

40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him.

42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

## FIRST SAMUEL

43 And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46 This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47 And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was* no sword in the hand of David.

51 Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

52 And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the

valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

53 And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.

54 And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent.

15. *Why did David not wear Saul's armor? 17:38, 39*

David did not wear Saul's armor because he had not proved it. Exactly what he meant by saying this is hard to tell, but it certainly would not fit David. Saul stood head and shoulders above anyone else in Israel. David was not fully grown at the time. The helmet of brass and the coat of mail would not be comfortable for David. In the second place, he had not proved that he knew how to use the sword. His weapons had been the weapons of rural use. In the third place, David had not proved himself worthy of wearing a soldier's armor. He was not unworthy, but it is normal for a soldier to earn his stripes and to deserve the privilege of carrying certain weapons. David was quite humble, and he may have meant that he had no right to wear the king's armor.

16. *With what was David equipped? 17:40*

David was equipped with a sling and a shepherd's bag, called a "scrip." In addition, he selected five smooth stones out of the brook as he crossed it. The exact nature of the scrip is not known, but it was probably a pouch which may have been suspended from his girdle or from a strap slung over his shoulder. As David had grown up watching his father's sheep, he had become skilled in the use of a sling. Benjaminites are mentioned in Judges 20:16 as being able to sling a stone at a hair's-breadth and not miss. Moreover they did this with their left hands. Such skill is difficult to obtain, but it is a deadly offensive and defensive weapon.

17. *What did Goliath and David say to each other?*  
17:43-47

The giant looked upon David with disdain and asked if they had sent someone out after him as after a dog with clubs and sticks. Goliath said that he would feed the flesh of David to the birds of the air. David replied that the giant was coming out to meet him with a sword and spear and javelin, but that he came to meet the giant in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom the giant had defied. David also said that Jehovah would deliver the giant into his hands and that he would give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines unto the birds of the heavens, and that all people would know that Jehovah depended not upon spears and swords, but that the battle would be won by His power.

18. *What was the result of the encounter?* 17:49-51

David was confident that the battle would be Jehovah's. He declared that all the earth would know that not by sword and spear doth Jehovah save; for the battle is Jehovah's, to dispose of according to his own sovereign will. When Goliath arose, therefore, and drew near, David ran towards him, took a stone out of his pocket, hurled it, and hit the Philistine in his face so that the stone entered his forehead and the giant fell upon his face to the ground. Goliath was so disdainful of David that he failed to close the visor of his helmet. David then cut off the head of the fallen giant with his own sword. Upon the downfall of their hero the Philistines were terrified and fled; whereupon the Israelites rose up with a cry to pursue the fleeing foe. They pursued them from the valley of the battle to the gates of Ekron, returned to plunder the camp of the enemy, and returned to their homes victorious. David took the head of Goliath and brought it to Jerusalem, and put his armor in his tent. From this place, Goliath's sword was taken to the Tabernacle at Nob. It was deposited

here by David in honor of the Lord and the victory that was granted over Israel's enemies.

19. *How far did the Philistines flee?* 17:52

Shaaraim is from the Hebrew word meaning, "two gates." There are two places by this name. One, a city near Azekah in Judah (Joshua 15:36), the other is a town in Simeon (I Chronicles 4:31), and evidently to be identified with Sharuhēn, which is between Gaza and Beersheba. Ekron is one of the Philistine cities where the Ark had been kept. Mention of the fact that the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim even to Gath and Ekron would indicate that the Philistines were driven back into their own territory. The mention of the Valley would indicate that there was another valley near Ekron. Reference could hardly be to the valley Elah where the battle was fought. This was no doubt a turning point in David's life and it was also a turning point in Israel's history. The Philistines are no longer found fighting up in the mountains of Judah and Ephraim. God's people were blessed with a decisive victory over their perennial enemies.

20. *Why did David take Goliath's head to Jerusalem?*

17:54

The Israelites tired from chasing the Philistines and spoiled their tents. The Philistines had left in such a complete rout that they had not taken their baggage and equipment with them. David himself took the sword of Goliath and put it in the tabernacle at Nob (I Samuel 21:9), but he took the head of Goliath and brought it to Jerusalem. The rest of his armor was kept in David's tent for the time being. Jerusalem was not yet David's capital city. He was evidently not gibbeting Goliath's head on the wall of Jerusalem as the Philistines did the bodies of Saul and Jonathan on the wall of Beth-shan (I Samuel 31:11). The Philistines also sent Saul's head

around about in the cities of the Philistines to publish the victory among their people.

David evidently did not pass around Goliath's head to publish the victory, but he may have brought it to Jerusalem to warn the Jebusites, who held the city, not to cause trouble for Saul and the armies of Israel. David was also possibly bringing it to throw it in the valley of Hinnom, which later was used as a place of refuse. If this had been the long-standing practice of casting refuse into this valley, David may have disposed of Goliath's head in this manner to show his utter contempt for anyone who would defy the armies of the living God.

*Saul Inquires About David's Background.* 17:55-58

55 And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son *is* this youth? And Abner said, *As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.*

56 And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling *is*.

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

58 And Saul said to him, Whose son *art* thou, *thou* young man? And David answered, *I am* the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

21. *Why did Saul seemingly fail to recognize David?*  
17:55-58

This does not necessarily mean that Saul did not know David as the young man that played the harp for him when he was under the spell of the evil spirit. The fact that he had asked no questions along this line when David first appeared before him indicates that he knew who he was. Otherwise it would be hard to understand how he was so ready to trust him. What he did not know was

the standing of David's family. It was the story of David concerning his family that seemed to have a strong appeal to Jonathan and led him to make the gift of his armor.

If Saul was going to make Jesse's house free in Israel, he would have to know more about the house. He may have inquired as to the number of sons in the home of Jesse. Furthermore, if David were to become the son-in-law of the king, Saul would want to know his background to make sure that he was of proper Israelite ancestry. It would also be necessary for Saul to find out more about David's family in order to know what kind of gifts to make for this daring deed of patriotism. David did surely more than to answer Saul's question. He must have gone into some little bit of explanation of his humble origins; because when he concluded speaking with Saul, Jonathan's soul was knit to that of David (I Samuel 18:1).

## CHAPTER 17 IN REVIEW

1. Where did the Philistines gather for battle? \_\_\_\_\_
2. To what tribe of Israel did the place belong? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the name of the Philistine champion? \_\_\_\_\_
4. From what Philistine city did he hail? \_\_\_\_\_
5. For how many days did Goliath issue his challenge? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many of David's brothers were in Saul's army? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which of David's brothers rebuked him? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many stones did David take from the brook? \_\_\_\_\_
9. To what Philistine city did Israel pursue the Philistines? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what Canaanite city did David carry Goliath's head? \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 18

- Vv. 1- 4 *David's covenant with Jonathan.* David's spirit was of such nature that Jonathan was immediately attracted to him. David made a covenant with Jonathan which was later renewed. The effect of the covenant was that David and Jonathan agreed not to harm each other. In case of the death of either the other agreed not to harm the descendants of the deceased.
- Vv. 5- 9 *Saul's jealousy of David.* David carried out all of his responsibilities with effectiveness. He won such favor in the eyes of the people that he became a national hero. The song which the people sang concerning the exploits of Saul and David aroused the jealousy of Saul because it was more favorable to David than it was to Saul.
- Vv. 10-16 *David driven out of Saul's court.* Saul's jealousy became so intense that he tried to kill David, not once but twice. Finally David was sent from the court to serve with the army in a distant outpost.
- Vv. 17-30 *David, the king's son-in-law.* It was understood by the men in the army that whoever slew Goliath would become the king's son-in-law, but Saul shamed David in the sight of Israel by giving his oldest daughter Merab to another man. When Saul found out that Michal loved David, he attempted to ensnare David by having him kill 100 Philistines as a dowry. When David did twice what was expected of him, Saul could hardly refuse to give Michal to him as his wife. This Saul did

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

although he knew that all Israel loved David greatly and he himself feared David more and more.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Kindred spirits are attracted to one another.* Though Saul was afraid of David, Saul's son Jonathan was a good man and found a fast friend in David. David's speech before Saul after David had killed the giant was of such humble nature that Jonathan's soul was knit to the soul of David immediately. Men today often find their closest friends among fellow workers in the church. Such ought to be the case with God's people. Their closest friends ought to be those who are of like precious faith.
2. *Two wrongs do not make a right.* David did what was expected of him even though Saul treated him shamefully. He must have been tempted to retaliate against Saul's injustices, but the idea of gaining revenge never gained the upper hand in David's thinking. It seemed that the more Saul oppressed David the more faithful David was to the tasks assigned him by Saul. David's actions remind us of the injunction of the apostle Paul to "overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

Saul's Reception of David Into His Court, 18:1-30.

#### *David's Covenant With Jonathan.* 18:1-4

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more to his father's house.

3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that *was* upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

1. *What took place between David and Jonathan when he told about his family? 18:1-4*

David's victory over Goliath was a turning-point in his life, which opened the way to the throne. This deed brought him out of the rural shepherd life to the scene of Israel's wars. In these wars Jehovah blessed all his undertakings with success. It also brought him, on the other hand, into such a relation to the royal house, which had been rejected by God, though it still continued to reign, as produced lasting and beneficial results in connection with his future calling. In the king himself, from whom the Spirit of God had departed, there was soon stirred up such jealousy of David as his rival to whom the kingdom would one day come, that he attempted at first to get rid of him by stratagem. When this failed, and David's renown steadily increased, he proceeded to open hostility and persecution. Jonathan, however, clung more and more firmly to David with self-effacing love and sacrifice. This friendship on the part of the son of the king not only helped David to bear the more easily all the enmity and persecution of the king but awakened and strengthened in him a pure feeling of unswerving fidelity towards the king himself.

2. *Why did David remain permanently with Saul? 18:2*

When David first came to Saul's court, he went to and fro to feed his father's sheep (17:15). His habit must have been to spend some time with Saul, then as Saul would show improvement, David would be free to go back to his father's house. If Saul's condition deteriorated, David would be called again to the court. After David slew the giant he vaulted into such a prominent place in the life of Israel that Saul kept him with him permanently.

This change of his schedule must not have been because of the worsening of Saul's condition, but rather the fact that his courage had been demonstrated in such a way as to make his services in constant demand.

3. *Why did Jonathan give his armor to David? 18:4*

As a sign and pledge of his friendship, Jonathan gave David his clothes and his armor. This seems to have been a common custom of very ancient times. The manifestation of Jonathan's love is seen in the covenant. Saul had earlier been willing to clothe David in his armor, but his was a temporary measure. Jonathan's gift was a permanent bestowal of honor and favor.

4. *When did David become Saul's armor-bearer? 18:4*

When Absalom was brought back from Gilead, he prepared a chariot of horses and fifty men to run before him (II Samuel 15:1). Saul did not have as much equipage, but he must have had several armor-bearers. When David first came to be with Saul, Saul loved him greatly, and David became his armor-bearer (16:21). Since David came and went and was not constantly at Saul's court, David was probably not his only armor-bearer. After he killed Goliath, it would appear that David was made Saul's personal armor-bearer. Saul set David over his men of war. This prominent position given to David was pleasing in the sight of the people. The servants who were under David's jurisdiction were also pleased with his leadership.

*Saul's Jealousy of David. 18:5-9*

5 And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

6 And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing,

to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music.

7 And the women answered *one another* as they played, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands,  
and David his ten thousands.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom?

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

5. *What caused Saul's anger after David had defeated the Philistines? 18:7, 8*

The eulogies of the women who greeted the returning army roused the jealousy of Saul. He therefore removed David from service near his person and appointed him over a band of soldiers in the field. David's activity and discretion were such that his hold on the people increased, which increased also Saul's jealousy. Michal, the younger daughter of Saul fell in love with David; and Saul made this an occasion for exposing David to new dangers. David's success in this instance added to the king's dislike, which became a settled hatred. At one point we are told of Saul's attempt to murder David. At another point, we are told of Saul's unfulfilled promise to give his older daughter to David. All these are but expressions of Saul's growing hatred.

6. *What is the meaning of Saul's eyeing David? 18:9*

Saul was so jealous of David that he kept him under constant surveillance. He was especially cognizant of all honors bestowed on him and heard with displeasure the songs that the women sang about David. From that day forward, Saul watched David's every move. He was evidently watching to see if he could find some flaw in him. Had David made a wrong step, Saul would have been

quick to condemn him and perhaps dishonor him or even kill him. Each of David's victories must have brought added displeasure and jealousy for Saul. Every favor bestowed on David must have given him acute mental anguish. He was indeed filled with an evil spirit.

*David Driven Out of Saul's Court. 18:10-16*

10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand.

11 And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it*. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

12 And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord *was* with him.

15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

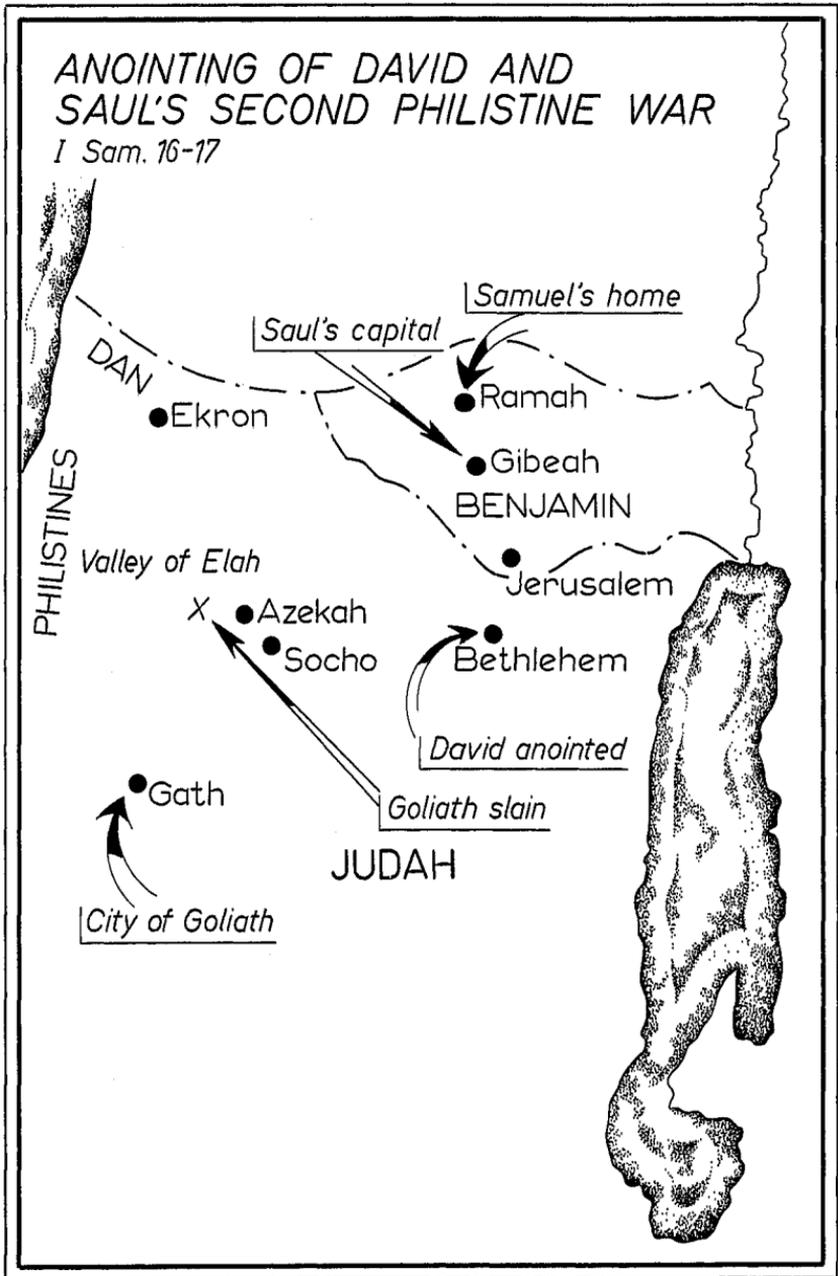
16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

*7. How could Saul prophesy? 18:10*

The evil spirit that came upon Saul was a supernatural influence. It was more than jealousy. Saul may have left himself open for the seizure of the evil spirit by falling into moods of melancholia. His condition may have been aggravated by the nearly insane jealousy he felt towards David. His condition was quite unnatural. The spirit of the living God not only filled his servants that they might reveal the truth, but Satan worked with all power and signs and lying wonders among his servants (II Thessalon-

# ANOINTING OF DAVID AND SAUL'S SECOND PHILISTINE WAR

I Sam. 16-17





General view of the valley of Elah

Matson Photo Service

ians 2:9). Saul was filled with an evil spirit, and his prophesying was not done in truth.

8. *How did David escape twice?* 18:11

The exact nature of Saul's attack on David is not made clear from this verse. He did have a javelin in his hand as David played before him. Saul threw the javelin, intending to pin David to the wall with it. The fact that David escaped once would be enough, but the statement is made that he escaped twice. Some commentators feel that Saul swung the javelin. If this were the case, David ducked and escaped the blow. Saul may then have swung again, and David dodged again. This kind of action does not fit the description of Saul's intention to pin David to the wall. It would be better to view this as a statement that this kind of an attack was made not only once but twice.

9. *Why did Saul make David captain over a thousand?*  
18:13

Saul's jealousy of David turned into fear. The Lord was with David and blessed him, but an evil spirit was in possession of Saul. Saul removed David from being his armor-bearer, not because he thought David would seek revenge, but because the constant aggravation and irritation of his presence was more than Saul could take. He also felt that David would be in great danger out in the field of battle. He made him a captain over a thousand men (18:16). David never made a wrong step. He behaved himself very wisely. He gave Saul no occasion to find fault in him. David's blameless conduct caused Saul to be more and more afraid of him. For this reason Israel and Judah loved David. Once again a distinction is made between the eleven other tribes and the leading tribe of Judah. Such a reference is not an indication of the books being written after the schism, but rather a manifestation of the fact that God had chosen Judah to be the leading tribe. David's conduct brought him into

such a place of prominence that he was like Joshua, who was chosen to take Moses' place as Israel's leader. As Moses was laying down the reins of government, he prayed that the Lord would set a man over the congregation who would go out before them and come in before them. This man's responsibility was to lead them out and bring them in. As Moses said, he had this responsibility so that the congregation of the Lord "be not as sheep which have no shepherd" (Numbers 27:17). Solomon used this same kind of reference to indicate his place of leadership as their wise king. Solomon said that he did not know how to "go out and come in" (II Chronicles 1:10). David must have had a place of very great prominence as his irreproachable character and wise conduct won much favor for him.

*David the King's Son-in-law.* 18:17-30

17 And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

18 And David said unto Saul, Who *am* I? and what is my life, *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?

19 But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

20 And Michal Saul's daughter loved David. and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

21 And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law in *the one of* the twain.

22 And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight

in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son-in-law.

23 And Saul's servants spake these words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you *a light thing* to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I *am* a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David.

25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law: and the days were not expired.

27 Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

28 And Saul saw and knew that the Lord *was* with David, and *that* Michal Saul's daughter loved him.

29 And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, *that* David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

#### 10. *Who was Merab?* 18:17

Merab was Saul's oldest daughter by Ahinoam, Saul's wife (14:50). Saul's men understood that whoever killed Goliath would become the king's son-in-law. Since Merab was his older daughter and as yet unmarried, he promised

to give her to David as his wife. He asked additional service on David's part as he entered into this covenant. He charged him to be valiant for Saul and to fight the Lord's battles. Saul was not at all anxious for David to continue his valiant service, but he was hoping that if David went into battle against the Philistines, the Philistines might kill him. Saul would thereby be freed from the threat to his throne. David was humbled by this promised honor. He did not count himself worthy of being the king's son-in-law. He did not count his life to be of much effect and evidently fought the Philistines without regard for his own safety.

11. *Why was Saul's promise not kept? 18:19*

Saul showed himself to be a very wicked king. He not only set David in positions where his life would be endangered and threatened his life on a number of occasions, but he failed to keep his word to David. A character study of Saul would reveal that he was jealous, fearful and dishonorable. He became a complexity of evil motives and deeds. When it was time that he should be married to Merab, Saul betrayed him and gave Merab to be the wife of Adriel, a Meholathite.

12. *Who was Michal? 18:20*

Michal was Saul's younger daughter. Her mother was also Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz (14:50). Michal loved David, and this information was brought to Saul. He saw in Michal's association with David an opportunity to lay a snare for David. He proposed that David would be his son-in-law by marrying Michal, but he demanded a dowry of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. The servants of Saul were sent to find out David's reaction to such a proposal. David felt that he was being mocked by the king and said, "seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law" (18:23). He evidently believed that Saul was toying with him, and he did not think it was a laughing matter. In other words, David took the proposal

seriously and was willing to do whatever was honorable to be given the hand of Michal in marriage.

13. *Why did Saul demand the foreskins of David?* 18:25

Jacob worked for seven years in order to receive the hand of Rachel in marriage (Genesis 29:28). Saul demanded a very unusual dowry from David in the form of 100 foreskins of the Philistines. Hardly any personal advantage came to Saul by demanding such a dowry. He was evidently trying to place David in such a dangerous situation that David could not escape. If David went out to kill one hundred Philistines and one of them killed him, then Saul would have removed this constant source of aggravation. Once again David showed himself willing to give more than could be expected of him. He not only killed a hundred Philistines, but doubled the number. He killed two hundred men and brought their foreskins to Saul.

14. *What is the meaning of the phrase, "in full tale"?*  
18:27

There was no lack of any in the total of two hundred foreskins. The number was not one hundred ninety-nine. It was a full two hundred, just twice as many as Saul had demanded. This phrase is an old English phrase from which we sometimes get the expression, "all told." We may make reference to there being two hundred people, "all told," at some kind of meeting. This expression has persisted in our language from the old English way of saying that a number was fully counted.

15. *Why did the princes of the Philistines go forth?* 18:30

The princes of the Philistines probably went out to avenge the killing of two hundred of their men by David as he satisfied the beastly whim of king Saul. They went forth to battle against the Israelites as they probably did on a number of occasions. David behaved himself wisely as ever. His behavior was better than that of any of the other servants of Saul so that his reputation grew better

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and better. His reputation even spread into Philistia, and all the Israelites came to depend upon him greatly. The Philistines feared him as a mighty man of war, and the Israelites looked to him as a champion of their cause.

### CHAPTER 18 IN REVIEW

1. What was the name of Saul's son? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What items did Saul's son give David? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many slain did the people ascribe to David? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many slain did the people ascribe to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
5. To whom did Saul give his older daughter in marriage? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the name of the daughter of Saul whom David married? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What rank did David hold in Saul's army? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many men did he have under him? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many foreskins of Philistines did Saul demand of David as a dowry? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many foreskins did David secure? \_\_\_\_\_

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 19

- Vv. 1- 7 *Jonathan intercedes for David.* Jonathan spoke kindly to Saul on David's behalf. He brought the two together again.

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- Vv. 8-17 *David driven out a second time.* Now Jonathan's good offices were to no avail. Once again Saul tried to kill David. When David escaped from his flying javelin, Saul sent messages to David's home; and Michal, David's wife and Saul's daughter, helped him to escape.
- Vv. 18-24 *David with Samuel.* The old prophet Samuel was David's good friend. Samuel and Saul had parted company long ago. Samuel had gone to anoint David to be king. David knew that he would find a friend in Samuel. He went to him in Ramah.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Some men are determined to do evil.* Some situations are of such an evil nature that no amount of good seems able to prevail. Some men are so filled with evil thoughts that they will not be persuaded by any good reasoning. Such seems to be the case with Saul. Christians will do well to realize this truth and cease to cast their pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6).
2. *A man's enemies may be those of his own house* (Matthew 10:36). Even though David was Saul's son-in-law, Saul was determined to kill him. Michal, David's wife, seems to have lied about David's threatening her. David must have wondered if there were any good person to help him since they of this own family were against him.
3. *A friend in need is a friend indeed.* Samuel had brought the call of God to David when he anointed him in Bethlehem. Now the side of events was going against David. David must have sorely needed the asylum afforded him by the man of God in Ramah.

## David's Final Flight from Saul's Court, 19:1-24.

*Jonathan Intercedes for David.* 19:1-7

And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.

2 But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret *place*, and hide thyself:

3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou *art*, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee.

4 And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good:

5 For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, *As the Lord liveth*, he shall not be slain.

7 And Jonathan called David and Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

1. *Who were Saul's servants?* 19:1

Saul's servants would be his courtiers. They were his other armor-bearers, his captains of the army, and all those who had an office in his kingdom. Saul extended his personal scheme to include all those over whom he had any control. He embraced Jonathan, his son, in the order. All were expected to do whatever they could to catch David and kill him. Such a widespread plot made it necessary for David to be always on the defensive. Had it not been for Jonathan, Saul's plot may have been suc-

cessful; but Jonathan told David of this extensive attempt on the part of Saul to kill him.

2. *What was Jonathan's scheme? 19:3*

Jonathan intended to make an opportunity to speak personally to his father about David. He found this opportunity as the two were in a field near the place where David was fighting. Jonathan spoke only good of David. His reasoning was good, and he reminded Saul of the good things David had done for him. Jonathan pointed out that David had not sinned against Saul. His activity had brought honor and glory to Saul and his kingdom. Jonathan reminded his father that David took his own life in his hands as he went out against Goliath. Jonathan believed that the Lord had worked in these instances and had brought about a great salvation for all Israel. Jonathan reminded Saul that he had seen this himself and rejoiced over it. Jonathan could see no reason for Saul's seeking to slay David. To Jonathan the killing of David would be the shedding of innocent blood.

3. *Why did Saul yield to Jonathan's appeal? 19:6*

When Saul was in full possession of his faculties, he must have known that he was wrong in trying to bring harm to David. Much of his fear of David must have come when he was in possession of the evil spirit. If Jonathan caught him at a time when he was rational, he could make his father understand what was right. Such must have been the case for Saul listened to Jonathan.

*David Driven Out a Second Time. 19:8-17*

8 And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him.

9 And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with *his* hand.

10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall

with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.

11 Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life tonight, tomorrow thou shalt be slain.

12 So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.

13 And Michal took an image, and laid *it* in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster, and covered *it* with a cloth.

14 And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He *is* sick.

15 And Saul sent the messengers *again* to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him.

16 And when the messengers were come in, behold, *there was* an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster.

17 And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

#### 4. *Why did Saul have his spear in his hand? 19:9*

Saul probably had the spear as a sceptre. He must have held it in his hand as he presided over his court. This would be in keeping with ancient oriental custom. It is also possible that Saul kept his spear always at hand in order that he might seize upon an opportunity to kill David. The spear that he held was evidently in the form of a javelin which he could throw. On the occasion described in this chapter he threw the javelin, but missed David. The javelin then stuck in the wall as David escaped out of Saul's presence. This is the second incident mentioned in which David escaped from a direct attack

on the part of Saul. Since the other occasion mentioned David's escaping twice, this would make at least three times that David escaped out of Saul's presence (18:10).

5. *Why did Michal have teraphim? 19:13*

Teraphim were little household images. The fact that Michal had these in her house reveals that she was not purely a worshipper of the Lord. Teraphim were found in the house of Laban, and Rachel stole them when she left her father's house (Genesis 31:19). These images were not large, for Rachel was able to hide her father's teraphim in the camel's baggage and sit on them. If Michal had larger images so that only one of the teraphim was put in the bed to look like a human form, they must have been larger than those stolen by Rachel, since it would be hard for Rachel to hide an image of this size. The pillow of goat's hair would resemble human hair quite naturally. It was goat's hair which Jacob put on his hands to feel like the human hair on Esau's hands (Genesis 27:16). Ancient dramatists in Greece and Rome used kid skin for the making of puppets to resemble humans, and they used kid skin with the hair to make wigs and toupees. Kid skin very nearly resembles human skin in its softness and pliability.

6. *Was Michal's answer true? 19:17*

Nothing is said about David's threatening Michal. David may have asked her to let him go and to give him time to escape so that he might protect her. Saul may have been so senseless in his attack on David that he would have killed his own daughter along with David. The inference of her statement is that she could not prevent David's escape. She gives the impression that David forced her to make up the bed so that it appeared that he was in it, even threatening her life if she failed to cooperate with him. If this be the case, there is no reference to it in the narrative. More than likely it is a piece of deceit on the part of Michal, and she is not justified in lying thus about the matter.

*David With Samuel. 19:18-24*

18 So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.

19 And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah.

20 And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.

21 And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.

22 Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where *are* Samuel and David? And *one* said, Behold *they be* at Naioth in Ramah.

23 And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

24 And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, *Is* Saul also among the prophets?

7. *What was Naioth of Ramah? 19:19*

Naioth was the communal dwelling place of the company of the prophets found in Ramah. It can hardly be taken as a town for there is no reference of Samuel's moving his residence to a smaller village which would be under the jurisdiction of Ramah. The Naioth would likely be located at the highest point in Ramah. This would make the ideal dwelling place of the prophet.

8. *What was Samuel's position with the prophets? 19:20*

Samuel was called the "head" of the prophets. He had jurisdiction over them and occupied the same place that

Elijah evidently occupied at a later time. When Elijah was about to be taken into heaven, Elisha asked to be given a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elisha was evidently asking to be recognized as Elijah's successor as head of the prophets (II Kings 2:9).

9. *What caused the prophesying?* 19:20b

The Spirit of God came upon the men. The prophets could not work up an ecstatic frame of mind. They were not whirling dervishes and even the use of the musical instruments does not account for the spirit of prophecy coming upon these men. It has well been said that no prophecy is of any private interpretation. Men of God did not speak as it pleased them, "for no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21).

10. *Who were the company of the prophets?* 19:20

The company of the prophets are sometimes known as the "band" of the prophets. On other occasions they are known as the "school of the prophets." Another designation is "sons of the prophets." These were young men that are met in the Scripture all the way from the time of Samuel down to the time of Amos who said that he was not "a son of a prophet" (Amos 7:14). These men were allowed to marry, but they lived in a common dwelling place. They had an older prophet as their leader. On occasions they were sent on such important missions as anointing kings, even in a country like Syria. They were sent on special missions such as that fulfilled by the unnamed prophet who announced judgment on Jeroboam's idolatry (I Kings 13:1).

11. *In what sense was Saul naked?* 19:24

Saul did not have on his usual regal costume. He was probably clad only in his undergarments. This truth is brought out in such instances as the occasion on which David danced before the Ark. On that occasion, he wore a linen ephod (II Samuel 6:14). When David got to his

house, Michal upbraided him because she thought he had shamelessly uncovered himself (II Samuel 6:20). Evidently Michal was incensed that her husband, the king, would dance before the Ark in such an abbreviated costume as a priest's ephod. She must have thought that it was beneath his dignity to be among the common people and not to have on his robe and crown. On another occasion we learn that Peter put on his coat and jumped into the sea because he was "naked" (John 21:7). The American Standard Version contains a footnote indicating that Peter had on his "undergarment only." This must have been the case with Saul's lying on the ground all night and prophesying.

12. *Why is the proverb given twice? 19:24*

When Saul first met a band of prophets after leaving Samuel, he fell in with them and began to prophesy (10:12). People learned of this, and they started the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" On this occasion at Naioth Saul once again fell among the prophets and prophesied. The occasion received a new exemplification. It also received a new basis and was therefore the cause of the proverb being revived and emphasized.

## CHAPTER 19 IN REVIEW

1. Who interceded with Saul on David's behalf? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Saul hurl at David? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did Michal put in David's bed? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Of what was the pillow made? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did David threaten to kill Michal? \_\_\_\_\_
6. To whom did David flee? \_\_\_\_\_
7. In what city did David find refuge? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What group of men were prophesying when Saul's messengers met them? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where did Saul go in search of David? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Quote the proverb which arose from Saul's prophesying. \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 20

- Vv. 1-10 *David's appeal to Jonathan.* Since Jonathan had helped David to return to Saul's court at one time, David sought him out again. Jonathan was still David's friend and agreed to assist David.
- Vv. 11-23 *Jonathan's plan.* Jonathan renewed his covenant with David and agreed to find out his father's intentions concerning David. He also arranged a plan whereby David would know the outcome of Jonathan's inquiry of his father.
- Vv. 24-34 *Saul's attack on Jonathan and David.* When Saul found out that Jonathan was in touch with David he berated not only Jonathan but also his own wife Ahinoam as well.
- Vv. 35-42 *David's and Jonathan's parting.* When David learned of Saul's implacable anger, he knew that he could not return to the court. He knew that he was doomed to live the life of a fugitive. The parting with Jonathan was sad, but in the best interests of both.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The value of faithful friends.* At the risk of his own life Jonathan was willing to help David. Their friendship is classic in its very nature. The two stand as examples of what friends ought to be to each other.
2. *The vile fruits of jealousy.* Saul became so intense in his hatred, fear and jealousy of David that he attempted to kill his own son. He called his wife a "perverse, rebellious woman" (v. 30). Such is the way of one who is proud and selfish.

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3. *The strengthening of truth in adversity.* The parting of Jonathan and David is filled with heartwarming lessons. The two wept unashamedly, for their souls had been knit inseparably together by their experiencing danger together. Such is the outcome of the fires of testing on friendship that is true.

David's Farewell to Jonathan, 20:1-42.

*David's Appeal to Jonathan.* 20:1-10

And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

2 And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will show it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? *it is not so.*

3 And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly *as* the Lord liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, *there is* but a step between me and death.

4 Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do *it* for thee.

5 And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, tomorrow *is* the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third *day* at even.

6 If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me that he might run to Beth-lehem his city: for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

7 If he say thus, *it is* well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, *then* be sure that evil is determined by him.

8 Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for

thou has brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father?

9 And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

10 Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what *if* thy father answer thee roughly?

1. *Why did David appeal to Jonathan? 20:1*

Samuel was the man who had anointed David to be king over Israel. In this role, Samuel had showed himself to be a friend of David. David first fled to him. After he had been with Samuel in Ramah, his thoughts must have turned to other friends and supporters. No one had been any closer to David than Jonathan. In addition Jonathan would have full access to the court of Saul. Jonathan would know if there were some possible reasons for Saul's continued animosity. It was for these reasons that David next turned to Jonathan. His question was three-fold: What had he done? What was his iniquity of any kind? What was his sin against Saul? David thought Saul had surely indicated some reason why he was seeking to take his life.

2. *Why did Jonathan deny his father's intentions? 20:2*

Jonathan did not so much deny his father's intention as to utter a prayer that God would spare David's life. It was unthinkable to Jonathan that David should be slain. His continued speech, however, reveals that he evidently thought that his father was not intending to take such drastic action. As heir apparent to the throne, Jonathan would be taken into his father's most intimate confidence. Nothing of any significance would be hidden from Jonathan; and he felt that Saul's intentions towards David were ultimately for good, except when his father was in the throes of the state of depression into which he fell.

3. *Why did David insist that Saul did intend to kill him?*  
20:3

David said that Saul knew that there was a deep friendship between Jonathan and David. On account of this friendship he believed Saul had failed to reveal his full intentions towards David as a part of the information he gave to Jonathan. This was one aspect of the kingdom's business into which Saul had not taken Jonathan into his confidence. David thought that Saul did not want to grieve Jonathan in this matter and had spared him the mental anguish of knowing his father was intending to slay his best friend. David insisted that there was only a very slight chance that he could escape. He was just one step away from death.

4. *What was the plan devised between Jonathan and David?* 20:5

David proposed being absent from the feast of the new moon. He intended to go and hide himself in a field for three days while Jonathan made specific inquiry into the status of Saul's plans. Should Jonathan find out that David could safely come back into the court, he was to come out into the field and get him. If there were no possibility of his being reinstated at the court, Jonathan was to come and inform him so that he could flee from Saul.

5. *Was there a feast at Jesse's house?* 20:6

The feast of the new moon was a very important feast to the Israelites. Every male member was expected to observe the beginning of the new month. It is quite possible that there was a feast being held at Jesse's house in Bethlehem. The Tabernacle in Shiloh had lost its significance to the people since the Ark had been captured by the Philistines. The Ark itself was still in the house of Abinadab on the western border of the tribe of Judah. The faithful people of Israel would continue to hold their feast. Since this is mentioned as an annual feast, it may

have been the first day of the new year, the first day of the month Abib.

6. *How would David's absence indicate Saul's attitude?*  
20:7

David would surely be missed. This may have been the very time at which Saul had laid the plot to catch David. He may have been waiting for this occasion when all his courtiers were expected to be with him. The fact that David was gone would irritate the king. The extent of his irritation would indicate his attitude towards David.

7. *What covenant of the Lord was between David and Jonathan?* 20:8

The covenant of friendship into which David and Jonathan had entered (18:1, 2) was considered a holy covenant by David. It was more than a statement of friendship between two men. David did not take it lightly. He had sworn unto the Lord that he would show kindness to Jonathan. Jonathan had made the same vow to him. This covenant was renewed time and time again throughout the lives of the two men. It bound them together inseparably.

8. *What danger was there in the plan for Jonathan?* 20:10

David foresaw the possibility of Saul's answering Jonathan "roughly." As the matter transpired, Saul did answer Jonathan roughly. He called him the son of a perverse, rebellious woman (v. 30). Saul even cast his javelin at Jonathan to smite him (v. 33). It is hard to imagine any depth to which Saul could have fallen where he would be lower than he was at this time. He had turned upon his armor-bearer and champion, David. He had accused his own daughter of turning against him. He had imagined that his courtiers were all against him. He came to the place where he cast reproach and suspicion upon his own wife and then threw a javelin to kill his heir and prince.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### *Jonathan's Plan: 20:11-23*

11 And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

12 And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about tomorrow any time, *or* the third *day*, and behold, *if there be good* toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee;

13 The Lord do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father *to do* thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not:

15 But *also* thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

16 So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, Let the Lord even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies.

17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

18 Then Jonathan said to David, Tomorrow *is* the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

19 And *when* thou hast stayed three days, *then* thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was *in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

20 And I will shoot three arrows on the side *thereof*, as though I shot at a mark.

21 And, behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows *are* on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for *there* is peace to thee, and not hurt, *as* the Lord liveth.

22 But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the

arrows *are* beyond thee; go thy way: for the Lord hath sent thee away.

23 And *as touching* the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the Lord *be* between thee and me for ever.

9. *What is the meaning of Jonathan's prayer? 20:12, 13*

As Jonathan and David went into the field, Jonathan prayed to the Lord God of Israel. He asked God to do evil to him if he did not tell David the outcome of the matter. His prayer was really a vow. It was a solemn oath taken before the Lord that he would sound out his father and then tell David. If, for any reason, Jonathan failed to bring word to David, he prayed that God would smite him.

10. *What was the house of David? 20:16*

As yet David had no family. The covenant which Jonathan made with David was looking into the future to a time when David would have heirs. The covenant which Jonathan and David made was not only between themselves personally, but it was to be binding upon their descendants. It was a promise that neither family would turn upon the other. Such a covenant was needed because regal families quite often exterminated each other. One family coming to the throne would customarily seek out all the members of the other royal house and attempt to exterminate them. By doing this they would dispose of any threat which might be made to their claims to the throne.

11. *Where was the stone Ezel? 20:19*

The spot is lost to present-day archaeologists, but it was evidently near Ramah in Benjamin. The stone would have marked the field and spot where David was to hide. This would make it possible for Jonathan to come back to the area and be certain that he was in the vicinity of David's hiding place.

12. *How would the shooting of arrows be a sign to David?*

20:20-23

The signal was arranged so that David would know the outcome of Jonathan's inquiry without any direct conversation. If Jonathan shot arrows into the field, and then said to the lad who was to fetch the arrows that the arrows were beyond the boy, then David would know that he was to get up and flee. If Jonathan shot the arrows and then said to the lad who was fetching them that the arrows were between Jonathan and the lad, David would know that it was safe for him to come out of hiding. David was then to get up from his hiding place and come back with the boy and the arrows to Jonathan. Should Jonathan be followed into the field, there would be no danger to anybody concerned. If Saul were still threatening David's life, the boy would run on and get the arrows. He would bring them back to Jonathan and they would return to Gibeah. After they had gone David would get up and flee. If Saul were favorably inclined towards David, David could listen for the signal and then get up and come back with all in a friendly and amiable atmosphere.

*Saul's Attack on Jonathan and David. 20:24-34*

24 So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

25 And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, *even* upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

26 Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; surely he *is* not clean.

27 And it came to pass on the morrow, *which was* the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor today?

28 And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave* of me *to go* to Beth-lehem:

29 And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favor in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

31 For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send an fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

33 And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

### 13. *Where was David's seat?* 20:25

From the arrangement given in the text it appears that Abner sat on one side of Saul and David sat on the other. Mention is made of the fact that Jonathan arose which may be an indication of Jonathan's having given Abner his seat next to Saul. Saul's seat was by the wall, a reference that indicates the use of a room where Saul could come and dine. The feast itself was important to the Israelites and David might well be expected to attend.

### 14. *Why did Saul think David was unclean?* 20:26

Those who touched dead bodies were not clean and could not attend the feasts. Since David was a man of war and

was sent out to fight Saul's battles, he might be expected to be in this condition. Even some animals were considered unclean to the Israelites, and anyone who touched them was unclean until the end of the day (Leviticus 11:27). When Saul missed David from the feast of the new moon, he was hoping that he was absent for some unavoidable reason, and the most logical explanation would be that he was ceremonially unclean and therefore not eligible to participate in the feast. This would lead Saul to expect that David would be at the feast on the next day. With this thought in mind he dismissed the situation.

15. *Why would David's brother command him to be at home? 20:29*

The elder brother had the right of *prototokia*. This was the same as the Latin *primogeniture*. The firstborn in the family was given a double portion of the father's inheritable goods. He had the responsibility for the younger children and especially for the arranging of marriages for the daughters in the family. If the father left a widow, the older son was also responsible for her welfare. David's father was not yet dead, for we learn that he later joined David in his flight from Saul (22:3). Eliab, David's older brother, may well have been assuming many of the responsibilities of the head of the family during the years of Jesse's later life.

16. *Why would Jonathan's love for David cause confusion? 20:30*

Under normal circumstances Jonathan would have been heir to Saul's throne. The love that Jonathan had for David led him to honor David as the leading man in Israel. By doing this he was taking a second place himself and was not filling the prominent role which Saul thought belonged to the crown prince. Saul evidently believed that Jonathan would rather see David sitting on the throne than to sit on the throne himself. Such a situation would lead to a break in the genealogy of the house of Saul or at

least to a change of dynasties. In this way Ahinoam, Jonathan's mother, would not be the queen mother. This would cause confusion on her part.

17. *Why did Jonathan become angry? 20:34*

Jonathan became so angry that he left the feast. He did not participate in the services of the second day of the feast of the new moon, and he was filled with fierce anger. He had been convinced beyond all question or doubt of the fact that his father was determined to kill David. In addition to this Saul had cast reproach upon Jonathan's mother and even attempted to take Jonathan's life. Although Jonathan appears to be the kind of a person who would give the other fellow every benefit of the doubt, he finally saw the truth of the matter. Such a desperate situation filled him with grief and anger. He was grieved for David's sake. He was filled with fierce anger towards his father.

*David's and Jonathan's Parting. 20:35-42*

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is not the arrow beyond thee?*

38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40 And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

41 *And* as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

18. *Why did Jonathan send the lad back to the city? 20:40*

Since no one else had come with Jonathan and the lad who fetched his arrows, Jonathan was safe in sending the lad back to the city so that he could have one more conversation with David. If anyone had come with them, Jonathan would probably have simply given the signal and then gone back to the city with the lad. Moreover, if someone had been watching the events, Jonathan would not have dared to bring David out of hiding. As they were alone except for the lad, Jonathan ordered the lad to leave them. After the lad left, David was free to come out of his hiding place.

19. *In what way did David exceed? 20:41*

The extreme warmth of the friendship of David and Jonathan found its expression on this occasion as they embraced one another and wept. Their weeping must have been filled with uncontrollable sobs. This condition continued for a time until finally David gained control of his emotions and led Jonathan to gain control of himself. The two were then able to talk about their affairs.

20. *What facts show the superiority of Jonathan's friendship with David? 20:42*

Jonathan had much to lose personally by befriending David. Events which were transpiring made it clear that David was the most outstanding citizen in Israel. Although Jonathan was probably unaware of David's being

anointed as king by Samuel, he must have realized that David was destined for a place of leadership in the kingdom. Jonathan did not try to press his claims to the throne but acquiesced to the Lord in the matter. Their friendship was bound by an oath which they swore "in the name of the Lord." Their prayer was that the Lord would be between them and between their houses forever. Their parting prayer is of the same spirit as that of Jacob and Laban as they separated. They gave us the Mizpah saying, "the Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another" (Genesis 32:49). As Jonathan and David parted, they prayed that God would watch them while they went their separate ways. When they could no longer be together personally to counsel and aid each other, their prayer was for the Lord's abiding presence.

## CHAPTER 20 IN REVIEW

1. To whom did David go after he left Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
2. From what feast was David absent? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where did David say he was going? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did Saul think he was not at the feast? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Near what stone was David to hide? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How did Saul describe his wife? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did Saul hurl at Jonathan? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who sat by Saul's side at the feast? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who went to the field with Jonathan? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What did Jonathan shoot into the field? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 21

- Vv. 1- 9 *David at Nob.* The Ark of the covenant was not yet returned to the tabernacle. The high priest was at Shiloh in the days of Samuel but after the Ark was captured, the Tabernacle was evidently located at Nob. David wanted to worship God and so went to the Tabernacle. He found some help and friendship in the priests that were there.
- Vv. 10-15 *David at Gath.* David's flight to Philistia seems ill advised, but he must have thought that he would find help there. Since Saul was seeking to kill him he might find safety among Saul's Philistine enemies. He fled to the city which had been introduced earlier as the home of Goliath. It was a very important Philistine city and ruled over by Achish, the king.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Let us go into the house of the Lord*" (Psalm 122:1). David sang this song which he taught Israel, but this was evidently the tenor of his life long before he wrote the Psalm. Since he was in dire straits, he not only sought out the priest of God but also went to the house of the Lord where he could worship in an acceptable way. Here he would have opportunity to make a sacrifice unto God and to seek the will of the Lord for his life.
2. *Politics make strange bedfellows.* This old adage has been seen in many different instances. Once David had fought against the Philistines. He slew the champion of their army and caused them to flee from the armies of Israel. Now he sought refuge among them. His reasoning was wise according to the ways of this world, but it fills us with chagrin to see a man of God

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brought so low that he must affiliate himself with the enemies of God's people in order to save his own life.

3. *The enemies of God's people watch them closely.* When David got to Achish in Gath, he found that they already knew the song which was sung in Israel crediting David with slaying ten thousands of men whereas Saul had slain only thousands. They also recognized him as being the one who was to become king of Israel. He was thus not able to find safety among them. Christians would be surprised to find out how much non-Christians know about their everyday activities. We ought to realize that non-believers watch the believers very closely.

David's Flight to Gath, 21:1-15.

### *David At Nob. 21:1-9*

Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, *Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?*

2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place.

3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give *me* five *loaves of* bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

4 And the priest answered David, and said, *There is* no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.

5 And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.

6 So the priest gave him hallowed *bread*: for there was no bread there but the shew-bread, that was taken from before the Lord, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the Lord; and his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul.

8 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.

9 And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take *it*: for *there is* no other save that here. And David said, *There is* none like that; give it me.

1. *To what place did David first flee? 21:1*

David fled first of all to Nob, to Abimelech the high priest, to inquire the will of God through him concerning his future course and induced him to give him bread and the sword of Goliath also, under the pretext of having to perform a secret commission from the king with greatest speed. The town of Nob, or Nobeh, was at that time a priests' city, in which, according to the following account, the Tabernacle was then standing and the legal worship carried on. According to Isaiah 10:30, 32, it was between Anathoth and Jerusalem: and in all probability it had been preserved in the village of *el-Isawiyeh*, an hour's distance from Jerusalem and the same distance to the southeast of Gibeah of Saul.

2. *Why did David say he was alone? 21:2*

The high priest was surprised to see David, the son-in-law of the king and a chieftain among the soldiers, without

a company of men with him. He asked David about this, and David replied that he had been sent on a certain business that was secret, therefore, he said he was traveling alone. He explained further that he had dispatched his soldiers to other places. He must have had some young men, but not his usual soldiers, with him.

3. *Was it right for him to eat the bread?* 21:3

For David and the young men to eat the shew bread was a departure from the Levitical Law. As is stated in the Law (Leviticus 24:9), the bread was for the priests. According to a higher law of love for a fellow man in need, the high priest may have justified himself in giving this bread to David. Jesus made reference to this incident when the Pharisees found fault with the disciples for being hungry and plucking ears of corn to eat on the Sabbath day. Jesus did not expressly justify David in his taking the shew bread, but He referred to the matter in order to give pause to the Pharisees. Jesus might have expected them to find fault with David rather than with his disciples (Matthew 12:1-4).

4. *Why did the high priest ask if the young men were clean?* 21:4, 5

The high priest was reluctant to give the holy bread to men who were ceremonially unclean. A part of the sanctification of a people for a holy occasion was their refraining from their normal relationships with their wives (Exodus 19:15). If the young men of David were ceremonially clean, the high priest would not feel as reluctant to give them the holy bread.

5. *Who was Doeg?* 21:7

Doeg was an Edomite. The Edomites were descendants of Esau (Genesis 36:1). These people lived in the country south of the Dead Sea. As the brother of Jacob, Esau was given a secondary blessing of Jacob. Esau had many descendants, and they grew into a prosperous nation. They

had kings ruling over them before the monarchy was established in Israel (Genesis 36:31). Doeg the Edomite was a chief herdsman among Saul's servants. He may have come to Israel as a mercenary and been given the responsibility of tending to the king's flocks and herds. If this were the case, he was no doubt grazing the royal herds near Nob and thus in a position to overhear the conversation of David.

6. *Why did the priest have Goliath's sword? 21:9*

After the battle in the valley of Elah David put Goliath's armor in his own tent. At that time he took the head of Goliath and brought it to Jerusalem. Nothing is said at that time about the ultimate destiny of Goliath's armor, but it was customary for a victorious people to bring some spoils of war to their temple as an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord, who had given victory. It was no doubt that spirit which prompted David to leave the disposition of Goliath's armor with Saul. Saul had evidently sent the sword, at least, to the Tabernacle at Nob.

*David At Gath. 21:10-15*

10 And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

11 And the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is not this David king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying,*

Saul hath slain his thousands,  
and David his ten thousands?

12 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

13 And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

14 Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me?

15 Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

7. *Why did David flee to Philistia? 21:10*

David fled to Gath, the home of Goliath, where Achish was king. Achish was Saul's enemy. Saul was David's enemy. Achish and David had a common enemy in Saul. David must have thought that Achish would give him political asylum.

8. *Why did they call David a king? 21:11*

This Achish, king of Gath, is evidently the same one who was overlord of David in his later career. The servants and officers of Achish asked, "Is not this David, king of the land?" They called him king, not because his anointing and divine election were known to them, but on account of his victorious deeds, which had thrown Saul entirely into the shade. Whether they intended by these words to celebrate David as a hero, or to point him out to their prince as a dangerous man is sometimes debated; but David's actions indicate that they were considering doing him harm.

9. *What effect did these questions have on David? 21:12, 13*

David pretended to be out of his mind. In their presence, he carried out all the acts of a maniac. When they tried to take him captive, he raved in their hands. In their houses, he scribbled on the doorposts. Wherever he was, he let the saliva run out of his mouth. By these acts, David caused Achish to wish to be rid of his company. From the assertion that the king made, some would imply that the members of the king's household were insane; but the obvious meaning is simply that the king did not relish the company of madmen, of whom plenty were to be had in his own land.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 21 IN REVIEW

1. When David finally fled from Saul, to what place did he flee? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was priest there? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did the priest give David to eat? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What piece of armor did he give to David? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the name of Saul's servant who was there? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Of what nationality was the servant? \_\_\_\_\_
7. To what foreign country did David flee? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what city did he seek refuge? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What was the name of the king to whom David fled? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What title did these foreign people ascribe to David? \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 22

- Vv. 1- 5 *The prophet Gad and David.* As David left Philistia and moved back through the land of Judah, he was joined by members of his own family. All those who were in distress or in debt also joined David. Altogether he had a company of 400 men. After David fled to Moab, God sent his prophet Gad to be with David and to instruct him not to flee outside the land of Israel.
- Vv. 6-16 *Saul's increasing jealousy.* Saul not only berated the members of his own family, but he loosed a tirade against his officers and soldiers accusing them of being in a conspiracy with David. This caused Doeg to reveal David's brief association with the priests at Nob.
- Vv. 17-23 *Saul's slaughter of the priests.* There was still some fear of God among Saul's men. When Saul ordered the killing of the priests none of his soldiers would obey. Finally, Doeg killed all but one of the priests.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God always raises up men to meet the needs of the hour.* God has never been without men to meet the needs of a particular situation. When David was in need of a man of God, God sent Gad his prophet to be with David. When God needed a messenger to carry the gospel to the Gentiles he called Saul of Tarsus to be His chosen vessel. God has worked this way throughout human history, and Christians should always be thankful that there are those who are willing to rise up and meet the call of God.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

2. *Man's worst enemy is often his own imagination.* Saul imagined that all of his men were against him. He fell into such a slough of self-pity that he thought there was conspiracy in the ranks of his own soldiers. He thus alienated the affections of many of his leaders. Too often this happens in the ranks of Christian workers today.
3. *Nothing is holy to a man who has sold his soul to Satan.* Most men would stop short of killing God's anointed people. When Saul ordered his men to slay the priests there was none at first to do his infamous will. Finally one who was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel and evidently a mercenary in Saul's army fulfilled the mad king's order. It is hard to imagine anyone falling lower than Saul fell as he slew the priests, but when man sells his soul to Satan, he falls to unbelievable depths.

Saul's Reprisals Against David and His Friends, 22:1-23.

### *The Prophet Gad and David, 22:1-5*

David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard *it*, they went down thither to him.

2 And every one *that was* in distress, and every one that *was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

3 And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me.

4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

1. *Where was Adullam? 22:1*

Adullam is one of the Canaanite towns whose kings are said to have been conquered by Joshua (Joshua 12:15). It is mentioned in the Shephelah, between Jarmuth and Shocoh (Joshua 15:35); in II Chronicles 11:7, it comes in immediate connection with Shocoh; and in Nehemiah 11:3; 11:30, it is one of the towns of Judah. These indications point to a location on the western edge of Judah and favor the identification with the present *Aid-el-ma*, twelve miles west by south from Bethlehem. David probably had friends there, and he was joined by his own clan. With David outlawed, they would not feel safe. At this time also a large number of malcontents gathered around David. These numbered about four hundred men, and David became their leader. Here is evidence that Saul was oppressing his people, causing some of them to sell themselves to others as servants (Leviticus 25:39; II Kings 4:1).

2. *Why did David flee to Moab? 22:3*

His ancestress Ruth was a Moabitess. Mizpeh means literally "a watch-tower" or "mountain height" commanding a very extensive country. It is probably used here in reference to a mountain hideout on the high land which bounded Moab on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. As David came to the king of Moab, the Moabites had probably taken possession of the most southerly portion of the eastern lands of the Israelites. We may also infer this from the fact that Saul had also made war upon Moab.

3. *Who was the prophet Gad? 22:5*

The prophet had probably come to David from Samuel's school of prophets; but whether he remained with David from that time forward to assist him with his counsel in

his undertakings cannot be determined. In I Chronicles 21:9, he is called David's seer. In the last year of David's reign he announced to him the punishment which would fall upon him from God on account of his sin in numbering the people (II Samuel 24:11 ff.); and he also wrote the acts of David (I Chronicles 29:29). In consequence of his admonition, David returned to Judah and went into the wood Hareth, a woody region on the mountains of Judah, which is never mentioned again, and the situation of which is unknown. According to the counsel of God, David was not to seek for refuge outside the land; not only that he might not be estranged from his fatherland and the people of Israel, but also that he might learn to trust entirely in the Lord as his only refuge and fortress. David had said that he would wait until he knew what God would do to him. He was assured of the justice of his cause as contrasted with the insane persecutions of Saul, and he confidently hoped that God would bring his flight to an end. Now he was to trust implicitly in Jehovah.

*Saul's Increasing Jealousy.* 22:6-16

6 When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him;)

7 Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;

8 That all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that showeth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and *there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over

the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

10 And he inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that *were* in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.

12 And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I *am*, my lord.

13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as this day?

14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who *is so* faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?

15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute *any* thing unto his servant, *nor* to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.

#### 4. *Why was Saul under a tree?* 22:6

The unsophisticated society of the early Israelites did not demand that the king have a palace which was equipped with finery. Saul evidently held court in the open air. This was the custom in the days of Deborah. We read of her that she "dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment" (Judges 4:5). Conditions had not changed greatly in the days of Saul, and his judgments were passed out to the people under similar circumstances.

5. *What was the meaning of Saul's question? 22:7, 8*

In order to elicit response from his servants, Saul asked them if David was in a position to reward them for their services. David obviously could not make any of them captains of thousands because he had less than a thousand in his band. By accusing his people of conspiring against him, Saul reveals that he is yet not quite rational. The corrupt state of his mind is brought out in his statement that nobody felt sorry for him. He even indicated that he thought Jonathan had stirred up David against him to lie in wait to kill him. Such an evaluation of the situation was a complete reversal of the facts. It was Saul who was lying in wait for David. David was not lying in wait for Saul. Saul must have learned of Jonathan's final covenant with David; for he asked why nobody had told him that his son had made a league with David, the son of Jesse.

6. *Who reported the action of Ahimelech to Saul? 22:9, 10*

Doeg, the Edomite, told Saul of David's coming to Nob. He did not tell all the facts. He did not tell Saul that David had told Ahimelech that he was on a secret and hurried mission for the king. For his part in the transaction, Saul afterwards took fearful vengeance upon the priest and his associates at Nob. The verse prepares us for the account of Doeg's betrayal of David. Some have therefore supposed the earlier verse to be an interpolation, but the later passage seems to presuppose the earlier. Doeg, the Edomite, who is described as Saul's muleherd, was kept at the sanctuary by some ceremonial obligation.

7. *Who was Ahimelech? 22:11*

Ahimelech was the high priest and successor of Eli, although of a different line. He was the son of Ahitub and not the son of Hophni or Phinehas, the sons of Eli. His name is a good Hebrew word signifying that his father was king. His father was probably not really king, but

the name has this meaning. His father was the leading priest, and in the position of ruling over the other priests.

8. *Had Ahimelech inquired of God for David?* 22:13

The scripture contains no reference to Ahimelech's making any sacrifice for David. There is no statement of his having used the Urim or Thummim to find out the Lord's will for David's life. The only benefits bestowed on David by Ahimelech were his giving him some of the shewbread and the sword of Goliath. These two items are mentioned by Saul, but he was evidently more concerned about the possibility of David's having secured the blessing of God at the hands of the high priest. If Saul thought that this had been done, he would have felt that not only men but God himself were surely against him. Indeed God was against him for Saul had failed to obey God.

9. *What was Ahimelech's reply to the king?* 22:14, 15

Ahimelech took the same position that Jonathan had taken. He reasoned with the king that there was nobody in all of Israel more faithful to Saul than David. The high priest also assured Saul that he had not transferred his allegiance to David. He was not serving as David's high priest. He denied that he had inquired of God for him. What Ahimelech had done he had done in integrity.

*Saul's Slaughter of the Priests.* 22:17-23

17 And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord; because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord.

18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that wear a linen ephod..

19 And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

21 And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests.

22 And David said unto Abiathar, I knew *it* that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned *the death* of all the persons of thy father's house.

23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou *shalt be* in safeguard.

10. *What vengeance did Saul execute on Ahimelech?*  
22:17, 19

Upon being informed by Doeg concerning David's flight to the priest at Nob, Saul summoned the priest and all his father's house, the entire priesthood, to answer for what they had done. Ahimelech was not conscious of any crime, since David had come to him with a false pretext; and probably knowing little of what transpired at the court, he answered calmly and worthily. In his consciousness of innocence, he prayed that no guilt be laid to the charge of himself or the priests. That they were under suspicion is manifest from their being summoned before the king. To this protestation of ignorance and innocence, Saul replied only with a sentence of death on him and his whole clan. He commanded the runners, his body guard, to act as executioners; but they refused to carry out the command, owing to the sacred character of the accused. Doeg was less scrupulous, and at the king's command he turned about and slew the priests. When Abiathar told David of what had happened, David accused himself as an

accessory, since his visit had precipitated the whole affair. Abiathar found refuge with David, and David's exile continued.

11. *Who escaped from Saul's slaughter? 22:20, 23*

Only one son of Ahimelech escaped, and his only refuge was with David. David assured the young priest that he would protect him as one of his own men. It was in this manner that David secured not only the services of Gad, the prophet, but also the services of Abiathar, the priest. One by one the leading citizens of Israel were coming over to David's side.

## CHAPTER 22 IN REVIEW

1. To what point in Israel did David return? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what tribe was the place located? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many men did David have with him? \_\_\_\_\_
4. To what point in Moab did David flee? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which of David's ancestors was from Moab? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the name of the prophet who came to David? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How does Saul refer to David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Whom did Saul order to kill the priests? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who did kill the priests? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which priest escaped? \_\_\_\_\_

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 23

- Vv. 1- 6 *Abiathar, the priest, with David.* Escaping from the slaughter at Nob, Abiathar joined David in his hideout in Keilah. Abiathar had a linen ephod, a distinctive garment of the priests and evidently served as the priest for David and his men while they fled from Saul.
- Vv. 7-18 *David's and Jonathan's meeting.* Saul learned that David was hiding in Keilah and went out to get him. Jonathan, Saul's son arose and went to David into the forest around Keilah. The two met again and confirmed a covenant which they had made earlier. Jonathan returned to his home but David remained in hiding in Keilah.
- Vv. 19-29 *Saul's pursuit of David.* The Ziphites came to Saul in Gibeah and told him where David was hiding. With this information Saul made a bold attempt to capture David. He very nearly accomplished this. On one occasion Saul went on one side of the mountain and David and his men were on the other side. David got away and continued his flight out of Saul's presence. He then moved his hiding place to the caves on the west shore of the Dead Sea near En-gedi.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God's abundant provision for our needs.* God not only sent a prophet to be with David but he also made it possible for a priest to join David's company. God always does more than we would expect.
2. *The blessing of steadfast friends.* David must have longed to see Jonathan. Jonathan must have known this. He came to David and the two were able to

renew their covenant and David received strength to go on in his life as a fugitive.

3. *God's good providences.* Things happen in life that cannot be explained except that they are directed by the hand of almighty God. When Saul went around one side of the mountain David was on the other. God must have been with David.

Saul's Pursuit of David to Keilah, 23:1-29.

*Abiathar, the Priest, With David.* 23:1-6

Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors.

2 Therefore David enquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

3 And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?

4 Then David enquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

5 So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6 And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, *that* he came down *with* an ephod in his hand.

1. *Why did David save Keilah? 23:1*

Keilah is a city in the Plains of Judah now identified with *Khirbet Kila*. The location is some nine miles northwest of Hebron. The city was on the Philistine border, but the inhabitants were evidently Israelites of the tribe of Judah. David himself was of that tribe; and although

the people of the community later betrayed David, his deliverance of them would have endeared him to the upright men of the place. Such activity on the part of David demonstrates that he was still behaving himself wisely, even while fleeing for his life from the king. He had the best interests of the people at heart.

2. *How did David enquire of the Lord? 23:2*

As Moses appointed Joshua to be his successor, the Lord told Moses that Joshua would stand before Eleazar who was to ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord (Numbers 27:21). It was at the word of the priest as given to him by the Lord that Joshua was to lead the people out to battle and to bring them back in again when it was over. Of Moses himself it was said that "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10). Both Gad and Abiathar, the prophet and the priest, were with David. More than likely David used the Urim and the Thummim, God's appointed means for revealing His will. The inspired prophet could also receive the Lord's message and deliver it. In either way David moved only at the Lord's directive. He did this regardless of the fear which gripped men. Naturally they were afraid to take the offensive against the Philistines by themselves since they were on the defensive against any attack Saul might make. Such activity seemed foolhardy to them. They were in enough trouble on their own without stirring up the opposition of the Philistines.

3. *Why did Abiathar bring an ephod with him? 23:6*

The ephod was the distinctive garment of the high priest's clothing. Such wearing apparel would identify Abiathar as the priest with David's men. It would signify that he was an heir of the priests who were slain at Nob and would indicate orderly procedure on the part of David in appointing him as his priest. There is no indication that the ephod mentioned here was in any way a fetish

such as was made of the spoils of war taken by Gideon after he defeated the Midianites. The idolatry practiced with regard to the ephod in Gideon's day is soundly condemned (Judges 8:27), and if there had been anything wrong with Abiathar's having an ephod, it would more than likely be mentioned.

*David's and Jonathan's Meeting. 23:7-18*

7 And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.

9 And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.

10 Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.

11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the Lord said, He will come down.

12 Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, They will deliver *thee* up.

13 Then David and his men, *which were* about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth.

14 And David abode in the wilderness in strongholds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

15 And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

16 And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.

17 And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.

18 And they two made a covenant before the Lord: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

4. *Why did Saul think he could catch David in Keilah?*  
23:7

A man is hard to catch in the open fields. Those who are skilled in guerrilla tactics can slip off into the woods, hide in caves, or literally blend into the landscape. A group of men in a city are easier to catch. Saul evidently thought David had made a tactical mistake in going into a city which had gates and bars. If Saul could only besiege the city, set watchmen at the walls, and block the gates, then it would be impossible for David to escape. Even if Saul could not fight his way into the city, he could lay a siege and starve David and his men until they were forced to surrender.

5. *Why did David call for the ephod? 23:9*

If Abiathar brought an ephod to David, he more than likely brought the rest of a high priest's wearing apparel. God commanded Moses that he should make a breastplate for the high priest and here were placed the "urim and thummim" (Exodus 28:30). These items formed the media through which the high priest learned the will of the Lord in regard to any important matters. Josephus identifies the Urim and the Thummim with the sardonyxes on the shoulders of the ephod (*Antiquities* III, iii, 5). The rabbins indicated that these stones would glow with an unnatural iridescence to indicate the Lord's will. If the Lord's answer was negative, they would remain dull and dark. Other suggestions are made indicating that

there was a golden plate within the folds of the ephod. On this plate were engraved the letters of the sacred name of God. It is suggested that by fixing his gaze on these letters, the priest became capable of prophesying, hearing the divine voice within or listening to it as it proceeded from God. The former suggestion seems more likely, and it was on this account that David called for the ephod. God would give him guidance through the services of the priest.

6. *Did the oracle come true?* 23:12

David asked the Lord if the men of Keilah would deliver him up to Saul's hand. God said that they would. He also asked if Saul would come down to fight with him, and the Lord responded that Saul would come down to fight with him. David and his men left Keilah after he made this inquiry of the Lord. There is no record of the men of Keilah delivering David into the hands of Saul for this reason. Some would feel, therefore, that the oracle of the Lord was thwarted by David's actions. If we understand David's question to be a conditional question, we would not deny that the oracle came true. David's question should be understood more as an enquiry as to whether the men of Keilah would deliver him if he stayed there. Of course, if he left then they would not have this opportunity. David was trying to find out if they were grateful for the way in which he had saved them out of the hands of the Philistines. He was making inquiry about their loyalty to him. When he found that their loyalty could not be trusted, he left their area. Furthermore, if the men of Keilah are considered to be a part of the people known as the Ziphites, we learn from the Scripture that these men twice revealed to Saul the hiding place of David in their vicinity. The land of Ziph extended between Carmel and Juttah and included the inhabitants of the highland of Judah. The men of Keilah might well be described as Ziphites. These men did deliver up David.

7. *Why did David's band increase? 23:13*

More and more people were placing their confidence in David. Gad, the prophet, had been sent of God to be with David. Abiathar, the priest, had fled to David after the priests were slaughtered by Saul. In the beginning every one that was distressed, every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented gathered themselves to David. The fact that his band was increasing would indicate that more people were plunging into debt on account of the taxation levied upon them to support the monarchy. More and more people were growing discontented with Saul and his policies. An increasing number of people were distressed over the way in which Saul was pursuing David. All of these joined themselves to David.

8. *Where was Ziph? 23:14*

There is a town in the desert or wilderness of Ziph to which David fled. It was a place fortified by Rehoboam at a later date. The location has been preserved in the ruins of *Tell Zif*, four miles southeast of Hebron. The wilderness of Ziph was that portion of the desert of Judah which was near to and surrounded the town. Generally speaking, it was the highland district of Judah, and would be extending from Carmel on the east to Juttah on the west.

9. *How did Jonathan strengthen David's band? 23:16*

Jonathan's coming to David would in itself encourage him greatly. To see an old friend was a real privilege for a fugitive. Jonathan's strengthening of David was primarily "in God." One might expect such encouragement to be the function of the prophet or the priest, but the covenant between Jonathan and David had been a sacred vow. The flight of David was even worse than he had anticipated, and Jonathan's coming to him gave him a great deal of reassurance. He was strengthened to know that Jonathan had not forgotten. This knowledge would be an immense boost to David's morale.

10. *How did Jonathan know that David had been anointed king? 23:17*

David delivered the men of Keilah (eight and one-half miles northwest of Hebron, *Kbirbet Kila*) from the hands of the Philistines. Saul had proposed to come against the city while David was enclosed therein; but David, led of the Lord, departed and hid in the wilderness of Ziph. To his wilderness retreat came Jonathan. Here he told David that he knew that he was to be king, and he asked only that he himself might have the second place. It by no means follows from the words "my father knoweth" that Saul knew of David's being anointed; nor does it follow that Jonathan knew of David's calling to be king. Jonathan could learn from David's course this far, and from his father's own conduct, that David would not be overcome, but would possess the throne after the death of Saul.

*Saul's Pursuit of David. 23:19-29*

19 Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strongholds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon?

20 Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand.

21 And Saul said, Blessed *be* ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me.

22 Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, *and* who hath seen him there: for it is told me *that* he dealeth very subtilly.

23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

24 And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.

25 Saul also and his men went to seek *him*. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.

26 And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

27 But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.

28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth.

29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strongholds at En-gedi.

### 11. *Why did the Ziphites aid Saul? 23:19*

Saul had repeatedly scolded his courtiers and every other member of his kingdom. He charged them with being in league with David and aiding and abetting him in an attempt to usurp the throne. He charged them with failing to understand his position and to sympathize with him in his plight. He had slain the priests under the false charge of their being on David's side. Such activities on the part of the king would strike terror in the hearts of the weak and vacillating members of the kingdom of Israel. Some of these may have been rewarded for information which they brought to Saul. Others, who had knowledge of David's whereabouts, may have been afraid to conceal it lest they be charged with failing to support Saul. These people are especially despicable because of their repeated spying on David and reporting to Saul.

*Tell Zif* itself is a conical hill. It stands above rich and beautiful valleys which surround it on every side. The base is terraced, and its light, rich soil produces a full harvest of grain. The summit is leveled and circular, being about one hundred yards in diameter. Nothing is left of the town, however, except a few cisterns, sepulchres, and pieces of pottery that are thickly intermixed with the soil. The view to the southeast is extensive and reaches out over a rich and beautiful country. Barren hills of the desert span the horizon (J. W. McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, p. 255).

12. *Where was Hachilah?* 23:19b

Hachilah appears to be the long ridge now known as *El Koleb*. On this high hill is a ruin called *Yukin*. David's hiding here is apparently the only significant event which transpired at this place throughout the Bible history. The Ziphites betrayed him again when he was here later (26:1).

13. *What was the meaning of Saul's benediction?* 23:21

Saul was very appreciative of the fact that the Ziphites had brought him information about David's hiding place. In his nearly ecstatic condition he pronounced a benediction upon these people. He was grateful that they had compassion on him and helped him. He prayed that they might be blessed of the Lord for what they had done. The benediction would be a lot of empty words to anybody who knew Saul's real character. Since Saul had turned his back on God and was forsaken of God, one could hardly expect that God would hear his prayer for a blessing to be upon anybody. Here is an instance of a pitiable reference to God by one who had essentially abandoned God and thereby had been left desolate by God.

14. *What is the meaning of the "thousands of Judah"?*  
23:23

Judah had always been the most numerous of all the Israelite tribes. At the first numbering, while they were still at Sinai, Judah numbered 74,600 (Numbers 1:27).

At the second numbering, just before the Israelites entered Canaan, Judah was still the largest and at that time she numbered 76,500 (Numbers 26:22). Those who were numbered were men twenty years of age and older. No doubt there were as many women of this same age as men. In addition there would be an equal number of boys as well as an equal number of girls under these ages. Judah may have had as many as 300,000 inhabitants. Saul faced an enormous task as he boasted that he would search David out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

15. *Where was Maon?* 23:24

Maon was a town on a high hill in the tribe of Judah, and located some seven miles to the south of Hebron. David hid himself here and later found many of Nabal's possessions nearby (25:2). *Tell Main*, a rather small mound of ruins, has been taken to be the modern-day remnants of the location. The Scripture located Maon south of Jeshimon. Jeshimon is a word signifying a waste or desolation. This is a title given to the area north of the Dead Sea (Numbers 21:20; 23:28). At times this title is given to the desert area of Judea. The American Standard Version gives it the title of Arabah. This title is usually applied to the deep valley running between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah. David's wandering must have taken him into an area that was sparsely inhabited and where little vegetation marked the landscape. It is little wonder that he referred to himself as a flea (24:13).

16. *What was the rock?* 23:25

The rock is undoubtedly the cone-shaped height of Maon. The top of the height is covered with ruins, and there are some indications that these may be the remains of a tower. No reason is given for David's descending from the height of the mound, and he chose to remain in the desert of Maon. Perhaps this mound was more visible to an approaching army and David decided that he would

be safer hiding behind it than staying on top of it. He did escape from Saul by going around one side of the hill while Saul was on the other.

17. *Was David's escape providential? 23:27*

The fact that a messenger came to Saul just at the time when he was about to take David and his men appears to be an act of providence. Certainly David could hardly have sent word to the Philistines and urged them to attack Saul while he was in the south part of his country. Probably the Philistines did keep an eye on Saul and knew where he was. They did, no doubt, take advantage of the opportunity to "spread themselves over the land" (marginal reading A.V.). Their attack must have been more than a skirmish or a small raid. Such a light attack would hardly have caused Saul to give up on his pursuit of David just at the time when he had him in his clutches.

18. *What is Sela-Hammablekoth? 23:28*

The spot cannot be identified definitely, but the word is a compound indicating "the rock of divisions." This was the scene of one of David's most remarkable escapes from Saul. David must have given the spot this name in commemoration of his providential deliverance from the armies of Saul, just as Jacob gave the name "House of God," to Luz when God revealed Himself there (Genesis 28:19) and Abraham gave the name Jehovah-jireh to Mount Moriah when God provided a ram to take the place of Isaac as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:14).

19. *Where was En-gedi? 23:29*

En-gedi is along the west shore of the Dead Sea. The Arabs call it "Ain Jiddy." Travelers in this area say that nothing can surpass the gloomy grandeur of the mountain walls of this vicinity. The mountain-sides have turned brown and, in places, almost black by their long exposure to the elements. They are rendered still more gloomy by contrast with the rich green and the sparkling water of the oasis in the wilderness. The spot is frequently men-

tioned in the Old Testament, but not enough is said to give a very definite concept of it as it then existed. At En-ge-di one is about halfway down the west side of the Dead Sea and at a point to look out over the Dead Sea to the eastern shore.

20. *What reference did David make to these events in the Psalms? Psalm 54:1-7*

Many of the Psalms seem to arise out of particular instances in the life of David. The Shepherd Psalm, the Twenty-third Psalm, for example, must have been written in recollection of David's early life as a shepherd. No doubt God's spirit guided him to leave this treasure of devotion as a testimony of the way in which David had known God through his experiences as a humble shepherd boy. Many of the other Psalms carry headings which indicate the particular event in David's life out of which the Holy Spirit through David gave to us lasting testimony of God's providence. The Fifty-fourth Psalm is attributed to David and was written when the Ziphim, or the Ziphites, came and said to Saul, "Doth not David hide himself with us?" Certainly the sentiments are appropriate as David says, "For he hath delivered me out of all trouble, and mine eyes have seen his desire upon my enemies" (Psalm 54:7).

## CHAPTER 23 IN REVIEW

1. What city did David protect from the Philistines? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Abiathar have when he fled to David? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many men were with David? \_\_\_\_\_
4. In what wilderness did David hide? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who came down to see David in the wilderness? \_\_\_\_\_
6. In what hill did the Ziphites tell Saul that David was hiding? \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

7. Where was Saul when the Ziphites went to him? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what wilderness was David hiding when the Ziphites returned? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What name was given to the place where David escaped? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what place did David finally flee? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 24

Vv. 1-7 *David spares Saul's life.* David was hiding in a cave in En-gedi when Saul came to rest in the open mouth of the cave. As Saul slept, David crept forward and cut off the bottom of his robe. When Saul left the cave, David ran after him to identify himself and to show him how he could have killed him if he had so desired.

Vv. 9-15 *David pleads for his life.* David rightfully judged that many men had spoken false words about him and his relationship to Saul. He therefore asked Saul to listen to him and not to the false reports. He also asked that the Lord judge between Saul and himself.

Vv. 16-22 *Saul accepts David's plea.* Saul knew that what David said was true. He admitted that David was more righteous than he and assured David that he would no longer pursue him. Saul then went home, but David and his men stayed in the stronghold of Judah.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Let God lead.* David was not willing to take matters into his own hands to get rid of Saul. He knew, of

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

course, that if he killed Saul that he would himself become king. He would come to the throne under these circumstances with a shadow of guilt over him. He therefore was willing to wait until in God's providence Saul's reign would end. We need to learn this lesson of patiently following the Lord in all of our endeavors.

2. *Let the Lord judge.* David asked Saul to let God judge between the two of them. David knew that the Lord's judgment would be right. This is where all our judgment should originate.
3. *"Overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:21b). David's goodness in sparing Saul's life overwhelmed Saul and caused him to realize that he had been wrong in trying to take his life. He therefore assured David that he would no longer pursue him. He also asked David to make a covenant that David would not kill Saul's descendants. David was willing to make this covenant, and the pursuit was over for the time being.

Saul's Life Spared by David, 24:1-22.

### *David Spares Saul's Life. 24:1-7*

And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of En-gedi.

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

3 And he came to the sheepecotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him

as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

6 And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the Lord.

7 So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on *his* way.

1. *Who told Saul where to find David? 24:1*

No mention is made of the party or parties who told Saul that David was over in En-gedi. Since the Ziphites had informed Saul on previous occasions, they were probably the ones who gave this information to Saul. Again Saul may have left certain of his servants in the land of Judah to keep him informed of David's whereabouts. Although Saul was forced to leave the area himself in order to drive out the invading Philistines, he did not want to lose contact with David.

2. *What were the "rocks of the wild goats? 24:2*

Wild goats ran on the sides of the cliffs which dropped down to the Dead Sea from the mountain of Judah in the vicinity of En-gedi. It was in one of these caves on the west side of the Dead Sea just a little farther to the north that the Dead Sea Scrolls were found by a goat-herd. The man was looking for some of his lost animals when he came upon the mouth of one of these caves. Thinking that perhaps his animals were down in the cave, he himself entered it and found the sealed earthen vessels which contained the fabulous scrolls which have been acclaimed as the most important archaeological discovery of recent times. As far as Bible lands are concerned, wild goats made many tracks only a foot wide all through this area. This expres-

sion should not be taken as a proper name for some particular rocks, but as a general term applied to the rocks of the location on account of the number of goats which are to be found in the region.

3. *Why was David in a cave? 24:3*

Since caves were throughout the length and breadth of the area, they afforded a natural hiding place for David and his band of 600 men. The men of Israel hid themselves in the caves earlier when the Philistines attacked their land (I Samuel 13:6). Lot had asked permission to hide in a cave when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (Genesis 19:30). Probably David and his men went into the caves to sleep, finding this to be a more secure place to hide than out in the open field.

4. *Why did Saul come into the cave? 24:3*

It is said that Saul went into the cave "to cover his feet." The exact meaning of this expression is debated, and some take it to be a euphemism. The expression occurs also in Judges 3:24 when Eglon's servants were afraid to disturb him as they thought he had gone into his chamber "to cover his feet." Those who understand this as a euphemism believe that it describes Saul's performing the necessities of nature, since it was a custom in the East to cover the feet at such a time. The Peshitta, an ancient version of the Bible, translates this Hebrew phrase as meaning "to sleep." What follows seems to favor this. David must have gone into the cave to rest, and Saul found the spot to be suitable to his needs as well.

5. *How did David's men view the situation? 24:4*

David's men thought that this was an opportune time for David to kill Saul. They said, "Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee . . ." No record is made of David's ever having received a prophecy that God would deliver Saul into his hand. David was not out to kill Saul, although Saul accused him of lying in wait for him (I Samuel 22:8, 13). Gad, the prophet, was with David,

but there is no record of his having brought such an announcement to David. David's men must have therefore been referring to their interpretation of God's providences. It appeared to them that God had been saying through the transpiring events that eventually David would prevail over Saul. They could see no outcome of the situation except that David would overcome Saul and succeed him on the throne.

6. *What was David's view? 24:5*

David did nothing more than to arise and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe while he was sleeping. Afterward his conscience hurt him about this. He looked upon Saul as God's anointed. David had great respect for God's anointed leaders, and he was ashamed of the fact that he had humiliated Saul by marring his robe.

*David Pleads for His Life. 24:8-15*

8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

9 And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee today into mine hand in the cave: and *some* bade *me* kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he *is* the Lord's anointed.

11 Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that *there is* neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

12 The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

13 As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness pro-

ceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

14 After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.

15 The Lord therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

7. *Why did David dare to show himself? 24:8*

David trusted God to protect him, but he did not want to take foolish risks. Still he felt the circumstances favored his speaking to Saul directly. He could demonstrate the fact that he had not been lying in wait for Saul. In his hand he had a piece of Saul's robe which he had cut off, and this would be evidence of the fact that he could have killed Saul if he had wanted to do so. Armed with this bit of evidence, David thought that he could prevail upon Saul to listen to reason and to leave the area and stop his attempt to kill David.

8. *Why did David ask that God judge between them? 24:12*

David did not want to condemn his king and pass judgment upon him. He simply explained to Saul that he had cut off his skirt and did not kill him. This was a demonstration of the fact that there was neither evil or transgression in David's hand. He explained that he had not sinned against Saul. On the other hand he said that Saul was hunting him to kill him. David also was expressing his avowed purpose of letting God work out the difficult situation. David would not lift up his own hand to harm Saul. He was waiting for the Lord to avenge him of the evil which had been done to him.

9. *What ancients had given this proverb? 24:13*

The Hebrew word behind our word *ancients* signifies those who are from the east country. The word appears in Ezekiel 47:8 and must be a reference to the forefathers

who had originated in the Mesopotamian valley. In later Israelite history, Solomon is compared to the wise men of the East. At that time it was said that Solomon's wisdom exceeded the wisdom of all the children of the east country (I Kings 4:30). The saying which David quoted must have been well known, and it is reminiscent of Jesus' statement that we shall know men by their fruits. Jesus said, "A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 6:17). David knew that if he performed the wicked deed he would be considered a wicked man. He did not want to be in this class.

10. *Why did David call himself a dead dog?* 24:14

David was referring to himself as being one of no account. He was from the lowly shepherd's home in Bethlehem of Judah. His father was not a very important man in Israel. David's reference to himself in this lowly figure was similar to Saul's humility as he was introduced to Samuel. Saul had said that he was a member of the smallest tribe of Israel and that his father was the least of all the families of the tribe (I Samuel 9:21). Such language is customary among Orientals. Usually they are a very humble people, and we take David's expression to be a sincere effort to subject himself to the rightful claims of his king.

*Saul Accepts David's Plea.* 24:16-22

16 And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, *Is this thy voice, my son David?* And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

17 And he said to David, Thou *art* more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

18 And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.

19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

20 And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

21 Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.

22 And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

*11. Why did Saul weep? 24:16*

Saul was ashamed of himself. He could hardly believe that it was David speaking to him. He had to ask him if it were really his voice that he was hearing. Saul admitted that David was more righteous than himself. He realized that David had rewarded good for evil. David's judgment of the situation was correct. He really did not need to wait for a further indication from God of His judgment in the matter. Saul knew what the judgment would be.

*12. Why did Saul conclude that David would be king?  
24:20*

As events were transpiring, it was quite evident that Saul could not prevail over David. It was therefore evident to Saul as well as to many others that David was destined to be the sole leader of the people of Israel. It is doubtful that Saul knew that Samuel had anointed David to be king. Jonathan had reached the conclusion earlier (I Samuel 23:16). Even the Philistines had greeted David with a reference to their belief that he was king of Israel. The servants of Achish asked him, "Is not this David, the king of the land?" (I Samuel 21:11). These people surely would have no knowledge of the anointing at Bethlehem at the hands of Samuel the prophet. They must have

reached this conclusion from the song that they had heard the people singing one to another in their dances as they said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (I Samuel 21:11b).

13. *What favor did Saul ask of David? 24:21*

Saul asked David to enter into a covenant with him that was similar to the covenant existing between Jonathan and David. He asked David to swear to him that he would not kill his heirs. He prayed that David would not blot his name out of the national records of Israel and from his father's line. The Gibeonites asked for such vengeance to be reeked upon the house of Saul because Saul had tried to exterminate them. Their vengeance was only a partial extermination, but they did ask that seven of Saul's sons be delivered to them in order that they might hang them up in Gibeon (II Samuel 21:6). Egyptian kings quite often treated their successors in this way. They defaced the monuments so that there would be no permanent record left of their predecessors, and killed all the family of the former king to prevent any future glory from accruing to the house. David entered into this agreement with Saul. He had no evil intentions towards him.

14. *Where was the hold? 24:22*

David must have returned to the mountain heights. A different Hebrew word is used in I Samuel 22:5 to signify a stronghold. At that time David was seeking refuge in Mizpeh of Moab. Since Moab was outside the borders of Israel, Gad brought God's directive to David and told him to spend his time in the land of Israel. By staying inside the borders of the country, he would not only demonstrate to his people that he was upright in his actions, but he would also be afforded what protection they could give him. David's returning to the stronghold in Judah is indicative of the fact that he did not think that Saul's good intentions towards him would be long-lasting. Had he

thought that Saul would be favorably inclined towards him over a long period of time, he might have returned with him to Gibeah.

15. *On what two occasions did David spare Saul's life?*

24:26

Saul was called from his pursuit of David to drive the Philistines from the border of Israel. When Saul returned from this expedition, he again hunted for David, this time in the wilderness of En-gedi. It so happened that David and his men were hiding in a cave. Saul entered the mouth of that cave, and slept there. David's men were elated, because it appeared that Jehovah had delivered David's enemy into his hand. All David would do, however, was to cut the skirt from Saul's robe, privily. Even this small act weighed upon David's conscience. When Saul arose and left the cave, David kept his men from harming him, and asserted that he was loyal to the king, Jehovah's anointed. This touched even Saul's heart; and he repented over the evil that he had plotted against David, swearing that he would not do so any more. Saul then returned to his capital, but David and his men went up into a stronghold.

On another occasion, David sent spies and found out Saul's camp. This was after Saul had promised not to pursue David. David found the camp sleeping. He asked who would go over into Saul's camp. Abishai wanted to kill Saul while he was sleeping, saying that he would not need the second thrust of his spear. David again spared Saul's life, however, and took only his spear and a cruse of water, both of which were at the head of the sleeping Saul. Then, David went to a high hill a little distance off and shouted to the sleeping pursuers. He chided Abner for not having kept more careful watch over Saul, Jehovah's anointed. Saul recognized David's loyalty to the king and promised the second time not to pursue David any longer. Each of the two men then went his way.

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CHAPTER 24 IN REVIEW

1. How many men did Saul take to catch David? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What name was given to the area where Saul went? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was David hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What did David's men urge him to do to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What part of Saul's clothing did David cut? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What ancient proverb did David quote? \_\_\_\_\_
7. By what figures did David allude to himself? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Saul do when he recognized David? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where did Saul go after leaving David? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where did David go after Saul left? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 25

- V. 1 *The death of Samuel.* The grand prophet of God finally reached the end of his earthly pilgrimage. He was buried in his home at Ramah. Although mention is made of David's activities, it is not specified that he was able to be in Ramah at the time of Samuel's burial. Since he went farther south after Samuel died, he probably felt he had lost a great friend and that he should get farther away from Saul.
- Vv. 2-13 *Nabal's shameful treatment of David.* David had befriended Nabal by protecting his flocks from time to time. He therefore felt that he had a right to ask for some consideration at the time of the shearing. Nabal was churlish, however, and refused to send any provisions to David. David thus determined to fight against Nabal.

- Vv. 14-38 *Abigail appeals to David.* Abigail was Nabal's wife and when she heard of her husband's unfair treatment of David she went to meet David and asked him to spare her husband. Her words were wise and David listened to her appeal. Although David did not attack Nabal, Nabal was overcome with fear when he heard how close to feeling David's wrath he had come. The Lord then smote him and he died.
- Vv. 39-44 *David's wives.* David married Abigail after Nabal died. He also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Michal, David's wife, had been given to another man by Saul.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*" (Psalm 116:15). Verse one of this chapter should stand alone. It records the death of a valiant soldier of the cross. Special notice should be taken of this event. God's followers should always mark well the fall of His valiant leaders.
2. "*Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold*" (Proverbs 25:11). Abigail's words to David were words of wisdom. He did well to heed them. Wherever Christian people find words of wisdom, they should give full attention to them. They are indeed like apples of gold.

David's Continued Flight, 25:1—26:25.

### *The Death of Samuel. 25:1*

And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

1. *Why was all Israel gathered together? 25:1*

All Israel was gathered together because Samuel had died. They came to Ramah to lament him and to bury him. The fact that he was buried in his house is a reference to a custom of the day for a man to be buried on his own property. The Hebrew word might have better been translated "a sepulchre," especially one that is much adorned. Such a reference is made in Isaiah 14:18 and also in Ecclesiastes 12:5. Samuel was buried in his own private tomb on his own property.

2. *Where was the wilderness of Paran? 25:1 b*

The wilderness of Paran was in the Negeb, the southern part of the land of Palestine. Several main divisions are made in the Promised Land. The Hill Country was the center of the land and sloped down to the west to the Mediterranean Sea. From the Hill Country another slope went east to the Jordan Valley. This mountainous region is often referred to simply as the Hill Country. The Philistine Plain was occupied by the enemies who were constant in their opposition to the people of God. The Valley was the territory of the Jordan which ran the full length of Canaan, beginning in the foothills of Mt. Hermon on the north and ending at the Gulf of Akabah on the south. The South was the land below Beersheba. This wilderness area was very sparsely populated, and some have concluded that it has always been an uninhabited and uninhabitable place. Recent studies made in the area have shown that there were many settlements here in ancient times, some of them dating back to the days of Abraham. Moses and the people of Israel wandered for forty years in the Wilderness of Paran (Numbers 13:3). Much of this time was spent in and around Kadesh-Barnea. David went to this extreme southern border of the land of Israel in order to escape the wrath of the demented king.

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### *Nabal's Shameful Treatment of David. 25:2-13*

2 And *there was* a man in Maon, whose possessions *were* in Carmel; and the man *was* very great, and he had three thousand sheep; and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

3 Now the name of the man *was* Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man *was* churlish and evil in his doings: and he *was* of the house of Caleb.

4 And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.

5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:

6 And thus shall ye say to him that liveth *in prosperity*, Peace *be* both to thee, and peace *be* to thine house, and peace *be* unto all that thou hast.

7 And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there aught missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

8 Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee, Wherefore let the young men find favor in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.

9 And when David's young men came they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

10 And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who *is* David? and who *is* the son of Jesse? there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master.

11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* unto men, whom I know not whence they *be*?

12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.

13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

3. *Who were Nabal and Abigail? 25:2, 3*

David had protected the shepherds and the sheep of Nabal while they were in Carmel. Consequently, when David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent his young men to Nabal that Nabal might give to David and to his men some food and provisions in return for their protection. Nabal railed at the servants of David and sent them away empty-handed. One of Nabal's servants told this to Abigail, who saw the injustice of Nabal's action, and as a result, secretly took provisions to David. When Abigail returned to her husband, she found him in the midst of a drunken feast, so she told him nothing until the morning. When Nabal knew how close he had come to being wiped out and that his wife had saved him by her kindness, his heart died within him; and ten days later he died. David loved Abigail. When the news of Nabal's death was told to David, he sent to Abigail to ask her to become his wife. She consented, and they were married.

4. *What was the basis of David's request? 25:7*

While David was in and around Maon and Carmel, he had protected Nabal's shepherds and their flocks. Nabal may have been one of those who profited greatly from David's driving the Philistines away from Keilah. Whether David had protected Nabal's flocks from wolves or human predators, David felt that Nabal should be grateful for what he had done. He asked Nabal to check among his own young men to find out the truth of the matter. The occasion of sheep-shearing was also a joyous occasion when a man's heart should be opened to his friends and benefac-

tors. The sheep had been sheared and the profit from the sale of the wool would have brought prosperity to the owner. For all these reasons David asked for any token of Nabal's good pleasure which might have been convenient for him.

5. *What was Nabal's attitude towards David? 25:10*

Nabal sneered at David. He asked who David was, although he knew him. He cast reflection upon his ancestry by asking what benefit there was in being a descendant of Jesse. He also evaluated the situation by saying that David was simply a renegade deserter from Saul's army. He classed him with many servants of the time who had broken away from their masters without fulfilling their obligations to them. Nabal utterly despised David and turned a deaf ear to David's request.

6. *What was David's reaction? 25:13*

David armed himself for war. He commanded his men to prepare for battle. Two hundred men were left with the women and children to guard their homes and supplies. David took 400 men with him and was preparing to attack Nabal. He not only intended to take some of the food and supplies provided for the festive occasion but he also intended to kill Nabal. Such drastic action is not typical of David, who usually inquired of the Lord before he went into battle. This incident reveals an occasion when David allowed his quick temper to get the better of him and overrule a decision he would have made had he given more thought to it.

*Abigail Appeals to David. 25:14-38*

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.

15 But the men *were* very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:

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16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

17 Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he *is such* a son of Belial, that *a man* cannot speak to him.

18 Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched *corn*, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid *them* on asses.

19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

20 And it was *so, as* she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold David and his men came down against her; and she met them.

21 Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this *fellow* hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *pertained* unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

22 So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that *pertain* to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

23 And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

24 And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, *upon me let this* iniquity *be*: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, *even* Nabal: for as his name *is*, so *is* he; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

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26 Now therefore, my lord, *as* the Lord liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to *shed* blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

27 And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

28 I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee *all* thy days.

29 Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, *as out* of the middle of a sling.

30 And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

31 That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

32 And David said to Abigail, Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:

33 And blessed *be* thy advice, and blessed *be* thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to *shed* blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.

34 For in very deed, *as* the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

35 So David received of her hand *that* which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.

36 And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* merry within him for he *was* very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.

37 But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became *as* a stone.

38 And it came to pass about ten days *after*, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died.

7. *How did Nabal escape? 25:14*

Some young man told Abigail, Nabal's wife, how her husband had railed on David's men. The young man was evidently one of Nabal's servants who was ashamed of his master's actions. He was one of the men of whom David suggested Nabal make inquiry and must have known that David had a right to request a token of appreciation from Nabal. Nabal's actions must have been of such nature as to make it almost a matter of honor for David to avenge himself. The young man affirmed all that David had said. None of Nabal's flocks were missing while they were under David's protection. None of their equipment was missing as long as they were in contact with them. David had saved Nabal from very many losses. As a matter of fact a young man said that they felt as safe as if they had been behind a city wall.

8. *What was the young man's estimation of his master?*  
25:17

The young man was so ashamed of his master's action that he terminated his discourse with his master's wife by

referring to Nabal as the son of Belial. This epithet was one which was hurled to any man who was of bestial character. He viewed Nabal as a son of Satan, a worthless man. He was ashamed of him, and had gone to his wife to see if some action might be taken to rectify the situation.

9. *What did Abigail do? 25:18*

Abigail took matters into her own hand. She took provisions for David and his men. Without telling her husband, she loaded beasts of burden with 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five sheep already dressed, five measures of parched corn, and 100 clusters of raisins, in addition to 200 cakes of figs. She organized a company of servants to lead the asses and urged them to go on before her. She may have been afraid that if she were in the first contingent she would be attacked by David who was evidently going to take the spoils from Nabal by force. She also knew that the situation demanded speed and she did not want the servants to wait for her.

10. *What were David's intentions? 25:21*

David was not only out to get some provisions from Nabal, but he was also bent upon the utter destruction of the man and his family. He vowed a vow to God that he hoped God would wipe him out if he did not destroy Nabal from the face of the earth. As the American Standard Version expressed it, he said that he would not leave "by the morning light so much as one man child" (25:22b).

11. *How did Abigail stop David? 25:23*

Abigail took the initiative when she came within sight of David. She did not wait to see if he would attack her; but she approached him, got down off her donkey, and fell on her face to the ground before David. She must have known that David would not attack a woman, and yet she asked that all the iniquity of her husband be

laid upon her. She was willing to take the responsibility for what had happened although she had evidently had nothing to do with it. She asked David to let her speak to him about the matter.

12. *What is the meaning of the word Nabal? 25:25*

The word *Nabal* is a word from the original which means "fool." She also describes her husband as a worthless fellow, a son of Satan, a "man of Belial." She went on to say that she had not seen the young men whom David had sent to Nabal. Had she seen them, she would have attempted to give them these tokens of their appreciation of what they had done for them. Abigail then thanked God that David had been stopped from going out to shed innocent blood. David really had no right to take Nabal's life, although he was treated shamefully. Finally Abigail called attention to the provisions which she had brought. She called the present a blessing (25:27a).

13. *What was Abigail's estimation of David? 25:28*

Nabal had referred to David as a worthless servant who had broken away from his master. He had classed him with runaway slaves, but Abigail saw through the transpiring events that God was building a sure house for David. This meant that she viewed David as one to become the father of a great family in Israel. She believed that this was true because David was fighting the battles of the Lord. He was not fighting for himself, but he was putting down injustices and championing the cause of the righteous.

14. *What is the meaning of the phrase "the bundle of life?" 25:29*

If an object were in the midst of a lump of clay in a sling, it would not fall out. Any separated object would fall away. Abigail may have known of David's great victory over Goliath as David used his sling to kill the giant. She knew that David would appreciate this figure of speech and hoped that this would convince him of her good intentions towards him. Abigail went on to say that



41 And she arose, and bowed herself on *her* face to the earth, and said, Behold, *let* thine handmaid *be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

42 And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives.

44 But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which *was* of Gallim.

17. *Was David's marriage to Abigail an honorable one?*  
25:39

From the beginning it was not God's intention that man should have more than one wife. The Law was given at a time when men were practicing polygamy, and God did not reveal the full Christian standard at that time. He did give legislation to regulate polygamy, and this led men to the place where they could receive Christ's full revelation. In the light of the dispensation it was perfectly permissible for David to marry Abigail. Her husband was dead, and she was free from her obligations to him. Abigail was a very wise woman, viewing herself as unworthy of the love of David (25:41).

18. *What kind of woman was Abigail?* 25:42

Abigail was an honorable person and made a good wife for David. She was the mother of Chileab, David's son, of whom little is known (II Samuel 3:3). Her conduct showed her to be discrete in that she did not reveal her actions to her husband when he could have stopped her. She was humble (v. 23), generous (v. 27), god-fearing (v. 29), knowledgeable (v. 30), and affluent (v. 42).

19. *Who was David's other wife?* 25:43

David's other wife was Ahinoam (25:43). Ahinoam is introduced only as the Jezreelitess. Jezreel must have been a town in the mountains of Judah (Joshua 15:56), and

not the city of that same name in the tribe of Issachar (Joshua 19:18). The place in Issachar is so far north that it would seem improbable that David would have been in that area.

20. *What had happened to Michal? 25:44*

Michal was David's first wife. She had lied about his threat to her when David fled from their home as Saul came to kill him. Saul had then given Michal to Phalti, the son of Laish of Gallim. Phalti is called Paltiel in II Samuel 3:15. Gallim was a place between Gibeah of Saul and Jerusalem. David later persuaded Ish-bosheth and Abner to bring Michal back to him (II Samuel 3:14).

## CHAPTER 25 IN REVIEW

1. Where was Samuel buried? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what wilderness was David hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what man did David send for supplies at the time of shearing? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where was the man's home? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was his wife's name? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many men did David take to fight Nabal? \_\_\_\_\_
7. By what title did Nabal's servant refer to him? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the meaning of Nabal's name? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What other woman did David marry? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what man had Saul given Michal? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 26

Vv. 1- 5 *Saul pursues David again.* Saul had once said that he would leave David alone, but he could not resist the temptation to try to kill the man who threatened his position as king. The Ziphites came to Saul in Gibeah and told him that David was hiding in the hill of Hachilah. Saul then pursued David again.

## FIRST SAMUEL

Vv. 6-20 *David again spares Saul.* Once more David had an opportunity to kill Saul as Saul lay sleeping. Some of David's men wanted him to slay the king, but David was unwilling to lift up his hand personally against God's anointed, the ruler of Israel. He did take his spear and cruse of water. He then awakened Saul and showed him that he could have killed him when he stole into his camp and took his spear.

Vv. 21-25 *Saul again repents.* Saul knew that he had done wrong in breaking his oath. He also knew that David was more righteous than he himself. When he was confronted with this truth, he repented again. Once more he said that he would not try to kill David. He blessed David and returned to his place.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Man should respect the things of God.* David demonstrated over and over again that he respected God's anointed leader. Saul was quite unrighteous but David knew that he was still God's anointed king. He was unwilling himself to take Saul's life even though he did have the opportunity more than once.
2. *Men today do well to respect God's appointments.* "How oft shall my brother sin against me"? (Matthew 18:21). Peter once asked Jesus how often his brother should sin against him and yet be forgiven by him. Peter thought that seven times were sufficient, but Jesus taught Peter that we should forgive a repentant brother an unlimited number of times. David demonstrated this very well in his life. Over and over again he forgave Saul and tried to live peaceably with him.

*Saul Pursues David Again. 26:1-5*

And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon?

2 Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

3 And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed.

5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

1. *Did the Ziphites betray David again? 26:1*

The repetition not only of the treachery of the Ziphites, but also of the sparing of Saul by David, furnished no proof in itself that the account contained in chapter twenty-six is only another legend of the occurrences already related in chapter twenty-four. As the pursuit of David by Saul lasted for several years, in so small a district as the desert of Judah, there is nothing strange in the repetition of these similar scenes. The agreement between the two accounts reduces it entirely to outward and unessential things. On the other hand, all the details, as well as the final results of the two occurrences, differ entirely from one another. These decided differences prove clearly enough that the incident described in the second instance is not the same as the similar one mentioned earlier.

2. *Why did Saul have only 3,000 men with him? 26:2*

The men of Israel numbered 300,000 and the men of Judah were 30,000 in number when the combined armies

went out to fight Nahash, the Ammonite, in (11:8). Later there were only 2,000 men with Saul and 1,000 men with Jonathan (13:1) when Saul and Jonathan were fighting the Philistine garrisons. The fact that there were 3,000 men with Saul when he went out against David would indicate that this was the size of the standing army which Saul kept. Israel could have mustered 1,300,000 men in the closing days of David's reign (II Samuel 24:9). Saul must have felt that he did not need a huge army to fight David's small band of 600 men.

3. *Where were the two armies?* 26:3

Saul was in the hill of Hachilah in the center of the territory of Judah. This hill is described as being "before Jeshimon." It was on the edge of the hill country which rose out of the Arabah, the deep valley which ran along the eastern border of Palestine. David was "in the wilderness." Whether he was in the wilderness of Ziph near the center of Judah or in the wilderness of Paran (25:1) cannot be determined. Since Saul had come to seek him in the wilderness of Ziph, it seems better to think of him as being located there at the time of this battle.

4. *Why did David send out spies?* 26:4

Ordinary precautions would dictate that a band of soldiers the size of David's army have some men serving as scouts. They would need to determine the location and strength of the enemy. Although this is the first time we find David using spies, it must have been Saul's usual practice for he seemed to be able to keep close watch on David's movements.

5. *What kind of trench was in Saul's camp?* 26:5

The American Standard Version translates this word with the phrase, "place of the wagons." Once again we find a reference to the custom of ancient armies to throw up a rampart around their supplies (I Samuel 17:20). It was around these supplies that the main body of the army had pitched its tents. Saul and Abner were in the place

of the wagons. They must have been behind the rampart and in the center of the army where they would enjoy utmost protection.

*David Again Spares Saul. 26:6-20*

6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him the second time.

9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?

10 David said furthermore, As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

11 The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is* at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them.

13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off; a great space *being* between them:

14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner

answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king?

15 And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

16 This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. *As* the Lord liveth, ye *are* worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster.

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king.

18 And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand?

19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, cursed *be* they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods.

20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

6. *Why did David propose to go into the camp? 26:6*

For a moment David may have weakened and thought that he might do some personal harm to Saul. Since he had refused to do this before, he may have had other objectives in mind. He had sent out spies to find out as much as he could about Saul's army and its movements. It may have been his own purpose to go into the camp to learn as much as he could about Saul's army for himself. He found out that Saul was there lying within the trench.

He saw his spear stuck in the ground at the head of his bedroll. He saw that Abner was there also as well as many of the other captains of thousands and soldiers whom David had fought with on previous occasions.

7. *What was Abishai's proposal? 26:8*

Abishai, the son of David's sister, Zeruah, and brother of Joab, proposed that they slay Saul while he lay sleeping. Abishai seems ever ready to take immediate action against David's enemies. He made this same proposal when Shimei cursed David as David fled from Jerusalem during the revolt of Absalom (II Samuel 16:9). Abishai seemed sure of his prowess for he said that he would smite him but once and that he would not need to smite him the second time. He felt that he could kill Saul with one stroke.

8. *What was David's reaction? 26:10*

Once again David said that he would not lift up his own hand against the Lord's anointed. He predicted that Saul would go down into battle and be killed. If this were not his end, he would die sometime of old age. At any rate David himself was not going to be a party to the slaying of Saul. He did take evidence from his visit to Saul's camp and returned to his own men. The evidence which he took was the spear and the cruse of water. The spear evidently had a sharp point on the butt end of it so that it could be stuck down in the ground without dulling the sharp point on the other end of the shaft. The cruse of water was the personal jar or cup which would be recognized as Saul's own.

9. *Why did David rebuke Abner? 26:15*

After David got back to his own men, he cried out to Abner and asked him if he did not consider himself to be a valiant man. He chided him by asking if there were any man in his field to equal him. He then asked why he had not kept better watch over the king. He then announced that there had been those in the camp who intended to kill Saul. David's rebuke was stinging as he

judged that Abner was worthy of death because he had not guarded the king more carefully. He asked him to go out to see if he could find the king's spear or the water jar which had been kept at his pillow. Abner's search must have revealed that these items were gone. He knew that David had passed up an opportunity to kill Saul.

*10. Why did Saul call David his son? 26:17*

David was Saul's son-in-law. He had just been awakened out of his sleep, and he may have been very kindly disposed towards David. Saul loved David when he first met him; and since he was old enough to be his father, he may have looked on him as he did the members of his own family. Certainly this kind of address does not reveal any real feeling of animosity towards David on the part of Saul. It must have been largely when he was possessed of the evil spirit that Saul sought to kill David.

*11. What was David's proposal? 26:19*

David proposed that he make an offering to God, if God was stirring up Saul's hatred for him. A sinner was to be punished. If the king knew of his sin, his duty was to execute judgment. For example, one of God's laws through the ages has been that a man who killed another man should be put to death (Genesis 9:6). David was saying that if he were guilty of some crime for which the punishment was less than death, perhaps he could make a sin offering to the Lord and be forgiven of his sin. Thus Saul would not need to continue to search for him. On the other hand, if wicked men were making false accusations against David, he prayed that they might be cursed before the Lord because they were keeping him out of the presence of the king and making him to live on the borders of the promised land. In the areas outside of the borders of Israel David would be in pagan territory. These people worshipped other gods. The net result of his exile was that he could not go to the Tabernacle or to the priests of God and was in effect being told to go and serve other

gods. David was willing therefore that his blood might be shed if there were just cause: but if there were no real reason for his being killed, he prayed that his blood would not be shed in vain.

12. *What figures did David use to describe his plight?*  
26:20

David said he was like a flea or a partridge. He was being forced to move about from place to place. He was like a bird being hunted in the forest. He was forced to make himself as inconspicuous as a pesky insect. These were humble figures, but they described his condition very well.

*Saul Again Repents. 26:21-25*

21 Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

22 And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

23 The Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the Lord delivered thee into *my* hand today, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed.

24 And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

25 Then Saul said to David, Blessed *be* thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great *things*, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

13. *What was Saul's decision? 26:21*

Once again Saul said that he had sinned. He gave permission for David to return to his place unmolested. He

promised him that he would do him no harm. Saul admitted that he had acted like a fool. He had made a grave mistake. Saul parted from David after pronouncing a benediction upon him (v. 25). He predicted that David would go on to accomplish outstanding feats and that he would eventually prevail over him. David was allowed to go on his way unmolested and Saul went back to his home in Gibeah.

## CHAPTER 26 IN REVIEW

1. Who told Saul where David was hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what hill was David hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many men did Saul take to find David? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who went with David into Saul's camp? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was Saul's captain? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What items did David take from Saul's camp? \_\_\_\_\_
7. By what title did Saul address David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. By what figures did David refer to himself? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What part did Saul say he had played? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What part of Saul's armor did David show to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 27

- Vv. 1-7 *David again in Gath.* David's return to Philistia has been called a lapse of faith. He had been told by the prophet Gad not to flee outside the borders of Israel. David must have given up hope of living safely in Israel. He disobeyed God's commandment and returned to Achish, the king of Gath.
- Vv. 8-12 *David's pretended campaign against Judah.* The king of Gath gave the city of Ziklag to David for his residence. David and his men dwelt there for sixteen months. On a number of occasions he invaded the Geshurites and other foreigners to the south of Judah. He reported to Achish the king of Gath that he had been making attacks against Judah itself. He was trying to curry favor with Achish by pretending to attack his own people.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The weakness of the flesh.* David had demonstrated many times that he was a man of great faith. He finally weakened and went against the instructions of God. We look to David as a hero but we realize that he was human. He reached the end of his endurance and gave in to the wisdom of the world which was not the wisdom of God.
2. *A lie is never justifiable.* David lied to Achish when he said that he had attacked the south of Judah (v. 10). He was forced to slay all the inhabitants of the cities which he attacked lest some would report that he was not actually fighting against Judah. One sin led to another. When he lied about where he was fighting, he also had to kill any who might tell the truth. God

cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18) and He does not expect His servants to lie, even to save their own lives.

David's Second Flight to Gath, 27:1-12.

*David Again in Gath. 27:1-7*

And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: *there is* nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

2 And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that *were* with him unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath.

3 And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife.

4 And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.

5 And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?

6 Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

7 And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

1. *Why was David safer among the Philistines? 27:1*

David felt that Saul would not pursue him into the Philistine territory. His belief was justified from what is recorded in verse four. When Saul heard that David was in Philistia, he did not seek for him anymore. At the same time David was going against the commandments of God. Gad the prophet had told David not to flee outside the territory of Israel (22:5). At this point in his career

David was despairing of his life. He gave up and did what seemed best to him, but he was turning against the directions of God.

2. *What was David's position in Gath? 27:3*

David was still considered the leader of his 600 men. They evidently asked for political asylum with the king of Gath. This same king had not received David well when David came to him at the beginning of his flight. At that time his servants had reminded him that David was a very popular hero in Israel. David felt it to his advantage at that time to act as if he were a maniac. In this way he escaped any interrogation or imprisonment. As David returned at a later time Achish must have been convinced that Saul was definitely trying to kill David. This must have convinced him that it was all right for David to stay in Gath. The situation of David and his men was such that they could now enjoy a more normal life. Mention is made that each of David's 600 men went over with their households. David had his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail.

3. *Why did David ask for a town? 27:5*

The families of the 600 men would be large enough to settle a town. If they had a place of their own they would have more freedom. David was able to direct the affairs of a group of people. His abilities to lead were evident as he rose to prominence in Israel. If Achish trusted him and gave him a town, David could serve him well as one of the fortified cities giving protection to Gath. David also felt that he was not worthy of living in the royal city with the king. His presence there might have caused him some embarrassment among the other Philistine lords. All of these reasons seemed sufficient for David's having a separate town.

4. *Where was Ziklag? 27:1*

This town was given to the Simeonites in the time of Joshua (Joshua 19:5); but was afterwards taken by the

Philistines, probably not long before the time of David, and appears to have been left without inhabitants in consequence of this conquest. The exact situation has not been clearly ascertained; but it was evidently close to the southwestern border of Judah because David was able to represent his expeditions against the Geshurites, Gezrites and Amalekites as having been against the men of Judah. The statement that David remained there a year and four months is a proof of the historical character of the whole narrative.

*David's Pretended Campaign Against Judah. 27:8-12*

8 And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those *nations were* of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

9 And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish.

10 And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road today? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites.

11 And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring *tidings* to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so *will* be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.

12 And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

*5. Who were the people whom David attacked? 27:8*

The Geshurites, the Gezrites and the Amalekites were nomadic people who lived on the southwest border of Palestine. Their territory is described as being that land

along the route to Shur. This was the wilderness where Hagar lived after she was driven out from Abraham's household (Genesis 16:7). Geshurites are noted in Joshua 13:2 as south of Palestine. Gesenius connects the Gezrites with Mt. Gerizim, but this is very doubtful. They, too, must have been south of Palestine proper.

6. *What was David's purpose in his campaigns? 27:9*

David attacked the non-Israelitish people and utterly destroyed them so that there would be no living witnesses of his attacks. He did this and then told Achish that he had been fighting his own people. In this way he hoped to convince Achish that he was completely divorced from his former allegiance to Saul. If Achish believed that David was fighting against the people of Judah, he would believe that David would support the Philistines in their wars against the Israelites.

7. *Against whom did David say he was fighting? 27:9*

David said he had been fighting against the south of Judah, the Jerahmeelites, and the Kenites. The Jerahmeelites were the inhabitants of Jerahmeel. This was a city in Judah southwest of Hebron. The Kenites were the descendants of Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law (Numbers 10:29). These people were ordered to get out of the area when Saul was told to wipe out the Amalekites (I Samuel 15:6).

8. *Why did David use this deception? 27:12*

David was beginning to weaken in his honest purposes. He had left Israel against the commandments of God. He found himself in a position where he had to convince Achish that he was loyal to him. He saw no other way to insure his safety. Some of his own people had betrayed him and he was not safe to live among the people of his own tribe, the tribe of Judah. Had he only trusted in the Lord he would not have been forced to come to the place where he lived by deception.

FIRST SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 27 IN REVIEW

1. To what foreign country did David finally flee? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many men did David have with him? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what city did he flee? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What wives of David were with him? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was king of the country? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What city was given to David and his men? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How long did David stay in the city? \_\_\_\_\_
8. To whom did the city later belong? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Against what people did David make raids? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Against whom did David say he made raids? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 28

- Vv. 1- 2 *David with Achish in battle.* The Philistines began a campaign against Israel; and David was forced to go along with his benefactor, the king of Gath.
- Vv. 3- 6 *Saul forsaken by God.* Samuel was dead. Those that had familiar spirits had been put away out of the land. Saul had no one to give him guidance. The Lord did not answer him because Saul had disobeyed the Lord. The priests were not able to get an answer by Urim or Thummim. Since Saul had slain most of the priests there were none of these to help him. The only other prophet of whom we have knowledge was Gad, and he was with David. Saul was utterly abandoned.
- Vv. 7-14 *Saul seeks the witch of En-dor.* The law of Moses had commanded the people of Israel not to allow a witch to live in their midst. Saul

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

had put out of his country most of those necromancers, wizards, and witches. Some of his soldiers knew of the home of the witch in En-dor, and he disguised himself and went to her.

Vv. 15-25 *Samuel's appearance.* The Lord raised Samuel and allowed him to make a posthumous appearance to Saul. This appearance frightened the witch and greatly distressed Saul.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *A man forsaken of God is really all alone.* Saul makes a pitiable picture as there was no prophet, priest, or any other servant of God to advise him. We should learn from this occurrence that it is a terrible thing to turn one's back on God. We should remember that God is near to those who draw near to Him.
2. *There is life after death.* The witch of En-dor was not able to raise Samuel. She was frightened and cried out when Samuel was raised by the Lord. Samuel's appearance gives us evidence of life after death. We should all look forward when we will be raised to live a life everlasting.

Preparations for Saul's Last Battle, 28:1—29:11.

*David With Achish in Battle.* 28:1, 2

And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2 And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

1. *What was the demand of Achish on David?* 28:1

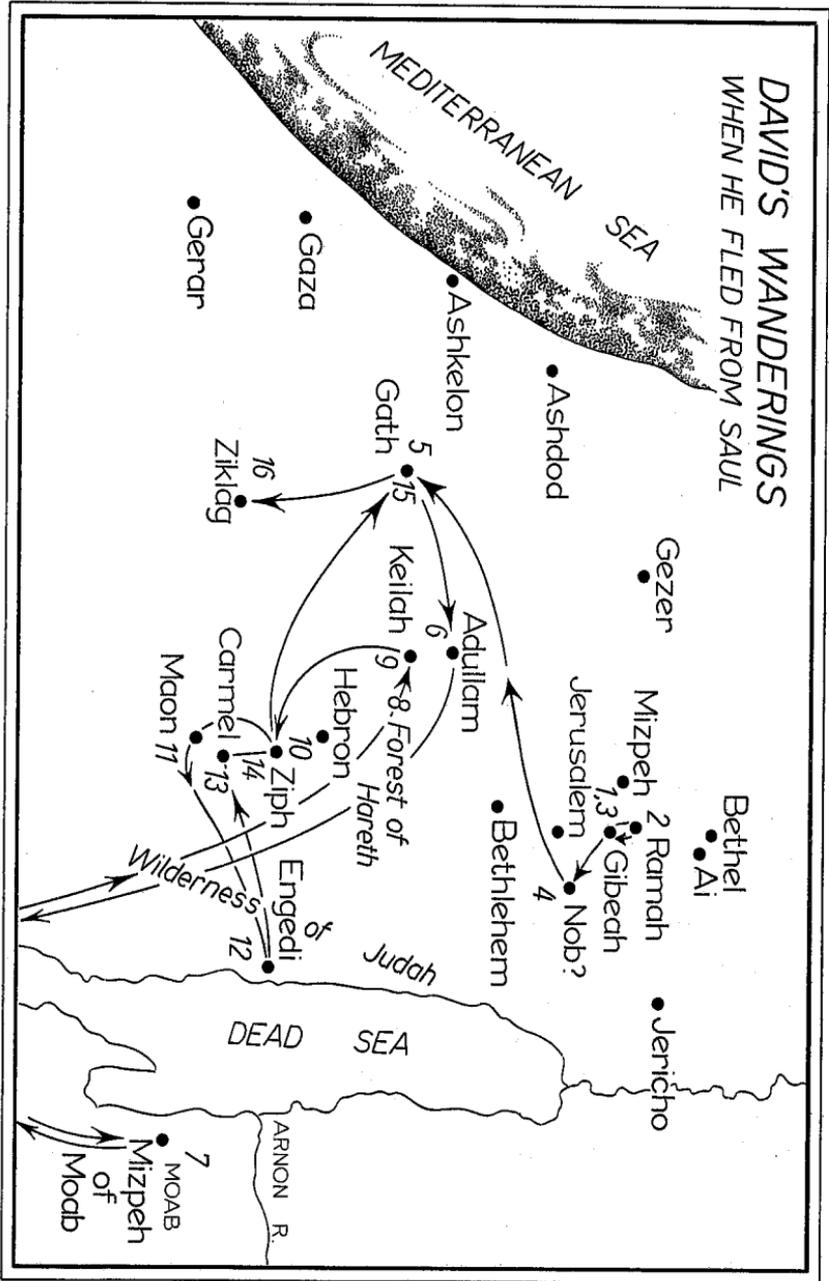
In exchange for the protection which David had received from Achish, David was expected to serve as a soldier with the Philistines. This was a high price to pay for the little bit of security which the Philistines afforded David. It has well been said that he who gives up a bit of his liberty in order to insure some security is worthy neither of liberty or security. David found himself in a position where he was expected to fight with the Philistines against his own people.

2. *Did David intend to fight against Saul?* 28:1, 2

While David was living in Philistia, the Philistines gathered their armies together for a campaign against Israel. Achish sent word to David that he was to go with him in his army along with his own men. David answered ambiguously. His words contained no distinct promise of faithful assistance in the war against the Israelites. There are no grounds for inferring that David was disposed to help the Philistines against Saul and the Israelites. Judging from his previous acts, it would necessarily have been against his principles for him to fight against his own people. Nevertheless, in the situation in which he was placed he did not venture to give a distinct refusal to the summons of the king. He was undoubtedly hoping that God would show him a way out of the conflict between his conviction and his duty to obey the Philistine king. He had no doubt prayed earnestly about it; and the faithful God helped his servant; first of all, by the fact that Achish accepted his indefinite declaration as a promise of unconditional fidelity and still more by the fact that the princes of the Philistines overrode the king.

*Saul Forsaken by God.* 28:3-6

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city.



## DAVID'S WANDERINGS

### WHEN HE FLED FROM SAUL

(The places listed are shown on the map.)

1. *Gibeah*; I Sam. 19:1-17.
  - a. Jonathan intercedes for David; 19:1-7.
  - b. Saul tries to spear David; 19:8-10.
  - c. Michal helps David escape; 19:11-17.
2. *Ramah*; I Sam. 19:18-24; Ps. 59 (?).
  - a. David visits Samuel; 19:18-19.
  - b. Saul and his messengers prophesy; 19:20-24.
3. *Gibeah*; I Sam. 20.
  - a. David absent from feast of new moon; 20:1-34.
  - b. Jonathan warns David with arrows; 20:35-42.
4. *Nob*;<sup>1</sup> I Sam. 21:1-9.
  - a. Ahimelech gives David food and weapons; 21:1-6, 8-9.
  - b. Doeg the Edomite witnesses Ahimelech's act; 21:7.
5. *Gath*; I Sam. 21:10-15; Ps. 34, 56.
  - a. David feigns madness.
6. *Adullam*; I Sam. 22:1-2; Ps. 142.
  - a. David gathers 400 followers.
7. *Mizpeh of Moab*; I Sam. 22:3-5.
  - a. David leaves his parents here for safety.
8. *Forest of Hareth*; I Sam. 22:5-23; Ps. 52.
  - a. Saul slays priests at Nob; 22:5-19.
  - b. Abiathar comes to David; 22:20-23.
9. *Keilah*; I Sam. 23:1-12.
  - a. David saves Keilah from Philistines; 23:1-6.
  - b. Saul pursues David; 23:7-12.
10. *Ziph*; I Sam. 23:13-23.
  - a. David escapes to the wilderness; 23:13-14.
  - b. Jonathan's last visit with David; 23:15-18.
  - c. Ziphites reveal David's hiding place to Saul; 23:19-23.
11. *Maon*; I Sam. 23:24-28.
  - a. David narrowly escapes Saul.
12. *Engedi*; I Sam. 23:29—24:22.
  - a. David spares Saul.
13. *Carmel*; I Sam. 25:1-44.
  - a. Samuel's death; 25:1.
  - b. Nabal refuses food for David's men; 25:2-13.
  - c. Abigail's intercession; 25:14-35.
  - d. Death of Nabal; 25:36-38.
  - e. David marries Abigail; 25:39-44.
14. *Ziph*; I Sam. 26:1-25.
  - a. Ziphites reveal David's hiding-place again; 26:1-3.
  - b. David spares Saul; 26:4-25.
15. *Gath*; I Sam. 27:1-4.
  - a. David dwells with Achish.
16. *Ziklag*; I Sam. 27:3-12.
  - a. David receives Ziklag from Achish; 27:5-7.
  - b. David raids southern tribes; 27:8-12.

<sup>1</sup> The location of Nob is uncertain. It is thought to be near the Mt. of Olives near Jerusalem.

And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6 And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

3. *Why had Saul put away the witches? 28:3*

Saul had kept the Law as recorded in Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; and Deuteronomy 18:10. Since Samuel was dead, Saul had no prophet to whom he could turn. He had chased out the people with familiar spirits and the wizards. He could not go to a false prophet. He could find no spiritual assistance of any kind, good or bad, valid or invalid.

4. *Where was Shunem? 28:4*

Shunem was a little town in the valley of Jezreel. The Philistines had marched to this far point between Mount Carmel on the west and Mt. Gilboa on the east. This was a famous battlefield, being the scene of the battle against Sisera in the days of Deborah (Judges 4:7). Gilboa was the mountain on the northeastern edge of the plain of Jezreel. Shunem was the modern Shulem or Solam, some eight miles away from Mt. Gilboa.

5. *Why was Saul so alarmed? 28:5*

Since he had met and defeated the Philistines in earlier battles, Saul's great alarm can be attributed only to the feeling that the Lord had forsaken him. No doubt the Philistine army was formidable, but he had met the armies of the Ammonites soon after he became king. He mustered 330,000 warriors out of Israel on that occasion. Using good military strategy and completely trusting in

God, Saul had been victorious against these eastern enemies (I Samuel 11:11). Throughout his career he had fought many battles against the Philistines, but his falling into the clutches of the evil spirit repeatedly must have enervated Israel's first king. He had been unsuccessful in his wicked attempt to kill David and David's continued wise behavior had convinced Saul that God was with David and not with him. All of these things combined left Saul a cringing coward.

6. *What were God's ways of revealing His will?* 28:6

Three of the various ways in which God revealed himself in ancient times are mentioned in connection with Saul's vain attempt to learn the will of God. God often spoke to people in dreams. This had been His way of indicating His will to Joseph (Genesis 37:5). The Urim was a part of the high priest's wearing apparel, and it was used to find out the Lord's will as the priests made inquiry of Him (Exodus 28:30). Prophets were active throughout most of Israel's history. There were bands of prophets in the days of Samuel, and God revealed His will through these men (I Kings 13:1). We need to remember that God "who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). Saul's desolate condition is emphasized by the statement of the fact that God did not answer Saul by any of these means.

*Saul Seeks the Witch of En-dor.* 28:7-14

7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.

8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto

me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee.

9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

10 And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul.

13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

14 And he said unto her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself.

#### 7. Why did Saul go to the witch of En-dor? 28:7

The Philistines had collected their forces in the plain near Shunem. Saul's army was encamped on the slopes of Mt. Gilboa, some two miles away but plainly within sight of the enemy. The very sight of the enemy had thrown Saul into dread terror. He was greatly anxious about the outcome of the battle and inquired of the Lord what might be the results of the coming conflict. The Lord had left Saul as He had withdrawn His spirit from Samson during the time of the Judges; and He did not answer Saul, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Instead of repenting and humbling himself before Jehovah, Saul plunged stubbornly forward in an

attempt of his own invention to find the verdict of the future. When living prophets gave no answer, he thought that a dead one might be called up, as if a dead one were less dependent upon God than the living, or that, even in opposition to the will of God, he might reply through the arts of a conjuring woman. Truly, if he perceived that God was hostile to him, he ought to have been all the more afraid, lest his enmity should be increased by his breach of His laws. But fear and superstition never reason.

8. *Where is En-dor? 28:7b*

En-dor still exists in a village under the ancient name on the Shoulder of *Duby* or Little Hermon about two miles from Saul's camp. Saul must have made a pitiable sight as he disguised himself and left the security of his camp to go down into the valley to find the home of the outlawed witch. Perhaps he had to slip along through the night past the Philistine outposts in order to reach this eerie home. His ill-fated journey is a sad commentary on the lot of a man who disobeys God.

9. *Why did Saul disguise himself? 28:8*

Saul would not want to be recognized by any Philistine scout whom he might meet. Most of all he knew that the woman would not practice her illegal art if she recognized him as king. He must have been ashamed to wear his kingly robes and make such a pitiable request of a spiritualist. His disguise would not be able to hide his stature, however; and this outstanding feature of Saul's person may have helped the witch to unmask Saul when Samuel did come back from the grave.

10. *Why had witches been banned? 28:9*

When Israel came into the promised land, they were "not to learn to do like the abominations of these nations." There was not to be found in the land any who caused his son or his daughter to pass through the fire (in other words, a worshipper of Moloch). Neither were there to be any who practiced sooth-saying, or a wizard, or a

snake-charmer, or a conjurer, or one who pronounced a ban, a necromancer and wise man, or one who asked the dead to be brought up. Moses was given this in the Law, and he grouped all the words which the language contained for the different modes of exploring the future and discovering the will of God, for the purpose of forbidding every description of soothsaying. At the head of the list was placed the prohibition of Moloch-worship, to show the connection between soothsaying and idolatry. Saul had acted in accordance with God's law when he banned all these from the kingdom (See Numbers 23:23 and Deuteronomy 18:9 ff.).

11. *Why was the woman suspicious? 28:9*

The witch of En-dor was afraid that her visitor was laying a snare for her. She was afraid that she would be reported to the king and eventually be killed. She knew that the Law said, "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus 22:18). She knew that God had ordained that there should not be found among the Israelites any "that use divination or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (Deuteronomy 18:10, 11). She had to be cautious in order to practice her illicit profession. When Saul gave her his word that she would not be punished, she was willing to go ahead.

12. *Did Samuel appear to the witch? 28:12*

The early Christian writers, the Protestant reformers, and many later Christian theologians assumed that there was no real appearance of Samuel, but only an imaginary one. More lately the opinion has been expressed that the apparition of Samuel was merely a delusion produced by the witch without any background at all. More recently orthodox commentators have been almost unanimous in the opinion that the departed prophet did really appear and announce the destruction; not, however, in consequence of the magical arts of the witch, but through a miracle

wrought by the omnipotence of God. This is favored by the narrator who speaks throughout of the appearance not of a ghost, but of Samuel himself. It is also sustained by the circumstance, that not only do the words of Samuel to Saul create the impression that it is Samuel himself who is speaking, but his announcement contains so distinct a prophecy of the death of Saul and his sons, that it is impossible to imagine it can have proceeded from the mouth of an imposter, or have come from Satan.

*13. How did the witch recognize Saul? 28:12*

The woman must have concluded that she was in the presence of Saul because he had asked to have a seance with Samuel. Samuel and Saul had been rather closely associated in the political and religious activities of the kingdom of Israel. The woman must have known about Samuel's death and Saul's desperate effort to find out the will of God. The very fact that Saul had asked for Samuel to be brought back from the dead probably raised a question in the woman's mind from the very beginning of the interview. As Samuel was raised from the dead by the power of God and the woman was frightened by this miraculous event, she undoubtedly was then not afraid to express her conviction. Saul's stature would have been a feature that he could not disguise. There was none other in Israel as tall as he. He stood head and shoulders above all the others. This imposing stature coupled with the strange request for Samuel's being brought back from the dead would have convinced the woman of the identity of her strange visitor.

*14. In what form did Samuel appear? 28:14*

Samuel's appearance is not to be regarded as the appearance of one who had risen in a glorified body; but though somewhat spirit-like in its external manifestation, so that it was only to the witch that he was visible, and not to Saul. It was merely an appearance of the soul of Samuel, which had been at rest, in the clothing of the

earthly body and dress of the prophet, which were assumed for the purpose of rendering it visible. In this respect, the appearance of Samuel, rather resembled the appearances of the angels in human form and dress, such as the three angels who came to Abraham in the grove at Mamre, and the angel who appeared to Manoah, with this exception, however, that these angels manifested themselves in a human form, which was visible to the ordinary bodily eye, whereas Samuel appeared in a spirit-like form. In all these cases the bodily form and clothing were only a dress assumed for the soul or spirit, and intended to facilitate perception, so that such appearances furnish no proof that the souls of departed men possess material corporeality.

*15. How did Saul know that it was Samuel? 28:14*

The apparition was clothed in the prophet's mantle such as Samuel was accustomed to wearing. Saul asked the woman to describe the apparition and she said that it was an old man. Samuel had died after several years of work among the people of Israel. Since Saul had asked for Samuel in the first place, he must have realized that God had granted his request.

*Samuel's Appearance. 28:15-25*

15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

17 And the Lord hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, *even* to David:

18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor

## FIRST SAMUEL

executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto this day.

19 Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

21 And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.

22 Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.

23 But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

24 And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened bread thereof:

25 And she brought *it* before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

16. *In what way was Samuel disquieted? 28:15*

The actions of the woman imply most unquestionably that she saw an apparition which she did not anticipate. This leads us to believe that she was not really able to conjure up departed spirits or persons who had died, but that she might merely pretend to do so. Even if it is

concluded that the woman had a certain demoniacal background, the appearance of Samuel differed essentially from everything that she had experienced and effected before, and therefore filled her with alarm and horror. The very fact, however, that she recognized Saul as soon as Samuel appeared, precludes us from declaring that all this was nothing more than jugglery and deception. Her recognition of Saul when Samuel appeared may be explained from their close association during Samuel's lifetime and the woman's knowledge of this, or from God's granting her clairvoyant power even as He had granted the appearance of Samuel himself.

17. *Why did Samuel reveal David as the next king? 28:17*

The purpose of God had already been formed and was about to be fulfilled. Samuel thus announced it definitely to Saul. Saul had taken very extreme measures. Although he explained that he was sore distressed, he did not have reason to ask God to disquiet Samuel. The Philistines were oppressing Israel. God had indeed departed from Saul. Saul was unable to get any revelation of the will of God from the prophets or by dreams. All of this was not reason enough to resort to illegal measures. Saul should have known that if the Lord was departed from him, he was helpless. This final and irrevocable revelation of God's utter rejection of Saul was in keeping with the drastic steps which Saul had taken. If Saul had any doubt about the outcome of his own kingdom it was removed by this revelation from the prophet who had been returned from the dead.

18. *What was the basic reason for Saul's being rejected?*  
28:18

A two-fold reason is given for Saul's being rejected. Samuel said it was because he had not obeyed the voice of the Lord. This was probably a reference to his failing to wait for seven days as he was ordered by Samuel before the two were to sacrifice. Samuel also said that it was

because he had not executed God's fierce wrath on Amalek. On both these occasions Samuel had rebuked Saul while he was alive. Coming back from the dead he summarized the rejection of Saul as being on account of these two failures.

19. *How would Saul be with Samuel?* 28:19

Samuel told Saul that he would die in the battle the next day. The two men would thus be together in the world of the departed spirits. Here is another indication of the deep conviction held by the Old Testament people with regard to life after death. Such expressions as one's being "gathered to his people" (Genesis 25:8), this statement of Samuel's with regard to Saul, and David's statement that his dead boy could not be brought back but that he would go to him (II Samuel 12:23) all verify the faith of the Israelite people in life after death.

20. *Why did Saul fast?* 28:20

Saul was mentally perturbed and excited of body and soul. His deep mental anguish left him without appetite. Hannah's deep distress left her in a similar condition (I Samuel 1:7) as did the apostle Paul's repentant spirit (Acts 9:9). In addition, he may have fasted as an outward sign of his attempt to be holy, hoping in this way to win favor with God.

21. *Why was the woman concerned for Saul?* 20:21

The witch had a sincere respect for her sovereign, and she did not want to see him expire because of lack of nourishment. She also knew that he would need every ounce of his strength as he made his way back to his camp and entered into the final battle with the Philistines. Her reasoning was good. She reminded Saul that she had listened to his request and cooperated with him in the practice of her necromancy, and she felt that it was only fair that Saul in turn listen to her appeal on his behalf. The woman's request was not enough in itself: but as his servants continued to insist that he eat something, he finally

arose from lying prone on the ground and did eat as he sat on the edge of the bed. This final ministration to Saul's physical needs on behalf of his loyal subject is a touching picture of life in Palestine in the eleventh century before Christ. She performed all the menial tasks necessary in the preparation of the meal and served it with loyal devotion. Thus strengthened, Saul and his servants returned to their camp and prepared for the final battle.

### CHAPTER 28 IN REVIEW

1. What kind of people had Saul banned from Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where were the Philistines encamped? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was Israel's camp? \_\_\_\_\_
4. By what means had Saul inquired of God? \_\_\_\_\_
5. For what kind of woman did Saul seek? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did the woman live to whom Saul went? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Whom did Saul ask the woman to disquiet? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what garment was Samuel arrayed? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Did Saul see Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Did Saul hear Samuel's voice? \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 29

- Vv. 1-7 *David challenged by the lords of the Philistines.* The lords of the other cities of the Philistines doubted that David would fight against his own people when they actually went into battle. These men requested that Achish, the king of Gath, send David back and not allow him to go into the conflict. Achish was not convinced that David would betray him in the heat of battle, but he yielded to the will of the other Philistine leaders and sent David back from the battlefield.
- Vv. 8-11 *David departs from Achish.* The Philistine lords of such towns as Ekron, Lachish, Gaza and Gath had met at Aphek along the Mediterranean coast as they prepared to go into battle. David departed from this point and returned toward Ziklag. The Philistines went on to battle near Jezreel.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "All things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28). David must have been in great mental anguish as he found himself in a position where he might be forced to fight against his own people. He had pretended to wage little skirmishes against the south of Judah, but he had not actually done this. He had indicated that he would be loyal to Achish, the king of Gath, who had befriended him and allowed him to dwell in the Philistine city of Ziklag. It is hard for us to believe that David would actually fight against his people and he must have been glad when the Philistine lords insisted that he be sent back from the battlefield. This is apparently the good providence of God that

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

keeps His chosen servants from going too far in the wrong direction.

2. "*Lest haply we be found even to fight against God*" (Acts 5:39 b). In the days when the apostles were threatened by the Jewish leaders one of them had the good common sense to urge his colleagues not to go too far in persecuting Christians lest they themselves be found to fight against God. When we fight against God's people, we fight against God. We are glad that David did not have to fight against his own people. We should be careful that we do not put ourselves in a position where we fight against God's chosen men.

### *David Challenged by the Lords of the Philistines. 29:1-7*

Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel.

2 And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish.

3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, *Is* not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell *unto me* unto this day?

4 And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it not be* with the heads of these men?

5 *Is* not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

6 Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host *is* good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favor thee not.

7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.

1. *Where was Aphek?* 29:1

At least four different locations bear the name of Aphek. One is a city mentioned in Joshua 13:4. The context indicates that this was north of Sidon, and is often identified as *Asqa*, the ancient *Aphaca*, some twenty-three miles on beyond Beirut. Another is a town in the tribe of Asher, which the Israelites failed to occupy (Joshua 19:30; Judges 1:31). This Aphek has been identified with Tell Kurdaneh, some six miles southeast of Accho. A third location is a town in the Plain of Sharon, about eleven miles northeast of Joppa. This is the present *Ras-el-'Ain*. The Philistines were camped here on their way to Shiloh to attack Israel at Ebenezer (I Samuel 4:1-12). A fourth location is a spot about four miles east of the Sea of Galilee in the land of Manasseh east. This spot is on the highway between Damascus and a plain of Esdraelon and is known as the present-day *Afik* (I Kings 20:26; II Kings 13:17). Still another site is posited as not only possible but probable from the reference of the location of the armies in Shunem and Jezreel (I Samuel 28:4; 29:1, 11; 31:3). It seems doubtful that the Philistines would be assembling their troops at this far northern point. The Aphek described here must be the town in the Plain of Sharon. To place it farther north would make it too far away for David and his men to reach Ziklag on the third day after he was discharged from Achish's service (I Samuel 30:1).

*2. Why did the Philistines send David away? 29:3*

All the various armies of the Philistine governors were being assembled at Aphek for the great push against Saul, when the rulers of the Philistines spied David and his army in the company of Achish. Having recognized him as David, the servant of Saul, they demanded that he not be allowed to go into the battle with the Philistine armies. Achish regretfully informed David of this decision; and in accordance with Achish's admonition, David returned the next morning to Ziklag. No doubt he was very light of heart praising God for having so graciously rescued him out of the disastrous situation into which he had been brought and that not altogether without some fault of his own.

*3. How did the Philistines know Israel's songs? 29:5*

The song that the women sang as David came back from battle was a very popular song. It is first mentioned in the period following David's victory over Goliath (I Samuel 18:7). This was the song which had stirred Saul's jealousy because the song ascribed but thousands to him while ascribing ten thousands to David. The Philistines had heard it before the time when David fled from Saul and went to Achish at Gath (I Samuel 21:11). Evidently these songs were sung on a number of occasions and the Philistines may have been present to hear it. If they had not heard it in a time of peace, they may have heard it as their armies were encamped close enough together for sounds to carry back and forth.

*4. Why did Achish regret discharging David? 29:6*

Achish had not realized the truth of the activity of David. He thought he had been making attacks on the south of Judah and took this as evidence of his complete severance from the tribes of Israel (27:12). Achish was forced to discharge David because this was the majority decision of the lords of the Philistines—the king of Ekron, Lachish, Gaza, Ashdod, and others nearby. Achish thought

that David would be a valiant soldier, for indeed he had a reputation of being a capable military man. It is quite doubtful that David would have fought against Saul. He had refused to harm him on a number of occasions, and he would certainly have rebelled against any personal combat between Saul and himself.

*David Departs from Achish. 29:8-11*

8 And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

9 And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou *art* good in my sight, as an angel of God; notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

10 Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.

11 So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

*5. Why did David protest? 29:8*

David was playing the part to the hilt. His words are ambiguous, and he does not expect that Achish will be able to make any charge against him. As he said that he would go and fight against the enemies of his lord the king, he does not make the reference personal. He could have been saying that he would fight against the Philistines, since he was really still loyal to Saul. Achish in his gullibility, took the statement of David to be a declaration of allegiance to him and assured David still more earnestly that he was firmly convinced of his honesty and integrity.

6. *Why did Achish compare David to an angel of God?*  
29:9

This idiom is used quite often by people who want to show their deep respect for others. The comparison of the king to an angel of God was made by the woman of Tekoah, who came up to see David at the invitation of Joab (II Samuel 14:17 and 20). In the case of the Israelites they would look to their monarch as God's vice-regent; but in the case of Achish, the idiom is probably no more than a way for him to say that he had the strongest conviction that David had behaved himself well. He was as faultless as an angel in the sight of Achish.

## CHAPTER 29 IN REVIEW

1. Where were the Philistines gathering together? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where were the Israelites encamped? \_\_\_\_\_
3. With whom was David going into battle? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who objected to David's presence? \_\_\_\_\_
5. By what name did the Philistines describe David and his men? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What title did the Philistines use to describe David's relationship to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Quote the song which the Philistines knew which referred to Saul and David. \_\_\_\_\_
8. To what heavenly being did Achish compare David? \_\_\_\_\_
9. When did David leave the Philistine camp? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Towards what place did the Philistines go? \_\_\_\_\_

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A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 30

- Vv. 1-6 *David's camp looted.* David and his men marched for three days from Aphek and came to Ziklag. They arrived only to find that their camp had been attacked, the city had been burned with fire, and the men's wives and sons and daughters had been taken captives.
- Vv. 7-20 *David's pursuit of his enemies.* David made inquiry of Abiathar, the priest, to find out the Lord's will. The Lord informed him that he should pursue those who had destroyed his camp. David found a straggler from the enemy's forces, and the straggler helped David to take the enemy's camp by surprise.
- Vv. 21-31 *David's good will towards Judah.* David took considerable spoil from the Amalekites, who had attacked the camp. He did not keep all of it himself. He ordered that all his men should share equally in the spoils, and he then sent some of the spoils to the cities of Judah. He especially made sure that spoils were sent to Hebron and to all the places where he and his men had been protected when they fled from Saul.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *There is strength in the Lord.* David's men were so distressed when they saw that their wives and children had been taken captive that they threatened to stone David. David himself was really distressed, but we read this significant statement of David: "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God" (v. 6 b). When there is none other to give help, God is always close at hand.

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2. *Victory belongs to the soldiers of the Lord.* A weaker man than David might have given up in despair when he returned to find that his own city had been pillaged and burned. He continued his march against the enemy and by the strength of the Lord was victorious. We need to remember that often victory is just around the corner. Sometimes we give up just on the brink of ultimate victory, but thus we know only defeat.
3. *Blessings are to be shared.* David was very unselfish in not keeping all the spoils for himself. He would not allow the selfish men in his army to keep those who had watched the baggage from sharing the spoils. He made it an ordinance in Israel that those who went to battle and those who watched the baggage were to share and share alike in the spoils of war. He also shared the spoils with those who had befriended him in earlier days. This is the magnanimous spirit needed by all of God's people.

### David's Return to Ziklag, 30:1-31.

#### *David's Camp Looted.* 30:1-6

And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

2 And had taken the women captives, that *were* therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried *them* away, and went on their way.

3 So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, *it was* burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

4 Then David and the people that *were* with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

5 And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

6 And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

1. *Why had the Amalekites sacked Ziklag? 30:1*

David and his men had made expeditions against these people when David wanted to impress Achish (I Samuel 27:9-12). These Bedouin peoples had probably watched the departure of David and his men and had taken advantage of the opportunity to capture their women, children, and possessions. It is ironical that the people who led this expedition against David were the people whom Saul had been sent to destroy. Evidently Saul had not only spared the king, but had allowed some of the men to escape. These people then rose up to cause trouble for David.

2. *Why had they not slain any? 30:2*

They had not followed David's method of warfare. David had the extreme need for ridding himself of any witnesses and had entered into campaigns of total extermination. The captives taken by the Amalekites were probably destined to the Egyptian slave market. This was the way in which the Midianites were introduced in the days of Joseph. They bought him for twenty pieces of silver and took him to Egypt, where he was sold (Genesis 37:36).

3. *What caused David's excessive grief? 30:4*

David and his men had marched with the rearward of the Philistine armies as far as Aphek. There they were halted by the lords of the Philistines who were making the final assignments for the battle in the north. After they were discharged, they made a forced march for three days

and had arrived in their home only to find it pillaged and burned. They wept until they had no more tears and no more mental, physical, or nervous energy to expend in their grief.

4. *Why did the men blame David? 30:6*

The men felt that their association with David would ultimately bring them only misfortune. The men are described as being "bitter of soul." This description fits angry men as is evidenced by Judges 18:25 and II Samuel 17:8. The Shunamite woman whose son had died is described in this same way as she fell at Elisha's feet (II Samuel 4:27). The same idea is expressed in an attempt to describe Jacob's fear and distress as he was about to return to meet Esau (Genesis 32:7, 8) and also the people of Israel as the Canaanite peoples whom they had left in the land distressed them (Judges 2:15). These men were at their wits' end. Since David was their captain and ultimately responsible for the major decisions, they blamed him for all that had befallen them. They even considered seriously the actual stoning of David.

5. *How was David sustained in the day of peril? 30:6b*

Hardly any stranger circumstances can be imagined than those which confronted David upon his return to Ziklag. He and his men had hurriedly returned from Aphek to Ziklag by a forced march of three days' duration. Their welcome consisted of charred remains of what had been their homes and the knowledge that their women, children, and cattle had been driven away as spoil by the plundering Amalekites. Their grief was such that they wept until the fountains of weeping were run dry, and then the men turned and vented their grief by anger at David. There were conversations directed towards stirring up the men to stone David. In all this, we read, "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." By such faith David was sustained even in days of greatest peril.

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### *David's Pursuit of His Enemies.* 30:7-20

7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.

8 And David enquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*.

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men that *were* with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed.

10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.

11 And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water;

12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk *any* water, three days and three nights.

13 And David said unto him, To whom *belongest* thou? and whence *art* thou? And he said, I *am* a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.

14 We made an invasion *upon* the south of the Cherethites, and upon *the coast* which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire.

15 And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company.

16 And when he had brought him down, behold, *they* were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had

taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

17 And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled.

18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives.

19 And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any *thing* that they had taken to them. David recovered all.

20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drove before those *other* cattle, and said, This *is* David's spoil.

6. *How were the captives of Ziklag recovered? 30:7 ff.*

David inquired of the Lord concerning the advisability of going out against the Amalekites. God answered him by telling him that he should go out in pursuit of the enemy and added the promise that he would be blessed in the endeavor. An Egyptian, a slave of one of the plundering Amalekites, had grown faint while the plunderers were returning from Ziklag; and when he was unable to proceed with the army his master left him by the highway to die. This man was found by David, and his spirits were revived by their kind ministrations. He said that he would guide them to the camp of the pillagers if only David would promise not to take his life nor deliver him again into the hands of his master. Led by the slave, the men came upon the Amalekites as they were spread upon the ground eating and drinking, all of which was probably some sort of religious festival celebrating their successful plundering of Ziklag. The attack was sudden and soon decided, and the success was complete. David rescued all that had been carried away. Nothing was missing; and in

addition to recovering his own, David captured a large amount of other property.

7. *What was the nature of David's inquiry?* 30:8

David asked the Lord if he should pursue after the Amalekites. He puts it in the form of a question that could be answered by a full statement from the Lord. It would be better not to consider this as a question to be answered with a *yes* or a *no*. He was asking the Lord what would happen if he did pursue. The Lord answered his question. As he continued to be more specific, he asked if he could overtake the enemy. The Lord revealed to him that he would not only catch up with the Amalekites but he would recover everything he had lost.

8. *Where was the brook Besor?* 30:9

This brook is mentioned only at this point. It must have been south of Ziklag on the road to Egypt. Wady Gazze or Wady Sheria would fit a description of the events which transpired. Probably it was near Ziklag, because the men who stayed behind knew they would have to cross it in order to pursue the enemy.

9. *Why were the 200 so faint?* 30:10

David's men had been on a forced march from the rallying point at Aphek before they pursued their enemies from Ziklag. In addition, they had been under a great deal of mental strain as they had posed as friendly towards the Philistines. The final blow to their stamina came as they returned to find their wives, children, and supplies, carried away by marauders. Two hundred evidently stayed at Ziklag to protect the site. They knew that they would have to cross this valley and were not even able to begin the campaign.

10. *Who was the straggler?* 30:13

The young man whom David's men found in the field was an Egyptian. He was so faint that he was like a corpse according to the original text. After he had been given something to eat and drink, his spirit came again to

him. When he was asked about his background, he explained that he was an Egyptian but was a servant to an Amalekite. He had been left behind because he was sick and unable to keep up with the rest of the company.

11. *Who were the Cherethites?* 30:14

The Cherethites were tribes of the Philistines who lived in the southwest part of Canaan. Ezekiel mentioned them (Ezekiel 25:16) as did Zephaniah (Zephaniah 2:5). In these references they are synonymous with the Philistines. The Greek version called these people "Cretans." It is now understood that the Philistines originally came from Crete. David had Cherethites and Pelethites as body guards (II Samuel 8:18; 15:18; 20:7, 23; I Kings 1:38, 44; I Chronicles 18:17). Later on these men were called captains and the guard (II Kings 11:4, 19).

12. *Why did David overcome the Amalekites with ease?*  
30:16-20

When David came on the campsite of the Amalekites, they were spread all around over the ground eating and drinking and dancing. They were celebrating the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines and out of the land of Judah. Just how long David smote them is not clear, but it must have been only one evening. It was the next day after they had left Ziklag that he began the attack at twilight. He continued the attack after dark and recovered everything.

*David's Goodwill Toward Judah.* 30:21-31

21 And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that *were* with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them.

22 Then answered all the wicked men and *men* of Be-lial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they

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went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead *them* away, and depart.

23 Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.

24 For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.

25 And it was *so* from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

26 And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, *even* to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord;

27 To *them* which *were* in Beth-el, and to *them* which *were* in south Ramoth, and to *them* which *were* in Jattir,

28 And to *them* which *were* in Aroer, and to *them* which *were* in Siphmoth, and to *them* which *were* in Eshtemoa,

29 And to *them* which *were* in Rachal, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the Kenites,

30 And to *them* which *were* in Hormah, and to *them* which *were* in Chorashan, and to *them* which *were* in Athach,

31 And to *them* which *were* in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

13. *What military law was based on these events? 30:22-25*

Two hundred men had been too worn out by the events of the return from Aphek and all that transpired to cross over the Brook Besor as the men of David pursued the Amalekites. As a result, they had stayed behind with

some of the equipment. When the victorious men returned, they met these two hundred men; and the baser of their number were of a mind to refuse to divide the spoil with the two hundred. All that was to be given to these men were their wives and children. David immediately vetoed the proposition. His language is contained in this couplet:

“As the portion of the one who goes down into battle, So is the portion of the one who remains with the baggage.”

To this he added these words: “They shall all share alike.” David’s decision in the matter became a precedent for what was done in Israel from that time forward.

14. *To who did David send presents of the spoil? 30:26-31*

David used the booty at his disposal to win the hearts of the men of Judah. He sent portions to the elders of Judah, to his friends, and to his kinsmen with the note that the spoil was taken for a blessing for them from the possessions of the enemies of Jehovah. The listing of the cities indicates that they were all in the South of the land. In these cities and among these people David had wandered when he was a fugitive from the wrath of Saul. Many of them had no doubt rendered valuable assistance to David and his party. Sending these gifts could not fail to make the elders of these cities well disposed towards David; and so to facilitate his recognition as king after the death of Saul, David acted wisely. Moreover, some of these places may have been invaded and plundered by the Amalekites, since they had pillaged the Negeb of Judah.

## CHAPTER 30 IN REVIEW

1. Who had attacked Ziklag? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How long had David taken to reach Ziklag? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which wives of David were captured? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What did David's men propose to do to him? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What did the priest bring to David? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the priest's name? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many men went with David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many stayed behind? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Whom did David's men find in a field? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To whom did David send some of the spoil he took? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 31

Vv. 1- 6 *Saul's death.* Samuel had told Saul that he would die in battle. This came to pass as the armies of Israel and Philistia met in battle on Mt. Gilboa. Saul fell on his sword and killed himself. His sons were killed with him in this fatal battle.

Vv. 7-13 *Saul's burial.* The Philistines cut off Saul's head and stripped off his armor. They put his armor in the house of their gods the Ash-taroth. They fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. The men of Jabesh-Gilead heard that Saul's body was hanging on Beth-shan. They came by night and took the body and gave it a decent burial.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The word of God is sure.* Saul had done everything he could to try to thwart God's will. Even though he had disobeyed God on at least two outstanding occasions, he evidently thought he could escape the ultimate punish-

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ment which was pronounced against him. Samuel had predicted that Saul would die in battle. Saul did die as Samuel said. We may rest well assured that the Word of God cannot be broken. The prophecies of God are sure to be fulfilled.

2. *Faithful friends are priceless.* Saul had befriended the men of Jabesh-Gilead by rescuing them out of the hands of Nahash, the king of the Ammonites. The men of Jabesh-Gilead did not forget that Saul had helped them in the early days of his kingship. They did what they could to see that Saul's body was given a fitting burial. At the risk of their own lives they crossed the Jordan river. Traveling by night they came to the wall of Beth-shan and took down the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons. They took these bones back to their town and gave them an honorable burial.

Saul's Last Battle, 31:1-13.

### *Saul's Death.* 31:1-6

Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

4 Then said Saul to his armor-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armor-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

5 And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, that same day together.

*1. Why did Israel fight in the mountains? 31:1*

The Israelites seemed to prefer the hill country for their battlefield. They were forced to fight Jaban, the king of Hazor, in the lowlands in the days of Joshua (Joshua 11:1). At that time the Canaanites fought with horses and chariots (Joshua 11:4), equipment which the Israelites did not appear to use in the battle until the later days of the kings of Israel (I Kings 20:25; II Kings 9:16; et al.). Israel evidently held a good reputation for fighting in the hill country, and their enemies thought that they were not able to fight in the valleys (I Kings 20:23). The chariots of their enemies would be able to roll more freely in the plains and the valleys, so Israel would have every advantage as they went into this final battle under Saul. They would have the physical advantage of the terrain as they went into this final battle against the Philistines. The most important advantage was not theirs. They did not have the blessings of God.

*2. Why were Saul's sons with him? 31:2*

In earlier battles Jonathan was the leader of the sons of Saul. On occasions he had been in charge of at least one thousand men. It was his bravery that brought an initial victory as he and his armor-bearers surprised the Philistine garrison. Abinadab and Melchishua may also have been in charge of a detachment of soldiers. Israel needed all her men in this great battle. Her kings' sons were not exempt from military duty.

*3. How badly was Saul wounded? 31:3*

The Philistines were better equipped in many ways than the Israelites. They used their bowmen with great advantage in the fighting on the mountain slopes. It was these men who finally caught up with Saul and his three sons. Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchishua were evidently

mortally wounded by the Philistines themselves. Saul's wounds left him able to converse with his armor-bearers and finally to fall on his own sword, though dying. The Greek translation of the Bible, made some two hundred years before Christ, viewed this situation as one depicting Saul being wounded in the abdomen. He might have expected this wound to be fatal, and it certainly kept him from engaging in further battle. He was not so severely wounded that he could not kill himself. He was wounded so badly that he despaired of living, or else he would have not asked his armor-bearer to slay him. The words used in the various translations as well as in the original text point to his being wounded under the breast cartilage. This would put the wound in his abdomen and bowels and probably would have resulted in his ultimate death.

4. *Why did the armor-bearer refuse to kill Saul?* 31:4

Saul wanted his armor-bearer to kill him so that the Philistines could not make sport of him (Judges 19:25). Cases such as his and that of Abimelech (Judges 9:54) indicate that enemies of the day quite often amused themselves with the helpless but conscious warriors whom they found. Whether the armor-bearer was in a too-distressed state of mind or had too much reverence for his lord cannot be made out with certainty. The latter seems more probable. When the armor-bearer refused to kill Saul, Saul fell on his own sword and died. When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell on his own sword and died with him.

5. *How did Saul die?* 31:6

The archers of the Philistines overtook him; and when they got him in range, they wounded him. Saul then called upon his armor-bearer to run him through with his sword, but the armor-bearer would not do this. Saul wanted to die at the hands of a friend rather than at the hands of the Philistines who would cool their courage by maltreating him; but the armor-bearer was afraid, since he was

supposed to be answerable for the king's life. Saul then inflicted death upon himself with his sword, and the armor-bearer also fell upon his own sword and died with his king. On that day then Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer all died. It is said that all his house, or all the warriors who went out with him as a part of his house or his household, were slain in this battle. Neither Abner nor Saul's son, Ish-botheth, was included: for the latter did not go out to battle, and although the former was Saul's cousin and commander-in-chief, he did not belong to his house nor was he considered his servant. Saul's taking his own sword and falling upon it is one of the very rare instances of suicide in the Old Testament. In view of it, the older commentators discuss the question of Saul's final salvation, generally with an unfavorable verdict.

*Saul's Burial.* 31:7-13

7 And when the men of Israel that *were* on the other side of the valley, and *they* that *were* on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

9 And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish *it in* the house of their idols, and among the people.

10 And they put his armor in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.

11 And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul;

12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the

wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.

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

6. *What was the outcome of the battle of Mt. Gilboa?*  
31:7

The principal engagement of the war took place in the plain of Jezreel. When the Israelites were obliged to yield, they fled up the mountains of Gilboa and were pursued and slain there. The Philistines followed Saul, smote his three sons, and fought fiercely against Saul himself. When the men of Israel upon the hillsides that were opposite to the valley of Jezreel and the Jordan saw that the troops fled and Saul and his sons were dead, they took flight out of the cities; whereupon the Philistines nailed the bodies of Saul and his sons to the wall of Beth-shean. This presupposes the capture of that city, from which it is evident that they had occupied the land as far as the Jordan. All the northern part of the land of Israel, in other words, the whole land with the exception of Perea and the land of Judah, came into the hands of the Philistines when Saul was slain.

7. *Where was Saul's corpse gibbeted?* 31:10

On the following day, when the Philistines stripped the slain, they found Saul and his three sons lying upon Gilboa. Having cut off their heads and plundered their weapons, they sent them as trophies into the land of the Philistines, passing them round about among the different towns and hamlets of their land to announce the joyful news in the idol-temples and to the people. The corpses they fastened to the town-wall of Beth-shean, a city in the valley of the Jordan (see Joshua 17:11). It is not stated that the Philistines plundered the bodies of Saul's sons and mutilated them by cutting off their heads; but it is evident from verse twelve, where the Jabesh-gileadites are said to

have taken down from the wall of Beth-shean not Saul's body only, but the bodies of his sons also, that the Philistines had treated the corpses of Saul's sons in just the same manner as that of Saul himself. The writer speaks distinctly of the abuse of Saul's body, because it was his death that he had chiefly in mind at the time.

8. *Was Saul's body burned? 31:11-13*

The men of Jabesh in Gilead had special reason to remember Saul with gratitude (see I Samuel 11:1-11); and they undertook to remove the disgrace that had been heaped upon Israel by the gibbeting of the king's corpse. All the brave men of the town set out to Beth-shean, took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall, brought them to Jabesh and burned them there. It was not the custom in Israel to burn the corpse, but to bury it in the ground. The former treatment was restricted to the worst criminals (see Leviticus 20:14). Consequently the Chaldées interpreted the word "burned" as relating to the burning of spices, a custom which is met afterwards as a special honor shown to certain of the kings of Judah on the occasion of their burial (II Chronicles 16:14; 21:19; Jeremiah 34:5). In these later instances, however, it is written that the men did "make a burning for him"; whereas here it is stated distinctly that "they burned them." The reason for the burning of the bodies in the case of Saul and his sons is seen in the peculiarity of the circumstances. The bodies were mutilated by the removal of the heads, and therefore a regular burial of the dead was impossible. Moreover these men were anxious lest the Philistines follow up their victory, come to Jabesh, and desecrate the bodies still further. Then, too, this burning was not a complete burning to ashes, but merely a burning of the skin and flesh; so that the bones still remained; were buried in the ground under a shady tree; and were later fetched away and buried in Saul's family

grave at Zela, in the land of Benjamin (II Samuel 21:11 ff), as an act of kindness on the part of David.

9. *What judgment of God is seen in Saul's death?*

In the ignominious fate of Saul there was manifested the righteous judgment of God in consequence of the hardening of his heart. The love which the citizens of Jabesh displayed in their treatment of the corpses of Saul and his sons, had reference not to the king as rejected by God, but to the king as anointed of Jehovah, and was a practical condemnation, not of the divine judgment which had fallen upon Saul, but of the cruelty of the enemies of Israel and its anointed. For although Saul had waged war almost incessantly against the Philistines, it is not known that in any one of his victories he had ever been guilty of such cruelties towards the conquered and slaughtered foe as could justify this barbarous revenge on the part of the uncircumcised upon his lifeless corpse. Throughout the whole narrative one can almost hear the words of the prophet of God who had tried to admonish the king and had declared, "Behold, to hearken is better than sacrifice; and to obey is better than the fat of rams."

## CHAPTER 31 IN REVIEW

1. On what mountain did Israel fight the Philistines? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What sons of Saul were slain? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who wounded Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Whom did Saul ask to slay him? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How did Saul die? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did the Philistines put Saul's armor? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Where was Saul's body hanged? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What men took down his body? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What did the rescuers do with Saul's body? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How long did they mourn for Saul? \_\_\_\_\_