

1st Samuel — Introduction

When one picks a book to read, one of the first things often done is to consider the author. The same thing is true of books in the Bible. People often want to know who the human author was (understanding that GOD is the author who used men to proclaim His truths). When one studies the book of First Samuel (Second Samuel as well), one quickly realizes that the book is not named after its author. This becomes evident when one notices that Samuel died before all of the events recorded in these books took place (1 Samuel 25:1). It is quite possible that he was used by GOD to record the first parts of First Samuel and that GOD used someone else to record Samuel's death and the events which followed. It seems probable that the book was named for its first primary character — Samuel. Thus, this author believes one can simply refer to its author as being anonymous.

Regarding the book itself, one notices that it was originally part of one book called simply "Samuel." In the Greek Septuagint, it was divided into two books called "1 & 2 Kingdoms," and the books of Kings were called "3 & 4 Kingdoms." The division into two books was probably done because of the size of scrolls in that day — the book was simply too big to place on one scroll. The Hebrew canon called the books of Samuel "First Kings," and the two books known today as First and Second Kings, they combined and simply called "Second Kings" (Frank J. Dunn, Know Your Bible, p. 118).

First Samuel is easily divided around three main characters: Samuel (chapters 1-7), Saul (chapters 8-15), and David (chapters 16-31). With regard to content, Willis states:

"The books of 1 and 2 Samuel pick up the history of Israel where Judges left off. It continues the history of the judges, relating the events in the lives of the last two judges (Eli and Samuel). It proceeds from there through the

reigns of Saul and David. The book covers a history of about 125 years (1140-1015 B.C.). This was an important period because in it Israel changed from a loosely tied tribal confederacy to a nation under a king" (Willis).

1st Samuel — Chapter One

1 Sam. 1:1-8 "Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, 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: 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. And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there. And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. 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. 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?"

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

this man went up out of his city from year to year to worship and to sacrifice unto Jehovah of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests unto Jehovah, were there. And when the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: but unto Hannah he gave a double portion; for he loved Hannah, but Jehovah had shut up her womb. And her rival provoked her sore, to make her fret, because Jehovah had shut up her womb. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of Jehovah, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. And Elkanah her husband said unto 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?" (ASV)

This chapter begins with the lineage of Samuel and a little background history. From Samuel's later position as priest, one learns that he must have come from the lineage of Aaron, for only those of that lineage could serve as priests. Some would object to Samuel's ability to be a priest because Elkanah is called an Ephrathite (one from Ephraim). But if one lives in a certain place, it does not mean he was not from another place. Just so, because one lived in Ephraim does not mean his ancestry was from that tribe. It appears that the priests were considered a part of the tribe in which they lived.

Samuel's father, Elkanah, had two wives named Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah was blessed with several children, whereas Hannah was barren. Because the text says the "Lord had shut up her womb," some have speculated that this may have been a punishment for some sin. But when one considers the godliness of Hannah, it seems to this writer that such an assumption cannot be made. But it should be considered that it is possible, for many who have been rebuked by the Lord have later turned to become faithful, loving and obedient servants of GOD. Yet, there is another possibility. Could it be that the Lord withheld her ability to have a child

because of His future plans? GOD needed a strong leader for His people. If Hannah had had children soon after getting married, would she have desired one so badly that she would have prepared him for his lifetime of service and given him to it?

It is also stated that Elkanah went to Shiloh each year to attend the feast. Shiloh was the place where the Tabernacle was set up for many years. It was moved there from Gilgal by Joshua (Joshua 18:1). It remained there for about three hundred years. All males were required to worship at the Tabernacle three times a year.

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy GOD in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of Tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty" (Deuteronomy 16:16).

This shows one the reverent attitude which Elkanah had toward the things of GOD. It might also be pointed out that it is wrong to assert here that Elkanah only went up to the house of the Lord once each year. The text does not say that he only went up once each year.

One is also introduced to Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Eli served as High Priest, while his sons served as priests. Eli's son's evil ways will be discussed later. Suffice it to say here that Eli's sons were evil, and part of the fault of their wickedness lay at the feet of their father for his failure to restrain them.

In verse four, the portions spoken of seem to be speaking of the "peace offering." When the peace offering was made, the priests would take their portion, and then the one making the sacrifice received the rest. The people would then partake of this meal. Elkanah gave Hannah a "double portion," which signified his preferential treatment of her. He favored her even though she had not

borne him any children.

The adversary of verse six is Peninnah. It appears that she tormented Hannah with the fact that she did not have any children. It should be remembered that in those times it was a reproach to a woman not to have children. Hannah felt the weight of her barrenness and even more so because of Peninnah. Why did Peninnah torment Hannah as she did? There can only be one answer: jealousy. Elkanah loved Hannah more than he loved Peninnah. Notice the text says that Elkanah loved Hannah (v. 5), but such language is not used with regard to Peninnah. The result was that Hannah cried and would not eat because of her grief over being barren.

Being a good husband, Elkanah tried to comfort his wife. He asked her if he were not better to her than ten sons could be. Ten is probably used here to signify a large and complete number — a full house, so to speak. Though he tried to soothe her with these words, one can see how they might have caused her to think even more about her situation. Though Elkanah was obviously very good to Hannah, he could never truly replace the joy of motherhood. The relationship of the two (husband and child) are very different.

1 Sam. 1:9-11 “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. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. 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.”

“So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest was sitting upon his seat by the door-post

of the temple of Jehovah. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto Jehovah, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.” (ASV)

After eating a little bit, Hannah rose up and went to the Tabernacle (temple). We often think of the Tabernacle as a tent (portable), while the temple was a “permanent” building. Yet, here is a case where the Tabernacle is called the temple long before Solomon built “the temple.” The NKJV translates the original here as “Tabernacle.” But the original word (heykal) means:

“This is a large house, a palace, a citadel; a temple, a nave, a sanctuary, a tabernacle. This term generally denotes a magnificent building (Prov. 30:28; Is. 39:7; Dan. 1:4)” (Zodhiates, CD).

The seat spoken of here was probably a chair of some sort meant for Eli’s comfort in his latter years. Some have thought that it might be a chair symbolizing his high office. In this chair he could observe all who came to the Tabernacle. Remember that this referred to the outer court of the Tabernacle, for no one but the priests themselves could go into the Tabernacle proper.

Next one sees Hannah as she bewailed her condition of barrenness. The text says she was in “bitterness of soul.” The word “bitter” is the same word one finds used by Naomi in Ruth 1:20 (“Mara”).

“It means bitter (literally or figuratively), sad, embittered, fierce, violent, wild.... Mar is used to describe the heart-crushing experience of family turmoil (Gen. 27:34), sterility (1 Sam. 1:10)” (Zodhiates, CD).

Even in her bitterness she prayed to the Lord as she wept over her condition. For what did she pray? A son whom she would

dedicate to the Lord. Notice that in making this request of the Lord she also made a vow. While never commanded (except for Samson and his mother), vows were strictly governed for those who chose to make them. Women were governed in Numbers chapter thirty for any vow they made. Unmarried women could only make a binding vow of which their father approved. Likewise, married women were restricted to a vow which was approved by their husbands. Hannah's vow also said that a hair of his head would never be cut, which reminds one of the Nazirite vow (Numbers 6). Whether this was a Nazirite vow is not known with any certainty.

Notice these rules for vows:

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before GOD: for GOD is in Heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto GOD, defer not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should GOD be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands" (Ecclesiastes 5:2-6)?

In a very real sense, a vow is simply a promise to do something. All promises must be kept to the best of one's ability. It should be remembered that one is always before the face of the Lord. Keeping one's promise has never depended upon whether one used the proper words or not. The Pharisees of Jesus' day believed it was the particular word one used which determined whether he was bound

to keep his oath (Note Matthew 23:16-22 as an example of their thinking.). A promise is a promise no matter what words are used. Therefore, one should carefully consider any matter before making a commitment to do something. Our word should be our bond.

"Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." (James 5:12).

1 Sam. 1:12-18 **"And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. 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. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the GOD of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him. 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."**

"And it came to pass, as she continued praying before Jehovah, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. 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 I poured out my soul before Jehovah. Count not thy handmaid for a wicked woman; for out of the abundance of my complaint and my

provocation have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace; and the GOD of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of Him. And she said, Let thy handmaid find favor in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat; and her countenance was no more sad." (ASV)

The text says that Hannah "continued praying;" the Hebrew is *"multiplied to pray."* She did not just pray once and forget about it when her prayer was not answered in the affirmative. Instead, she appears to have prayed often. The Lord taught that one ought not to faint in prayer, but to continue praying.

"And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not GOD, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not GOD, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not GOD avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8).

One also notices that Eli watched her lips. The lips were moving, but there was no sound to be heard. Observing this, Eli thought she was drunk and told her to put away her wine. The question should be posed: Why did Eli assume that she was drunk? Why did he not assume that she was praying? From the things one will later notice with regard to his sons, it appears that he was used to seeing all

kinds of wickedness around the Tabernacle. This may very well be an indictment of the Israelites as a whole during that time. This thought seems even more plausible when one reads further and sees that GOD was going to give them over to the Philistines because of their evils.

Hannah was horrified that the High Priest would think her to be drunken. She stated that she was not a "daughter of belial." The word "belial" was not used as a proper noun in the Old Testament and should not be used as such here. One writer said that she was saying she was not a daughter of Satan. But again, the term "belial" is not used in the Old Testament as a proper noun. Notice the following definitions.

"Worthlessness, worthless, good for nothing, unprofitable, base fellow, wicked, ruin, destruction (construct)" (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *"It means worthlessness, wickedness; perdition, a wicked man; a destroyer"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

The ASV gives the better sense, stating, "Count not thy handmaid for a wicked woman."

Hannah told Eli that the reason she was acting this way was because of her meditation ("complaint") and grief. (COMPLAINT — siyah — "A masculine noun meaning contemplation, meditation, prayer, talk, utterance, babbling" — Zodhiates, CD.) (GRIEF — kaas — "A masculine singular noun meaning anger, provocation, vexation" — Zodhiates, CD.) She probably was so involved in her prayer that she did not realize her lips were moving. When Eli realized her sincerity, he told her to go in peace with a wish that her prayer be answered. This was enough for Hannah. Notice how her attitude changed, as is evidenced by the fact that she ate and was no longer sad.

1 Sam. 1:19-20 "And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their

house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. 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.**”

“And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before Jehovah, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and Jehovah remembered her. And it came to pass, when the time was come about, that Hannah conceived, and bare a son; and she called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of Jehovah.” (ASV)

The next day Elkanah and his family got up early, offered worship to GOD, and returned home to Ramah. There are several places called Ramah in the Bible. This one may be the one which is about a two-hour journey northwest of Jerusalem (Winter, p. 40).

Upon returning home, they resumed their normal home life. It is also revealed that the Lord remembered Hannah, meaning that her prayer was answered regarding her desire for a child. She named this son Samuel, because she said she asked him of the Lord. Thus, his name has something to do with her request of the Lord. There have been many guesses as to the meaning of this name.

“*Asked of GOD*” (Coffman, p. 8); Willis says it means “*Heard of GOD*” (Willis, p. 2); “*She calls him Samuel, lit. Shemuel (Num. 34:20; 1 Chron. 7:2), which was an ordinary Hebrew name, and means ‘heard of God,’ not ‘asked of God.’*” Pulpit Commentary, p. 12).

Could Samuel’s name be a mixture of these two, meaning — “*Asked and heard of GOD?*” She asked of GOD and was heard by GOD.

1 Sam. 1:21-28 “And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto

her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. 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. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. 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. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.”

“And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto Jehovah the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned; and then I will bring him, that he may appear before Jehovah, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only Jehovah establish His word. So the woman tarried and gave her son suck, until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of Jehovah in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew the bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto Jehovah. For this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: therefore also I have granted him to Jehovah; as long as he liveth he is granted to Jehovah. And he worshipped Jehovah there.” (ASV)

In this section it is learned that Elkanah

and his house all continued going up to the house of the Lord to make sacrifices on a regular yearly basis, except for Hannah. Until she weaned the child, she did not go up to the Tabernacle. Her intent was to take the child to the Lord after he was weaned. Coffman says, generally speaking, the custom of Hebrew women was to wean their children in "*two, or often, three years*" (Coffman, p. 9). This process sometimes lasted longer. It makes good sense that she would do this from the standpoint that at three he would be better able to care for himself, and the role of Eli would be more easily accomplished.

Notice also that Elkanah not only offered sacrifices yearly but also made his vow. These vows were voluntarily made, but once made, they must be kept as has already been noticed. It seems that his vow was in accordance with the vow his wife made with reference to giving their child to the Lord. Notice that Samuel was not going to be given to the Lord for a few years but for as long as he lived. To Samuel's credit, the Bible portrays him as being faithful to GOD all of his life.

Was Hannah's refusal to go to the Tabernacle wrong? It was only the males who were required to go to the Tabernacle yearly (Deuteronomy 16:16). Thus, she was well within her rights to stay at home with Samuel.

When the time came that Samuel was weaned, she took him to the Tabernacle (house of the Lord). Notice the sacrifices she took to commemorate this event. Some believe that the three bullocks, one each year, had been offered each year that she was weaning Samuel, with the last being at this time. This would explain the very definite "a bullock" in verse twenty-five. It may have been that all three were offered on this one occasion. There was also the wine and flour and the most important object — Samuel. Another possibility is that two of the bullocks were for Eli to provide for Samuel's needs. Or it may be that there was one for Elkanah and

each of his wives to sacrifice.

Hannah apparently took Samuel and gave him into the care of Eli herself, as verses twenty-six through twenty-eight seem to indicate. How did she know that this was the child to be given to the Lord? He was her only child. She reminded Eli of who she was and of the prayer for this child which she had prayed. In all of this, notice that there is no attempt to get out of giving her only child to the Lord. Instead the picture seems to be that of gladness for the opportunity to give to the Lord. How does this compare to one's giving today? When one determines to give his contribution to the Lord, is there sometimes regret and a wish that one had that money for some selfish use? One can make a sacrifice to GOD which He does not accept because the giver's attitude is not proper. One should remember the rich men and the widow with her two mites in Mark 12:41-44. When one has determined to give a certain amount or percentage, does one sometimes give less because there is something he wants instead or because some unexpected expense has suddenly come upon him? One needs to learn to give just as Hannah did: (1) What one has promised and (2) Cheerfully. How many, unlike Hannah, make a promise to GOD and then when blessed by Him, go back on their word?

The word "lent" is unfortunate in this text, because the English word gives one the idea of a temporary arrangement. There was to be nothing temporary about this; Samuel was given in service to the Lord for the rest of his life (See ASV).

1st Samuel — Chapter Two

1 Sam. 2:1-10 **"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; because I rejoice in Thy salvation. There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside**

Thee: neither is there any rock like our GOD. 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. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up. 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. He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. 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."

"And Hannah prayed, and said: My heart exulteth in Jehovah; My horn is exalted in Jehovah; My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; Because I rejoice in Thy salvation. There is none holy as Jehovah; For there is none besides Thee, Neither is there any rock like our GOD. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; For Jehovah is a GOD of knowledge, And by Him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken; And they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; And they that were hungry have ceased to hunger: Yea, the barren hath borne seven; And she that hath many children languisheth. Jehovah killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to Sheol, and bringeth up. Jehovah maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, He also lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor

out of the dust, He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill, To make them sit with princes, And inherit the throne of glory: For the pillars of the earth are Jehovah's, And He hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of His holy ones; But the wicked shall be put to silence in darkness; For by strength shall no man prevail. They that strive with Jehovah shall be broken to pieces; Against them will He thunder in Heaven: Jehovah will judge the ends of the earth; And He will give strength unto His king, And exalt the horn of His anointed." (ASV)

These ten verses are Hannah's grateful song of praise to GOD, as well as a prophecy of the coming Messiah.

Hannah's heart rejoiced in the Lord because of the great blessing He had given her by opening her womb. The word "**horn**" is used to signify power. She was saying that her power came from the Lord. She recognized that she could not do anything of a positive nature without the strength the Lord gave. "**I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me**" (Philippians 4:13). The victory she received over her enemies came from GOD, and the enemy here can be no other than Peninnah, who had tormented Hannah for so long because of her barrenness. It was obvious that Peninnah thought she was superior to Hannah because she could bare children, but that myth was exploded when GOD opened Hannah's womb.

Verse two shows tremendous praise of GOD. In it one sees a recognition that there is none like Him, because there is no other real GOD. The term rock has often been used to designate GOD as one who is stedfast and cannot be moved, thus, an emblem of strength, power, and stability (cf. Genesis 49:24; Matthew 7:24 - Christ).

"In calling him a rock she assigns to him strength, calm, immovable, enduring, but a strength which avails for the safety of his people" (Pulpit Commentary, p. 26).

Verse three seems to be a reference to Peninnah, who had ridiculed Hannah and spoken down to her. Peninnah's pride had

been evident, but now all basis for such pride was shown to be fallacious. There is no room for arrogant pride in man as he views his fellow man. One should keep in mind "That except for the grace of GOD, there go I." So often men attribute their position, their well-being, and their accomplishments to themselves in a spirit of pride. One should remember that one can accomplish all things **only** through Christ (Philippians 4:13). In speaking of pride, there is no basis upon which man may exercise pride when he compares himself to GOD. It is GOD who will be man's judge. As in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, all men will be brought low before their Creator. Every knee will indeed bow before the Creator (Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10).

Verses four and five show the idea of the first being last and the last first (Matthew 19:30). The power ("**bows**") of the mighty men had been broken, but those who were lowly and without strength had received strength. Those who had plenty of food were now in need, whereas those who were hungry now had plenty. Then she referred to herself as one who had been barren but who now could have children, whereas those who had formerly had strength to bear children were now feeble. Did Hannah have seven children? Verse twenty-one of this chapter states she had three sons and two daughters. It should be remembered that Hannah was speaking in poetic language and that the number seven was often used to represent completeness.

Verses six through eight are simply another way of saying that the Lord has His way in all things. None can stop Him from accomplishing His task. He does as He pleases, and none can over-ride His purpose.

Verse nine shows the protection GOD gives to those who belong to Him.

"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, He that keepeth

Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand" (Psalm 121:3-5).

"For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken" (Proverbs 3:26).

In the end, GOD will assuredly uphold His true servants while destroying those who have rebelled against Him. The strength and the power of GOD to punish all evil doers is clearly seen in this text.

Verse ten contains an element of prophecy regarding the coming Messiah. Israel had no king at this time, and the people would not even ask for one until many years later when Samuel was old. This obviously speaks about THE KING -- Jesus the Christ. When the time was right, GOD would exalt the power of His anointed one, His Son.

"When the fulness of the time was come, GOD sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4).

"All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18).

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to GOD" (Romans 14:11).

1 Sam. 2:11-20 **"And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest. Now the sons of Eli were sons of belial; they knew not the LORD. 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; And he struck 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. 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. 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. Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. 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. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home."

"And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto Jehovah before Eli the priest. Now the sons of Eli were base men; they knew not Jehovah. And the custom of the priests with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was boiling, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand; and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took therewith. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. Yea, 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 boiled flesh of thee, but raw. And if the man said unto him, They will surely burn the fat first, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would say, Nay, but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force. And the sin of the young men was very great before Jehovah; for the men despised the offering of Jehovah. But Samuel ministered before Jehovah, being a child, girded with a linen

ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little robe, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, Jehovah give thee seed of this woman for the petition which was asked of Jehovah. And they went unto their own home." (ASV)

The eleventh verse refers to the time immediately after Elkanah and Hannah took Samuel to the tabernacle the first time. They left him there and returned home. One is told that Samuel's job was to minister to Eli. In doing so, his work was also rendered to the Lord.

In verse twelve one sees the sons of Eli referred to as the sons of belial. Hannah did not want to be falsely accused of being a daughter of belial (1:16). Here, the charge stands against Eli's sons. They were extremely wicked men who should have known better, but they rebelled against the Lord and His laws for the priests. Notice that the text says, **"they knew not the Lord."** They knew the law, but they did not know GOD. As Winter states it, *"Their knowledge of God was 'head knowledge.' It was not 'heart knowledge'"* (Winter, p. 50). They were like many of all ages, including today, who know of GOD but do not know Him in the sense which would cause them to love and obey Him. Eli's sons simply did not love the Lord. **"If ye love Me, keep My commandments"** (John 14:15).

"For this is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

"And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it" (2 John 6).

The portion to be given to the priests was strictly detailed in Leviticus 7:31-35. There were also strict regulations on burning the fat

of the sacrifices (Leviticus 7:23-25, 31). Regarding the fat, none of it was allowed to be used by the priests or anyone else; it all belonged to the Lord. Eli's sons were so wicked that they took more than their allotted portion. Not only that, but they also demanded meat that they were not allowed. If any sacrificer told them they could not have it because of the law, they would tell them to give it to them, or they would take it by force. As Winter noted,

"When men stoop to force in situations like this, they admit that their reasoning is wrong" (Winter, p. 52).

What was the result of these priests' abuses in taking that meat which they were not allowed? Verse seventeen says their sin was **"very great,"** because it caused the people to abhor the sacrifices. The word **"abhorred,"** (*naaz*) means *"to revile, scorn, despise, reject; to condemn; to deride"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version). The people knew this was not right, and thus they came to despise the worship. This reminds one of conditions at the time of Malachi (Malachi 2:8), where the priests were told:

"Ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts."

Their open rebellion, uncontrolled by Eli, would cause the people to think that the law had no real meaning; thus many would reject the true worship. This is the same principle one sees today because of all the denominations, each practicing its own form of religion, yet claiming to practice what the Bible teaches. The world looks on and asks, *"Which one is right?"* The world understands that they cannot all be right and thus rejects the true worship of the Lord.

Verse eighteen shows a ray of hope. In the midst of Eli's son's violations of GOD's law and the people's turning away from the sacrifices, there was Samuel. He was faithfully ministering to the Lord. He was

obviously learning how to be a good priest, and he served faithfully.

Verse nineteen shows the continued care, concern, and love that Hannah had for this special son. Every year when she went to sacrifice, she brought him a coat.

COAT – MEIL – *"It was an under garment of wool, woven throughout without seam, with holes for the head and arms, and reaching nearly to the ground: when used by women it had sleeves. Under it they had a tunic or shirt fitting so closely that a man simply so clad was considered naked (1 Sam. 19:24), and over it priests and Levites wore the Ephod"* (Pulpit Commentary, p. 40).

She and Elkanah remained loyal to their vow: Samuel stayed at the tabernacle. The result was that Eli "blessed Elkanah and his wife." What was the blessing he pronounced? They would have other children because of their faithfulness in keeping their vow with regard to Samuel.

Something is interesting to this writer about this blessing. It seems obvious that GOD granted the wish of Eli (v. 21), as well as his earlier wish for Hannah (1:17). Yet, later one will see GOD condemning Eli because he had not restrained his sons (Hophni and Phinehas - 1 Samuel 3:13). One also sees that he apparently did a good job in raising Samuel to serve the Lord. This leads this writer to conclude that Eli was a good man, except in restraining his sons. Even though he rebuked them for their sins (v. 23-24), he did not stop them from practicing evil (**"restrained"**). What Eli should have done was call for the law to be exercised against his sons, remove them from their offices and have them stoned; but he did not. How many today are exactly like Eli when it comes to their own children?

1 Sam. 2:21 "And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons"

and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.”

“And Jehovah visited Hannah, and she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before Jehovah.” (ASV)

Here is the result of Eli's blessing upon Elkanah and Hannah: they had five more children. Meanwhile, it is said that Samuel grew before the Lord. In verse twenty-six one is told:

"The child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men."

"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with GOD and man" (Luke 2:52).

1 Sam. 2:22-25 “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. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.”

“Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and how that they lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings from all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make Jehovah's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, GOD shall judge him; but if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because Jehovah was minded to slay them.” (ASV)

Eli was very old and heard about the evil

actions of his sons. Particularly mentioned in this text is the fornication of his sons with the women who came to the tabernacle. All of the details of this text are not known. Did these women go to the tabernacle for the purpose of "prostitution," or had they gone to worship and were seduced or raped? Looking at the situation and the force they used with regard to the sacrifices, either seems to be possible.

The people had cried out to Eli against his son's sins. Now Eli rebukes them, but his rebuke is 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)" (Winter, p. 55).

The results of his failure to curb his sons and of their refusal to do what was right were that they made **"the Lord's people to transgress."** **"Transgress"** means *"to cross over, pass over, go over; to go through, penetrate; to go beyond; to pass by; to pass along, travel; to pass away, to disappear; to go forward; to transgress, cause to trespass; to depart; to bolt, shut; to impregnate; to lead over, transport, conduct across; to remove; to transfer; to lead along; to lead through; to bring; to be irritated; to be angry, fall into a passion. The principal meaning of this verb is movement of something in relationship to a stationary object"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version). Not only were their actions causing some to cry out against them, but they also led others to disobey GOD.

"The sins of men in high station do not end with themselves; they make others also to transgress" (Pulpit Commentary, p. 40).

Eli's argument in verse twenty-five is that, if one sins against man, his fellow man will judge him. But when one has sinned against the Lord, He will judge him, and there is no appeal from such. In fact, GOD has already judged the person to be guilty.

The last phrase of verse twenty-five is interesting and has caused a lot of questions over the years. The sentence reads:

"Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them."

Many have understood this as saying that GOD would not let them repent just so He could kill them. GOD has never wanted anyone to die in his sins. Barnes says this passage may be *"explained by saying that in the case of Hophni and Phinehas God's will to slay them was founded upon His foreknowledge of their impenitence"* (Barnes, p. 11).

Zerr comments on this sentence thus:

"The meaning is as if it said they rejected the word of their father 'and for this cause the Lord would slay them'"
(Zerr, p. 4).

Because they would not listen to the correction of their father, GOD would destroy them. They could not be allowed to maintain their positions and continue to corrupt the Lord's people and the Lord's worship.

1 Sam. 2:26 "And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men."

"And the child Samuel grew on, and increased in favor both with Jehovah, and also with men."
(ASV)

This is often not the case, i.e., when men are in favor with GOD, they are often in disfavor with men as a whole. Samuel appears to have gained favor with men because of his good conduct. As mentioned earlier, this is almost the exact same thing which was said of Jesus in Luke 2:52. Why would the people as a whole favor Samuel? Could it be they were tired of the oppression they saw in Eli's sons and compared that to the righteousness of Samuel? If this is the case, would it not show their desire for a return to GOD's ways?

1 Sam. 2:27-36 "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? 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? Wherefore kick ye at My sacrifice and at Mine offering, which I have commanded in My habitation; and honourest thy sons above Me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel My people? 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 honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.”

“And there came a man of GOD unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Did I reveal myself unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house? and did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up unto Mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before Me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? 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? Therefore Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before Me for ever: but now Jehovah saith, Be it far from Me; for them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 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 thy house. And thou shalt behold the affliction of My habitation, in all the wealth which GOD shall give Israel; and there shall not be an old man in thy house for ever. And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from Mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thy heart; and all the increase of thy house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be the sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die both of them. And I will raise Me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in My heart and in My mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thy house shall come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread.” (ASV)

The man of GOD is not named in this passage, but it is simply stated that the man who came to Eli with the message was doing GOD's will. I have often thought of all the people who are not well known beyond their community but have been mightily used by GOD as faithful servants. Some of these are people no one has ever heard of, but their

students may be well-known among Christians. Consider this text. Not much is known about Eli, but one is given much information about Samuel in the Bible.

The man of GOD rehearsed the history of GOD's making the Levites, the sons of Aaron, priests. He also reminded Eli that GOD had provided for the needs of the priests through the offerings (Leviticus 2:3-10; Numbers 5:9-10). GOD had not just provided for their needs but had provided abundantly for them. This had not been enough for Eli's sons. Eli was asked why he had kicked at the sacrifices and offerings of GOD. (**KICKED** — *baat* — “A verb meaning to kick at, kick out; disdain, scorn,” Baker/Carpenter, p. 1161.) Eli was showing disrespect to GOD because he did not discipline his children. [**DESPISE** - v. 30 - *bazah* — “A verb meaning to hold in contempt or to despise. The verb means to hold in disdain, to disrespect” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 125.)] Any time man refuses to follow GOD's will he shows disrespect to GOD. This is said to Eli, not because he himself had been involved in a direct way with being greedy, but because of the actions of his sons. Eli, as High Priest, was responsible for the entire priesthood. He had to answer for the actions of the priests. Thus, Eli was guilty because he had not controlled the priests and straightened out the mess they made, even though he had not directly participated in their evil.

How was Eli honoring his sons above GOD? By not controlling them, by refusing to discipline them and stop their sinful actions. He showed that he loved them more than he did GOD. Jesus said,

"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me"
(Matthew 10:37).

GOD absolutely demands that one love Him enough to obey Him, even when family is involved. Unfortunately, Eli is a good example

of one who allowed loyalty to blood to be thicker than loyalty to GOD. He chose to let his sons get away with sin, rather than be obedient to GOD.

“Eli, instead of removing them from the office which they disgraced, preferred the ties of relationship to his duty to God and the moral welfare of the people” (Pulpit Commentary, p. 55).

Not only should he have removed them from office, but he also should have had them put to death for their fornication.

“If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you” (Deuteronomy 22:22-24).

If this law were followed today, how many empty houses would we find in Lebanon Tennessee, much less the nation? How many children would be without one or both of their parents?

This writer has known elders who would not get involved in church discipline because one in their own families needed to be disciplined. He has also seen preachers who would not preach the truth on a particular subject because someone in their own families was guilty of that sin. This writer has seen parents ignore the sins of their own children and get angry at elders or preachers who dared teach the truth on these sins. But Jesus still says,

"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

GOD still demands that one be faithful to Him above all others — even family.

The priests were making themselves **"fat"** on the peoples' sacrifices. This showed their greedy nature. Because of their rebellion to GOD'S laws, the house of Eli was to be removed from the priesthood. Verse thirty is an excellent comment on the word **"forever."** Many have stumbled at this word over the ages. They think the word **"forever"** means never-ending, with no restrictions or conditions attached. This verse clearly shows that **"forever"** carries the condition of faithfulness on the part of those to whom the promise was made. Through Eli's family, the promise had been made that they would be priests forever, but because of their rebellion to GOD's laws, He was now going to remove them. Obviously, their continuation in this office was conditional upon their continued obedience.

When GOD said He would cut off Eli's arm (v. 31), He was not saying that He would literally cut off his arm. He was saying that the strength of Eli would be taken away, as the arm often signifies the strength of an individual. Here it signifies, as the text continues, that the house of Eli would basically dissipate into a family of little influence and importance. None of this family would ever again live to old age; they would die at relatively young ages. The wealth of Israel, which they should have been able to participate in, would by-pass them.

The man of GOD gives Eli a sign that all he has said would come to pass (v. 34). Both of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, would die on the same day. This was fulfilled in chapter four, verses eleven and seventeen.

In verse thirty-five, GOD said He would raise Him up a faithful priest. Most believe the immediate fulfillment of this was not Samuel,

but rather Zadok. Zadok first appears in Second Samuel 8:17, and then appears frequently in Second Samuel, First Kings and First Chronicles in association with King David. This also has a Messianic ring to it, signifying the Christ who should ultimately fulfill this prophecy. The entire priesthood became corrupt by the time of Christ, and He replaced it with a new priesthood (Christians) with Himself being the new High Priest. This new priesthood is thoroughly examined and proclaimed in the book of Hebrews.

Verse thirty-six returned to the punishment which would come upon the house of Eli. Whereas they had formerly bountifully partaken of the sacrifices, they would be reduced to poverty. They would be reduced to begging for their food.

1st Samuel — Chapter Three

1 Sam. 3:1 “**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.**”

“And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the Word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision.” (ASV)

The word “**child**” can refer to an infant (4:21) or to a man forty years old [2 Chronicles 13:7 (Coffman, p. 28)]. According to Josephus, Samuel is thought to have been twelve years old in this text (Barnes, p. 12).

Samuel ministered before the Lord under the supervision of Eli. This is clear when one notices that when Samuel was called in the night, he ran to Eli.

The word “**precious**” comes from yaqar which Baker and Carpenter say is an “*Adjective meaning valuable, rare, precious*” (p. 469). The reason that the Word of the Lord was precious was because it had been rarely spoken by GOD to man during these times or not at all. It may be assumed that

this was due to the corrupt nature of the people, especially the priesthood during these days. Notice, “there was no open vision.” [OPEN — paras — “*A verb meaning to break out, to break down, to burst forth*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 922)]. This seems to be very much like the time between Malachi and the coming of John — there was no revelation from GOD during that time for about four hundred years.

“*There are in Hebrew two words for vision: the one used here, hazon, refers to such sights as are revealed to the tranced eye of the seer when in a state of ecstasy; while the other, mareh, is a vision seen by the natural eye*” (Pulpit commentary, p. 65).

VISION — hazon — “*It is a mental sight, a dream, a vision, a revelation, an oracle, a prophecy*” (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

1 Sam. 3:2-9 “**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; 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; That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. 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. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the ord of the LORD yet revealed unto him. 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. 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."

"And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, so that he could not see), and the lamp of GOD was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down to sleep, in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of GOD was; that Jehovah called Samuel; and he said, Here am I. 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. And Jehovah called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him. And Jehovah called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place." (ASV)

Verse two tells one that Eli was blind. This is not saying he could not see because it was dark. There are those who believe that the phrase "**his eyes began to wax dim**" is a reference to some disease, possibly cataracts as that is the way a person with such loses his sight [things appear dim and then finally complete blindness comes (Winter, p. 62)].

Verse three tells one the time of day when GOD spoke to Samuel. It was before the lamp of the Lord went out, which indicates the early morning hours. The lamp mentioned here is the same as the seven golden candlesticks which resided in the Holy Place of the tabernacle/temple. Some do not believe this could be the seven golden candlesticks based on Exodus 27:20.

"And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always."

But the passage in Exodus alludes only to the fact that the lamp was to be lighted perpetually, as long as the Jewish dispensation existed. Another passage clearly shows that the lamps were lit only during the night time.

"Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. Without the veil of the testimony, in the Tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations" (Leviticus 24:2-3).

Notice when they were to take care that it burned ("ordered it"): "from evening unto the morning." The time when the Lord spoke to Samuel was in the early morning hours, shortly before the lamps burned out.

Some might get the idea that Samuel was sleeping in the Holy of Holies, where the ark was. But the phrase, "**where the ark of GOD was,**" modifies "**the Temple of the LORD.**" Only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies, and then only once a year on the day of atonement. The Tabernacle/Temple of the Lord included the entire complex, including the court.

The Lord called Samuel three times, and each time Samuel thought Eli was calling him. He would get up to see what his master wanted of him, only to be told that Eli had not called him. But on the third time, Eli perceived that it was the Lord who was calling Samuel. Eli instructed Samuel to answer by saying "**Speak Lord; for thy servant heareth.**" The reason for Samuel's confusion in this matter is stated in verse seven:

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

This refers not to a lack of knowledge of GOD, for Samuel had been trained for a number of

years in the knowledge of the Lord. What it refers to is the fact that Samuel did not yet know, nor had he experienced, how the Lord spoke to human beings in those days.

Zerr makes an interesting comment about verse seven, saying,

"It is interesting to consider Hebrews 8:11 in this connection. That passage deals with one difference between the old covenant and the new: in the latter it will not be necessary for one brother to tell another the knowledge of God, for he will have learned about him before becoming a brother; but in the former, a babe eight days old became a full brother to others upon circumcision, then when he became old enough he would have to be told about God just as Eli was here telling Samuel" (Zerr, p. 6).

1 Sam. 3:10-14 "And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 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. 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. 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. 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."

"And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth. And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which

he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifice nor offering for ever." (ASV)

Notice that the Lord "**came**" and "**stood**" before Samuel.

"It is something more than a voice; there was an objective presence; and so in verse 15 it is not called hazon, a sight seen when in a state of ecstasy, but mareh, something seen when wide awake, and in the full, calm possession of every faculty" (Pulpit Commentary, p. 66).

Here it would seem is another appearance of the Son of GOD in the Old Testament.

Samuel's attitude was the same one that one should have today. When the Bible is opened and GOD's message is read, one's attitude should be "Speak; for Thy servant heareth."

GOD then told Samuel that He was going to do something which would cause the ears of the people who heard of it to tingle. The word salah (tingle) is used of both the ears and lips to indicate a quivering reaction (Baker/Carpenter, p. 952). The sense here is news that simply astounds and horrifies people, news that they can hardly believe to be true.

Verse twelve tells one that GOD had already informed Eli (2:27-36) of all that He was going to do. Further, GOD assured Samuel that as surely as He began this thing, He would end it — all that He said would come to pass.

Verse thirteen gives the two reasons why GOD was going to bring this judgment on Eli's house. (1) His sons, Hophni and Phinehas, had made themselves "**vile**." The term "**vile**" (galal) means: "*to bring a curse upon oneself*" (Zodhiates, CD). They had brought a curse upon themselves because they had treated GOD's Tabernacle lightly, as well as His laws, and their functions as priests. (2) The curse

was to fall on the house of Eli because he **"restrained them not,"** i.e., he had not controlled them as he should have done. ("Restrained" — kahah — "A verb meaning to rebuke, to correct a person" — Baker/Carpenter, p. 496.) He could not keep them from their vile practices, but he could have punished them by removing them from their office and even having them put to death for their fornication. He should have. Instead of keeping the priesthood pure, he let it degenerate into something the people could not respect. Eli had indeed spoken against what his sons had done, but it is not enough to speak against something when you also have the power to do something about it. When Christians fail to realize the value and importance of their priesthood, involving themselves in the sins of the world, it causes the world to lose respect for Christianity. They thus fail to accomplish the goal of glorifying the Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16; John 12:28; John 17:1; Romans 15:6, 9; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 9:13).

Verse fourteen teaches a frightening truth: one can so sin against GOD that there comes a point of no return. It is possible to sin against GOD so long that there can be no forgiveness.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Has the flood been considered in this connection? Noah warned the people for one hundred and twenty years of their impending destruction, but they would not listen. On the day the rains and floods began, does not one believe that there were those who cried out for

forgiveness, but it was too late? The time of forgiveness had passed for them, just as it had for Eli's sons. One should pray that no one else allows himself to reach that state.

1 Sam. 3:15-18 "And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. 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. 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."

"And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of Jehovah. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he said, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that Jehovah hath spoken unto thee? I pray thee, hide it not from me: GOD do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that He spake unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is Jehovah: let Him do what seemeth Him good." (ASV)

Verse fifteen shows one that after receiving the message of GOD, Samuel lay until the morning and then began his duties. The implication seems to be that he did not go back to sleep, but possibly lay contemplating the message he had been given. This would be perfectly logical. How often has one done the same thing when contemplating something one has studied, or when some unpleasant task is at hand, or a major decision must be made? Barnes says that here is Samuel's *"first experience of the prophet's cross"* (Barnes, p. 13). The prophets were often given messages which were not popular, but they had to proclaim them anyway. The lesson for one today is the same. There are

many lessons from GOD's Word which must be proclaimed by Christians which are not easy to address and which are unpleasant because one needs to be reprov'd or rebuked. Sometimes this involves a family member or someone else one has grown to love. The task is not easy or pleasant, but in order to be a faithful proclaimer of GOD's Word, His truths must be delivered to the one needing them.

Incidentally, here is one of the things for which Samuel was responsible: opening the "**doors**" of the tabernacle. Since at this time the tabernacle was in existence, there were no doors as one commonly thinks of them. These were curtains which were pulled back to provide an opening.

"The Septuagint in this verse gives us THURA, and one definition Donnegan gives of the word is 'an opening in general,' and one meaning of the word 'open' is 'to loosen;' therefore, we can understand that Samuel pushed back the curtains" (Zerr, p. 6).

The "**doors**" which he opened were probably the entrance to the outer court where all of the people were allowed to enter in order to make the sacrifices, et cetera.

Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the news he had been given. When one considers the probable age of Samuel and the fact that Eli was the High Priest, this is perfectly understandable.

Because Eli perceived that GOD had made multiple appearances to Samuel during the night, he assumed that Samuel had received a message from GOD and that it must be important. He approached Samuel and asked what GOD told him. He said,

"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."

Winter tells us,

"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" (Winter, p. 65).

Imprecation — *"To invoke evil on: CURSE."*

Eli seems to be saying, *"If you do not tell me then the same fate which was mine shall fall upon you."*

Verse eighteen shows that Samuel revealed all that GOD said unto him. He had passed the test of a faithful prophet. It should be remembered that Eli had already heard this message at the hands of an unknown prophet; this was nothing new to him (1 Samuel 2:27-36). Notice a degree of faith exhibited here by Eli. He heard the message and then said, **"It is the LORD: let Him do what seemeth Him good."** He believed GOD and was submissive to His will. He knew that if GOD was going to do something, no human being could stop Him.

"His faith in GOD caused him to realize that GOD would only be fair and just in His judgments" (Winter, p. 66).

He may have allowed his sons to continue in sin, but he nevertheless seems to have had a strong faith in GOD.

1 Sam. 3:19-21 "And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the LORD."

"And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah. And Jehovah appeared again in Shiloh; for Jehovah revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of Jehovah." (ASV)

When the text says that Samuel “**grew,**” this does not primarily refer to his physical growth, although that is included. The context shows that he was growing spiritually, for the Lord “**let none of his words fall to the ground.**” This phrase means that everything GOD told him to say was backed up through fulfillment.

“The undeniable proof of the validity of God’s inspiration of his prophets lay in the fact that what they prophesied came to pass, exactly as foretold” (Coffman, p. 37).

GOD has never left His messenger without witness with regard to their proclamations. The same thing is taught with regard to the apostles of Jesus:

“They went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following” (Mark 16:20).

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; GOD also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will” (Hebrews 2:3-4)?

As time progressed, all of Israel began to accept Samuel as a prophet. The expression “**Dan to Beer-sheba**” came to symbolize all of Israel, just as one might say from “*Los Angeles to New York*” to symbolize all of the continental United States. How did they come to understand that Samuel was a prophet? Through the fulfillment of the words he spoke from the Lord.

“The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him” (Jeremiah 28:9).

Verse twenty-one shows that GOD was again revealing Himself to Israel at Shiloh. This confirms that for at least a time, there was no revelation from GOD to Israel. Again, this seems to indicate the corrupt nature of Israel as a whole, as was symbolized by Hophni and Phinehas. The place of appearance and communication with Samuel was Shiloh. Why? That was where the tabernacle of the Lord was and where Samuel served at that time.

In the comments made on verses ten through fourteen, it was observed that the words “**came**” and “**stood**” seem to be an appearance of the Son of GOD in the Old Testament. One should consider verse twenty-one here with regard to that thought. **“The LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the LORD”** (emphasis mine, RK). A study of John 1:1 shows that before His incarnation, Jesus was known as “**the Word.**”

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD.”

This writer firmly believes that the Father used His Son on this occasion to speak to Samuel.

1st Samuel — Chapter Four

1 Sam. 4:1-4 **“And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. 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. And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day 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. 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 cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of GOD.”

“And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and encamped beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines encamped in Aphek. 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. And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath Jehovah smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of Shiloh unto us, that it may come among us, and save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh; and they brought from thence the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of hosts, who sitteth above the cherubim: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of GOD.” (ASV)

The first sentence in verse one is disputed as to whether or not it belongs to what follows. It should be remembered that originally there were no chapter and verse divisions in either the Old or New Testaments. Some believe it goes with the last verse of the third chapter, which makes perfect sense. But it can also be argued that Samuel had told them their destruction was ahead and that they ignored him. One author (Coffman) thought that there was no way GOD would have called Israel to go up against the Philistines when He knew they were going to be beaten. Since GOD had determined to punish Israel, what better way for Him to do so than to tell His people to go to war with someone by whom He intended to punish them? Did not GOD send His people against Benjamin twice when He knew they would lose forty thousand soldiers in the first two days (Judges 20:18ff).

These wars against the Philistines had

been going on for many years; this was nothing new to Israel. On the first day of this battle, the Israelites lost about four thousand men. Apparently this was not a total rout, for the Israelites returned to their camp that night. But it was a signal defeat. The Israelites did not understand why GOD had smitten them this day. It was then that they decided to go get the ark of the covenant. The ark was supposed to reside in the Holy of Holies, except when the tabernacle was moved.

Notice that the Israelites seemed to think of the ark as some kind of magical object, whose mere presence would assure them victory. There are many in today's world who think a crucifix, or a Bible on their coffee table, or the fact that they have been baptized is some kind of magical thing which gives them safety. The ark was not some magical object of salvation as the text will show. Further, they should never have removed the ark from the tabernacle to a battlefield without GOD's directions. The ark was not the place where GOD lived. Rather, it represented the place from which GOD ruled His people.

The cherubim were objects which sat on each side of the ark facing each other. They had wings which were spread to overshadow the ark. Many have thought of them as little angels. But,

“The cherubim were symbolical representations of supernatural creatures adorning the top of the mercy seat located as a covering for the ark of the covenant” (Coffman, p. 42).

When the ark was brought, Hophni and Phinehas came with it. This was necessary to fulfill the prediction that GOD had made that they would both die on the same day.

1 Sam. 4:5-9 “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. 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 that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. 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. 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. 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.”

“And when the ark of the covenant of Jehovah came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. 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 that the ark of Jehovah was come into the camp. 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. 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 manner of plagues in the wilderness. 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.” (ASV)

When the ark arrived at the camp, the Israelites were overjoyed because they thought GOD had come among them and that they would now be victorious. What they did not realize was that GOD did not come with the ark. At this time GOD had abandoned them. He would not give them victory because of their wickedness. Nevertheless they shouted mightily.

When the Philistines heard the mighty shout of the Hebrews, it caused them great concern. Upon investigating the reason behind this shout, they learned that the ark had come into the Israelite’s camp. They also falsely believed that GOD had come into the

camp of the Hebrews. They believed that they were doomed with no chance of victory. Notice also the Philistines’ testimony to the accuracy of the books of Moses. They spoke about the mighty things GOD had done to the Egyptians. They were also probably well aware of all that had been done in Canaan when GOD brought Israel into that land.

But notice verse nine. Instead of fleeing in terror, they decided to fight like men. They would not run but would gather their arms and fight. If they lost they lost, but they would not run and hide like cowards. The word **"quit"** means *“behave.”* Their leaders were saying, *“Let us act like men, so that we do not become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to us.”* It seems that they were saying, *“It is better to die on the battlefield than to become slaves. Act like men and fight.”*

1 Sam. 4:10-11 “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. And the ark of GOD was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.”

“And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of GOD was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.” (ASV)

Now one sees the result of the next day’s battle: the Israelites were soundly beaten by the Philistines — the rout was one. The Israelites lost thirty thousand footmen, but that was not the worst thing they lost. They lost the ark! The loss of their priests was probably viewed by them as a tremendous loss as well. But the truth of the matter was that they lost nothing in the death of these two priests, for they were corrupt and had corrupted the nation. In essence, the loss of Phinehas and Hophni was a blessing to Israel. Even their father understood this, as shall be noticed

later.

1 Sam. 4:12-18 “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. 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. 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. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? 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. 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.”

“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. And when he came, lo, Eli was sitting upon his 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. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man hastened, and came and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were set, so that he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, How went the matter, my son? And he that brought the tidings 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. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of GOD, that Eli fell from off his 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.” (ASV)

These verses tell the news of Israel's defeat being delivered in Shiloh. Rabbinical tradition says this runner was Saul, but no one knows who this man was. He ran back with his clothes torn and dirt upon his head which was an ancient way of mourning.

Notice what Eli was worried about. His concern was not primarily focused on Israel, or upon his sons, but rather on the ark of GOD. Eli could hear the noise of the city when the young man appeared to him, but he was blind and did not know what the noise was all about. If he had been able to see, he would have instantly known there was bad news by the messengers appearance.

When the messenger came to Eli, he told him what had happened. Notice that there seemed to be no reaction from Eli when he heard of the thirty thousand foot soldiers who had died. Likewise there seemed to be no reaction when he was told that Hophni and Phinehas had died. But when he was told that the ark had been taken by the Philistines he fell backward off of his seat. Some might conclude that the weight of all the bad news caused this reaction in him, but notice the emphasis in verse thirteen upon his concern for the ark. He did not tremble for his sons — he trembled for the ark of GOD.

TREMBLE — hared — “*It means afraid, trembling, fearful, anxious, reverent*” (Zodhiates, CD); “*Terror*” (Wilson, p. 453).

The fall broke his neck, and he died at the age of ninety-eight. Notice also that one is told that he had judged Israel for forty years. This is the first mention one has that he served as a judge. Eli was a judge and a priest (High Priest).

1 Sam. 4:19-22 “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. And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. 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. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of GOD is taken.”

“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 brought forth; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast brought forth a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. 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. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of GOD is taken.” (ASV)

These verses tell of the furtherance of the predictions against the house of Eli in the death of his daughter-in-law. At the time of this battle it was close to the time for her to deliver her child. When she heard the news of the battle and the results of the deaths of her father-in-law and husband, but primarily the loss of the ark, she went into labor.

She named this child “**Ichabod**,” because she said the glory of GOD had departed Israel. Notice the emphasis on the fact that the ark had been taken. The loss of her father-in-law and husband no doubt caused her great grief, but the loss of the ark seems to have been the most important thing to her,

just as it had been to Eli. It should be emphasized that the glory of GOD had departed Israel before the ark was taken in battle. Otherwise, Israel would not have been defeated. The loss of the ark symbolized His departure. Notice that before the ark was taken they did not realize that GOD was no longer with them, just as Samson did not know GOD's Spirit was no longer with him when he arose to defend himself against the Philistines. It also appears that the Israelites looked at the ark as some kind of idol. They revered it instead of GOD. They thought this mere object could give them victory. Rather, it is only holy living which brings victory.

1st Samuel — Chapter Five

1 Sam. 5:1-2 "And the Philistines took the ark of GOD, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. When the Philistines took the ark of GOD, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon."

"Now the Philistines had taken the ark of GOD, and they brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. And the Philistines took the ark of GOD, and brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon." (ASV)

DAGON (Day' gahn) "*Name of god meaning, 'little fish,' or 'dear.'* Dagon is a god associated with the Philistines. However, his origins were in Mesopotamia during the third millennium B.C. By 2000 B.C. a major temple was erected for him in the maritime city of Ugarit. Ugaritic commerce carried his cult into Canaan when Canaan was still a part of the Egyptian empire. When the Philistines conquered the coastal region of Canaan, they adopted Dagon as their chief deity" (LeBron Matthews, Holman's Dictionary, CD Rom Version).

"Together with Dagon a female deity was commonly

worshipped, called Atergatis, half woman and half fish, whose temple is mentioned in 2 Macc. 12:26" (Pulpit Commentary, p. 102).

According to a popular etymology of Dagon, the name came from the Hebrew word for fish, and so it was postulated that he was a sea god. However, archaeological evidence does not support this view. The name probably was derived originally from the word for grain, or possibly from a word for clouds. Thus Dagon was a grain god or a storm god, much like Baal. According to Ugaritic documents from the fourteenth century B.C., Dagon was the father of Baal. Little else is known about his mythology or cult" (LeBron, IBID).

Winter says:

"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 elephant's tusks. The lower part of the body resembled the body of a fish" (Winter, p. 78).

The Philistines conquered Israel and took the ark of the covenant. They took the ark to Ashdod, which was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. They placed the ark in the house of their god, Dagon (See notes above on Dagon.). Gaza was between Ashdod and Shiloh, so why did they not stop there? Because Samson had destroyed the temple at Gaza (Judges 16).

The people of those times attributed victory in battle to their god's being superior to the god of the one they conquered. Thus, they would take important objects which were captured to the temple, which also served as a kind of trophy case for such things. Especially was this true of those objects which

represented the gods of the nations they captured. To the Philistines, the ark represented the GOD of the Israelites, in fact, they seemed to have thought the Hebrew's GOD was the ark or that He lived inside of it (1 Samuel 4:6-8). By placing the ark in the temple of Dagon, they were saying that Dagon was more powerful than GOD. But they soon learned that that was not the case. They took the ark and set it beside Dagon.

Coffman gives some interesting information on the city of Ashdod:

"The name Ashdod means 'stronghold or fortress,' and the history of the place justified the name. 'An Egyptian ruler besieged it for 29 years on one occasion (according to Herodotus).' The Jews were finally able to destroy the place when Jonathan finally did it in the times of the Maccabees (1 Macc. 10:84)" (Coffman, p. 57).

1 Sam. 5:3 "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."

"And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of Jehovah. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again." (ASV)

To rise up early in the morning seems to indicate that something special was going to take place that day. Possibly there was to be a celebration of some kind concerning their victory over the Israelites. But when they went to the temple, they found their god lying on the ground, face down, "before" (in front of) the ark. They set Dagon back up and went about their business.

I wonder if anyone at the time thought of the significance of this? To prostrate oneself before another signifies to worship that one or at the least to recognize his superiority.

1 Sam. 5:4 "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 to him."

"And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of Jehovah; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands lay cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him." (ASV)

The day before they had found their idol god fallen before the ark, which could have been an accident. But on this day, not only was their idol on the ground before the ark, it was now missing its hands and head; they had been cut off. Not broken off — **cut off** (a deliberate act, not an accident). The note in this writer's Bible says the "fishy part" was left to him. The Pulpit Commentary makes this interesting point:

"In the original it conveys the idea that the head, the emblem of reason, and the human hands, the emblems of intellectual activity, were no real parts of Dagon, but falsely assumed by him; and, deprived of them, he lay there in his true ugliness, a mere misshapen fish" (Pulpit Commentary, p. 102).

1 Sam. 5:5 "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."

"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." (ASV)

This is a tradition that was developed because of the disgrace their god suffered on this occasion. Anyone who entered the room where Dagon's idol was did not step on the threshold; they stepped over it. This is simply a silly superstition, much like baseball pitchers

who will change their step when walking to and from the pitcher's mound from/to the dugout, so that they will not step on the foul line. Superstition seems to always be involved in false religion.

1 Sam. 5:6-10 "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. And when the men of Ashdod saw that it 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. 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. 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. 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."

"But the hand of Jehovah was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and He destroyed them, and smote them with tumors, even Ashdod and the borders thereof. And when the men of Ashdod saw that it 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. 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 thither. And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of Jehovah was against the city with a very great discomfiture: and He smote the men of the city, both small

and great; and tumors brake out upon them. So 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." (ASV)

EMERODS: *"An archaic form of the word hemorrhoids used by the KJV for the disease(s) in Deuteronomy 28:27 and 1 Samuel 5-6. It is impossible to identify the disease with certainty. Whatever its precise nature, the disease was regarded as incurable and fatal. Modern speech translations are agreed that the malady is likely not hemorrhoids. The underlying Hebrew term is rendered tumors except for the passage in Deuteronomy where NRSV and TEV opt for ulcers or sores. The presence of tumors associated with an infestation of mice has suggested bubonic plague to some interpreters"* (Holman's Dictionary, CD Rom version).

Of the emerods, Coffman says:

"There is little doubt that it was anything other than an epidemic of the bubonic plague, the black death that wiped out a major fraction of the human race in the mid fourteenth century....The conclusion of scholars that the disease which struck the Philistines was bubonic plague is well supported; and John Willis has a full discussion of this. A key factor in the evidence is that the disease was likely spread by rats, indicated by the Philistines making golden images of those creatures ('The Hebrews did not distinguish between mice and rats.') Willis quoted the LXX and the Vulgate versions which declare that, 'Their territory swarmed with rats. There was death and destruction all through the city'" (Coffman, p. 63-64).

EMERODS: *"Tumours, hemorrhoids,*

piles" (Thayer, CD Rom Version), *"To be lifted up. A tower, hill....was descriptive of a hemorrhoid because of the swollen tissue associated with that affliction"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

The Philistines had five major cities (Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza), which were known as the *"Philistine pentapolis"* (Winter, p. 79). Three of these cities are listed in this text as suffering destruction from the Lord. Why was GOD destroying them on this occasion? It was because of the way they had treated holy things. The ark was holy, yet they treated it as a common trophy. They had considered it as a symbol of GOD and thus considered Him as being inferior to their god. GOD taught them a lesson.

The Philistines first took the ark to Ashdod, but when the people were destroyed, they wanted to get the ark out of their land. They had no illusion that it was the "GOD of Israel" who was afflicting them in this way. The lords of the Philistines, probably the leaders of the five above mentioned cities, were called in to confer on what they should do. It was agreed that the ark would be sent to Gath. But the same thing happened at Gath which happened at Ashdod. This confirmed that the GOD of Israel was behind this terrible destruction. Next they sent the ark to Ekron. But when the people of Ekron heard that the ark was coming to them, they wondered why they were being chosen to be killed. The word was spreading rapidly, and they wanted no part of the ark.

1 Sam. 5:11-12 "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. And the men that died not were

smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven."

"They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and they said, Send away the ark of the GOD of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, that it slay us not, and our people. For there was a deadly discomfiture throughout all the city; the hand of GOD was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten with the tumors; and the cry of the city went up to heaven." (ASV)

It was time for another conference of the lords of the Philistines. Again the purpose was to get rid of the ark. The people petitioned that it might be sent back to its own place. That is, the ark should be sent back to the people of Israel. Notice also that the text says that the cry of the people went up to heaven. Is it possible that they were crying out to GOD to remove the plague from them?

1st Samuel — Chapter Six

1 Sam. 6:1-3 "And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. 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. 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."

"And the ark of Jehovah was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do with the ark of Jehovah? show us wherewith we shall send it to its place. And they said, If ye send away the ark of the GOD of Israel, send it not empty; but by all means 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." (ASV)

These verses give a preview of what is

about to take place. They also give the length of time in which the ark was among the Philistines. Since the time the ark came among them, all they had had was misery, suffering, and death. They called for the priests and diviners to find out what their course of action should be. The priests were those who oversaw the ceremonies of their god, Dagon. The diviners were those who employed "*magical arts*" to try to tell the future.

DIVINATION AND MAGIC: *"An attempt to contact supernatural powers to determine answers to questions hidden to humans and usually involving the future. The practice was widely known in the ancient Middle East, especially among the Babylonians who developed it into a highly respected discipline....The ancient Babylonians and Assyrians employed several methods. The Babylonians commonly used hepatoscopy, divination by the liver. The liver of a sacrificial animal by virtue of being considered the seat of life could be observed carefully by specially trained priests to determine the future activities of the gods.... Other methods included augury (foretelling the future by natural signs, especially the flight of birds), hydromancy (divination by mixing liquids; see Gen. 44:5), casting lots (Jonah 1:7-8), astrology (2 Kings 21:5), necromancy (1 Sam. 28:7-25), observing the Urim and Thummim (1 Sam. 28:6), and by consulting the liver (Ezek. 21:21)"* (Karen Joines, Source unknown).

The advice they were given was to send the ark away (specifically, back to the Israelites). They were told not to send it away empty but to make a trespass offering. They were told they would be healed when this was done. According to Leviticus 5:15,

"If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy

things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering.”

The Philistines were told by their priests to make an offering for an unintentional offense they had made against the GOD of Israel.

1 Sam. 6:4-9 "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. 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. 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? 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: 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. 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."

“Then said they, What shall be the trespass-offering which we shall return to Him?
And they said, Five golden tumors, and five

golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines; for one plague was on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall make images of your tumors, 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. 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? Now therefore take and prepare you a new cart, and two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke; and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them; and take the ark of Jehovah, 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. And see; if it goeth up by the way of its own border to Beth-shemesh, 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." (ASV)

The mere idea of religion brings to mind the idea of gifts given to the deity under consideration. The Philistines wanted to know what gift should be given and were told to make five gold emerods and five gold mice. The term “**mice**” is a general term and may refer to rats as well. Since most believe the plague mentioned is the bubonic plague, rats fit the description better. The Hebrew word could mean either. It is noticed that the number of each was to correspond to the five lords of the Philistines, which indicates that all of the cities of the Philistines were affected by this plague.

The idea of “**peradventure**” in verse five is that perhaps GOD would take away their suffering, et cetera. As the text in verse nine indicates, they were not sure whether or not this plague was due to GOD'S intervention on behalf of the ark.

Verse six is interesting because it shows that the Philistines had knowledge of what had happened to the Egyptians when they stubbornly refused to let Israel go. The idea seems to be, “*Do not be like the Egyptians*

who stubbornly refused to heed the first miracle wrought among them and were destroyed.” They were asked, in effect, if they wanted to wait long enough to be destroyed like the Egyptians for their stubborn disobedience.

The instructions were then given for transportation for the ark. First, they were to take a new cart. To the cart were yoked two milk cows with calves. These cows were to be ones which had never been yoked together (never involved in common labor). The calves were then to be taken back to their homes. The ark was to be placed on the cart with a box containing the trespass offering beside it. Second, the cows were then to be let loose to go wherever they chose. This was a good test when one considers the elements of it. Two cows which had never been yoked would rebel at the yoke. Further, if you did get them yoked they would normally not work together without extensive training. They would tend to pull in different directions. Third, under normal circumstances they would have attempted to go back to their calves.

If the cows reacted as they normally would, then the Philistines would know that the plague just happened to them. But if the cows broke all of the normal traits and went to the Israelites, then they would know that the plague came from GOD.

1 Sam. 6:10-16 “And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: 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. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, 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 Bethshemesh. And they of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up

their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, 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. 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 Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.”

“And the men did so, and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home; and they put the ark of Jehovah upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their tumors. And the kine took the straight way by the way to Beth-shemesh; they 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. 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. And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered up the kine for a burnt-offering unto Jehovah. And the Levites took down the ark of Jehovah, 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 Jehovah. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.” (ASV)

The Philistines did as their priests and diviners had instructed them. When the cows were released, they headed straight for Bethshemesh. But as they traveled, they lowed (sound uttered by cattle — moo) for their calves. This showed that they were being moved to their goal by GOD, instead of returning to their calves.

It is interesting that the lords of the

Philistines followed to observe all that happened. From this, it seems that the destruction in their land must have indeed been very terrible for them to take such an active part in this affair.

The time of this event was in the reaping of the wheat harvest, about May or June on our calendar. The people of Bethshemesh immediately stopped harvesting and rejoiced at the return of the ark. Sacrifices were made by using the cows which had pulled the ark and the wood of the cart for the fire. Coffman quotes DeHoff as saying,

"Everything connected with the false method of transporting the ark of the covenant was destroyed" (Coffman, p. 74-75).

The Levites were also mentioned here as taking the ark down, which should not surprise anyone since the city of Bethshemesh had been set aside as a city of the Levites (Joshua 21:16). When the lords of the Philistines saw all that was done, they returned to their own cities. It has now been confirmed to them that GOD was behind all of their troubles.

1 Sam. 6:17-18 "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; 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 Bethshemite."

"And these are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned for a trespass-offering unto Jehovah: for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one; and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fortified cities and of country villages, even unto the great stone, whereon they set down the ark of Jehovah,

which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite." (ASV)

These verses again list the presents that were sent with the ark. In reading the verse, one might come to the conclusion that every single village sent or a golden mouse "**golden mice.**" But in those times, "*A city with its unwalled villages and adjacent territory was commonly regarded as a unit*" (Coffman, p. 76). Remember that earlier they had been told that each lord of the Philistines was to send a golden emerod and a golden mouse (v. 4).

1 Sam. 6:19-21 "And He smote the men of Bethshemesh, 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. And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD GOD? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you."

"And He smote of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of Jehovah, He smote of the people seventy men, and fifty thousand men; and the people mourned, because Jehovah had smitten the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before Jehovah, this holy GOD? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought back the ark of Jehovah; come ye down, and fetch it up to you." (ASV)

Numbers 4:20 reads, "**But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.**" This seems to suggest that the people were not even supposed to look at the holy things of GOD under penalty of death. When the ark first

came back to the Israelites, it probably was not covered up. But they should have taken every precaution, for being Levites, they surely knew the law on this matter. Others believe that they actually looked inside the ark and that was why so many died. Whichever the case, like the Philistines, they did not have the proper respect for the things of GOD.

Like the Philistines, they did not want the ark in their city. So, they called for the men of Kirjath-jearim to come and take the ark.

1st Samuel — Chapter Seven

1 Sam. 7:1 "And the men of Kirjathjearim 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."

"And the men of Kiriath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of Jehovah, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of Jehovah." (ASV)

The men of Kirjathjearim willingly took the ark at the request of the people of Bethshemesh. They took it to the house of a man named Abinadab, where his son was placed in charge of caring for the ark. Though it is not stated here, this man must have been a Levite. Only the priests and Levites could care for the ark according to the law. One sees the disaster which occurred to the Philistines, followed by that which occurred to the Israelites at Bethshemesh. It is therefore inconceivable that GOD would have tolerated improper care of the ark by anyone (especially those of a tribe not designated to care for it).

At the same time, this is not the change of priesthood which GOD had earlier promised. Notice that the text says Eleazar kept the ark, not that he officiated at the ark. It is possible during this time that no worship services were held by Israel.

1 Sam 7:2 "And it came to pass, while the

ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD."

"And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode in Kiriath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah." (ASV)

This is a short summary passage, which states that the ark stayed at Kirjathjearim for twenty years. It also shows that at the end of this time the people were lamenting after the Lord. This has the implication that they were seeking Him again. Some believe the time frame here corresponds with the last twenty years of the judges, where the people were following after the idols of the land, and thus neglected the ark, tabernacle, and worship of GOD in general. But hope for Israel is seen because they were looking to GOD once again as their King, their only leader.

1 Sam. 7:3-4 "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. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only."

"And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only." (ASV)

The people of Israel were in disarray. They had suffered a major defeat because of their unfaithfulness to GOD. As they turned back to GOD and looked for guidance, Samuel filled the void created by the loss of

their religious leaders. He instructed them to return to the Lord with **"all your hearts."** No half-hearted service will be accepted by GOD. One either turns totally back to Him or he has not turned at all.

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38).

"But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy GOD, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deuteronomy 4:29).

How would their turning back to GOD be demonstrated? How would their sincerity be measured? By giving up their false gods, the Baalim and Ashtaroth. It should be remembered that the terms Baalim and Ashtaroth are the plural forms of Baal and Ashtoreth respectively. Baalim represents the male deities they served, and Ashtaroth represents the female deities.

Ashtaroth, "is the Hebrew plural of Ashtoreth, the name of the goddess of the Babylonians called Ishtar, and by the Greeks Astarte. She was the oldest and the most widely distributed of the Semitic deities; and among the western Semites she was the goddess of fertility and sexual relations. Rites of a most licentious nature were associated with her worship" (Quoted by Coffman on page 83.)

The promise was made that if they would truly turn away from their false gods and back to the GOD of Heaven and earth, GOD would deliver them from the Philistines. Verse four states the Israelites turned from serving their false gods to serving GOD only.

1 Sam. 7:5-12 "And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you

unto the LORD. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us."

"And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah. And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our GOD for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah

answered him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us." (ASV)

The people had looked to Samuel for guidance, and so he directed them to assemble at Mizpeh. This was natural since GOD had chosen Samuel from his earliest being to be His representative to the people. Samuel told them that when they gathered at Mizpeh, he would pray for them. Here is an indication that Samuel is acting as priest, along with the fact that he offered a sacrifice on their behalf in verse nine.

When the people gathered at Mizpeh, they were seen to do two things: (1) they drew water and poured it out, and (2) they fasted. Both of these had something to do with their admission of sin and their need to be forgiven. Fasting was a common way of dedicating themselves to the Lord as well as an act of mourning. But the pouring out of water is more difficult to understand. Regarding this, Barnes believed it had something to do with the Feast of Tabernacles. He then wrote:

"Some think that Samuel chose the Feast of Tabernacles, and the fast which proceeded it, as the occasion for assembling the people. Others explain the pouring out water as the pouring out the heart in penitence as it were water; or, as a symbolical act expressing their ruin and helplessness (2 Samuel 14:14); or as typifying their desire that their sins might be forgotten 'as waters that pass away' (Job 11:16)" (Barnes, p. 19).

It is left up to each reader of these words to ponder the meaning behind this.

Also notice that Samuel judged the people.

The role of the judges of Israel was to decide matters as in a court of law, to lead in both spiritual and in secular matters, and to deliver the people from oppression. It seems that it was this particular occasion in which he began this great work. It has also been seen that Samuel was chosen by GOD to speak for Him to the people, i.e., to fulfill the role of GOD's prophet to the people. Thus, one sees Samuel fulfilled the roles of **prophet, priest, and judge** of Israel at the same time.

Next one sees the actions of the Philistines when they observe the Israelites gathering in mass at Mizpeh. To them this appears as a declaration of war and they prepare the troops to attack the Israelites. It would seem that this gathering which Samuel proposed had more to it than just a time of national penitence. It was a declaration that they would not serve the gods of the Philistines, and thus that they would not serve the Philistines themselves.

The reaction of the Israelites to the Philistines appearance is fear. It is important to notice how they reacted to this fear. They did not run off and hide as they had in Gideon's time. Neither did they turn to some other nation to help them. Instead, they showed that they had now fully placed their trust in GOD, by turning to Samuel, and pleading with him to continue to cry, or pray, to GOD on their behalf. This shows the true nature of their repentance. They were willing to put their complete trust in GOD to save them from their enemy.

Samuel answered their petition by offering a lamb as a burnt offering. Was the sacrifice accepted by GOD? The text says that it was, again showing GOD's acceptance of Samuel as a priest, for only they were allowed to make sacrificial offerings for the people. While the sacrifice was being made, the Philistines drew near to engage them in battle. But GOD protected His people by throwing the Philistines into confusion ("**discomfited them**"). How did He do this? By thundering a great thunder. Was this GOD speaking as

He did on Mount Sinai? In their confusion, the Philistines were easily beaten by the Israelites. Thus, Samuel's words in verse three were fulfilled:

"If ye do return unto GOD with all your hearts...He will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines."

The Israelites pursued the Philistines deep into their own territory, destroying them. Samuel then set up a stone between the cities of Mizpeh and Shen and called it Eben-ezer. The word Ebenezer means *"The stone of help."* This was a stone of memorial which would remind the people that GOD was their stone of help in times of trial and tribulation. Today when songs are sung which contain the word **"Eben-ezer,"** one needs to recall the significance of that word, for one is declaring that GOD is the Eben-ezer — the unmoving stone of help in time of need.

1 Sam. 7:13-14 "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. 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."

"So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel: and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the border thereof did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites." (ASV)

These two verses are a summation of the extent to which the Philistines were subdued. Israel recaptured the cities and land which the Philistines had taken from them. Further, as long as Samuel lived, the Philistines were not

able to cause the Israelites too much trouble. This does not mean that they stopped being Israel's enemies or that they never caused them serious troubles again. The qualification is that, as long as Samuel lived, GOD was against them, and no one can win against GOD.

It is specified that Israel had peace with the Amorites at this time. Barnes believes that the Amorites had been subjugated by the Philistines and helped Israel to overthrow them, becoming their allies. Where he got this idea from is anyone's guess. Winter believes this simply means that the Israelites were at war with the Philistines and were not attacking any other people. It may also mean that during the time the Philistines dominated Israel, the Amorites had also attacked Israel. But since Israel gained its independence, peace had evolved between the Amorites and Israelites. Whatever its significance it has some importance.

1 Sam. 7:15-17 "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. 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."

"And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el and Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah, for there was his house; and there he judged Israel: and he built there an altar unto Jehovah." (ASV)

It is not known how long Samuel lived, but he judged Israel all of that time. Winter thinks it was a very short time, yet Samuel lived through most of the reign of Saul (who ruled for forty years) and was a judge long before Saul came to the throne. Further evidence of a long life is that he had grown sons who were acting as judges before Saul became the first king.

In his administration as judge of Israel, Samuel rode a circuit of these four cities, holding court (so to speak) in them. But Ramah was designated as his home city, to which he always returned. Further, one sees that he set up an altar there. Some have speculated that the tabernacle must have been set up there, for the altar of the Lord was wherever the tabernacle was found. But notice that the tabernacle is not mentioned again until the time of David. In fact, it is probable that there was no tabernacle at this time. The Philistines had obviously destroyed Shiloh and probably with that destroyed the tabernacle. Thus, Samuel established Ramah as a place where sacrifices might be made for Israel. It should also be obvious that GOD condoned this and may have given Samuel directions to do so, for GOD answered Samuel's prayers and did not condemn him for the practice.

First Samuel — Chapter Eight

1 Sam. 8:1-3 "And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment."

"And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his first-born was Joel; and the name of his second, Abijah: they were judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice." (ASV)

In his advanced age, Samuel made his sons judges. They were not honored in the Scriptures as being judges like their father or any who came before him. They were probably little more than deputies meant to help him with his duties.

He named his first born Joel ("**The Lord is**

GOD") and the second-born Abiah ("**GOD is father**"). They were appointed to help their father in Beer-sheba, which was the southern border of Israel (an outpost, so to speak). But Samuel's sons were not like their father. Where he was honorable in every respect, they were dishonest. His sons sought dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted judgment. They were like many over the years who decided cases depending on who could give them the most or do the most for them.

"Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause" (Exodus 23:6).

"And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous" (Exodus 23:8).

"Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous" (Deuteronomy 16:19).

Samuel's sons, because of their disobedience to GOD'S law, were the trigger for the following event.

1 Sam. 8:4-9 "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 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. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 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. 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. 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."

"Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah; and they 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. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto Samuel, Harken 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 be king over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken Me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and shalt show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them." (ASV)

The elders, or leaders of the tribes, looked at the actions of Samuel's sons and used their actions as the excuse to ask for a king. This was not their only motivation in asking for a king.

"The elders gave several reasons why Israel should have an earthly king. (1) Samuel is near the end of his career; (2) Samuel's sons do not have godly qualities; (3) a king would be a permanent judge; (4) the surrounding nations all have kings; and (5) a king would effectively lead them in battle" (Quoted by Coffman, p. 93).

They wanted to be like the nations which were around them. The worldliness of their neighbors appealed to them. This would include the gods of their neighbors. This has been the ruin of many an individual and also many a nation.

In verse six, the marginal note for the word

"displeased" is *"was evil in the eyes of Samuel."* This shows one that it was not a sense of losing his own power that caused Samuel to be **"displeased."** Samuel saw their request for what it was — it was evil. Why was their request evil? Because it replaced GOD (who was to be their supreme leader, their king) with a human being. In rejecting the spokesman GOD chose, they were rejecting GOD. When GOD'S chosen leaders are rejected, GOD is rejected.

"He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me" (Matthew 10:40).

Yet, many today still have not learned that lesson, for they reject the message of the New Testament writers, those chosen by GOD to deliver His will to mankind.

Verse seven was GOD'S way of encouraging His faithful servant Samuel. As a preacher, this writer has tried to teach GOD'S Word to mankind, and yet he sometimes has seen those who know GOD'S will blatantly refuse to obey Him and even do those things opposite of what GOD has said to do. This is discouraging, and it sometimes makes one wonder if he has accomplished anything at all. GOD was simply encouraging Samuel by reminding him that the people had always had a disposition to disobey Him and it is He whom they were disobeying now. GOD told Samuel to give them what they asked for, but to warn them of the consequences.

Verses ten through eighteen give the warning of what having a king like all the nations around them would be like. The prophet Moses had prophesied that the day would come when the people would demand a king instead of accepting GOD as their only king (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

1 Sam. 8:10-18 "And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. 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. 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. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. 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."

"And Samuel told all the words of Jehovah unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots; and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye shall have

chosen you; and Jehovah will not answer you in that day." (ASV)

These verses simply give a short list of the abuses the kings would bring upon the people. They would take their sons and daughters for use in their armies and domestic needs. They would take their land and other things and give them to their servants. They would tax the people in order to give the money to their servants.

Verse eighteen warns them that when their kings abused them in these ways, that they would cry out for relief. They would, in effect, want to go back to the way things had been; but it would be too late. If they rejected GOD as their king, they would have to suffer the inevitable consequences. Samuel held nothing back from them; he told it all. Is it not interesting that the people knew Samuel was GOD's spokesman, His prophet and priest, yet they refused to listen to him on this occasion.

1 Sam. 8:19-22 "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; 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. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city."

"But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay: but we will have a king over us, 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. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of Jehovah. And Jehovah said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city." (ASV)

Samuel told the people the warning from GOD as to what their kings would be like, but they demanded a king anyway. Notice their reasoning in verse twenty. They wanted to be like the nations around them.

"How natural it is for men to suppose that what seems to be successful in the world of unbelievers would also be helpful among the people of GOD" (Coffman, p. 98). Today, notice how many of the Lord's people have turned away from GOD to the gimmicks they see in their denominational leaders.

They wanted this king to be their judge and to fight their battles for them. This showed the desire people had for a human leader. But who did they think was going to be the "cannon-fodder" of his armies?

Samuel heard their rejection and took it to the Lord. In this chapter one sees a wonderful example of prayer in Samuel. He kept taking the problems he faced to the Lord. Give it to the Lord; let Him take care of it. He Lord's people should always take their problems to the Lord - ALL OF THEM. The Lord made His final decree in this matter — "Make them a king." Samuel sent the people home until the right time to announce their new king. The people had chosen a Monarchy over a Theocracy.

Something else which should be noticed in these verses is the free agency GOD gives man. GOD did not desire for them to have a human king. But they were determined to have one. GOD knew the time would come when they would regret their decision. Yet, since they were determined to follow their own course instead of His, He let them do what they wanted to do. In any age, GOD will allow man to choose his own course of action, even if that choice leads him to destruction. GOD does not force man to obey Him. A good example of this is Balaam whom GOD discouraged from going to Balak, but when Balaam stubbornly desired the riches Balak could give him, GOD let him go to his own

destruction (Numbers 22-24; 31:8; Joshua 13:22).

1st Samuel — Chapter Nine

1 Sam. 9:1-2 **"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. 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."**

"Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor. And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a 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." (ASV)

These two verses serve as an introduction to Saul. His lineage is given, showing that he came from the tribe of Benjamin. Zerr points out that this will be the only king from this tribe. There may be a connection to the fact that Saul turned out to be quite wicked -- power went to his head.

One is told that he is a **"choice young man."** Coffman says the words **"young man"** mean,

"A man in the prime of life. Saul was not a teen-ager, for he had a son (Jonathan) at the time of this narrative" (Coffman, p. 102).

It is further seen that he was literally head and shoulders over all the people.

At this point in his life, one sees a spiritually good young man and one the people could look up to as a leader. How sad that this would change as time passed by.

1 Sam. 9:3-4 **"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. 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."

"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. And he passed through the hill-country of Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not." (ASV)

Why did GOD use this means of getting Saul to Samuel? Why not just send Samuel directly to Saul? It would seem to this writer that there was a purpose in this. If Samuel had gone to Saul it would have brought a great deal of attention to him, and the time was not right to publicly announce him as King. To be sure, many times one is left to guess why GOD did things the way He did. But be assured, GOD always has a reason for doing things the way He does. Is this GOD working in the affairs of men? That is, did He cause the animals in question to be lost, so that a search for them would need to be made? Did He influence Kish to ask Saul to go look for them and not simply some of the servants? It is this writers belief that GOD had a hand in these affairs, causing events to take place which would lead Saul to Samuel in such a way that it would not bring undue attention to Saul at this time.

1 Sam. 9:5-10 "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. And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this

city a man of GOD, and he is an honourable 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. 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? 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. (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of GOD, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.) Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of GOD was."

"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 off caring for the asses, and be anxious for us. And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of GOD, and he is a man that is held in honor; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can tell us concerning our journey whereon we go. 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? And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of GOD, to tell us our way. Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of GOD, thus he said, Come, and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer. Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of GOD was." (ASV)

The text says that they came to the "**land of Zuph,**" which indicates a territory. It was in this territory where the city of the man of GOD was to be found. They had searched and could not find their animals and then Saul decided it was time to give up. He was

concerned his father would become worried about them.

The servant was not ready to give up, there was one more option they had before giving up. He told Saul that there was a prophet in the nearby city who might be able to help them. There are two things worthy of note regarding the servants description of Samuel. First, he was an honorable man. Second, everything this man said came to pass. The test of a prophet was whether or not his words came to pass.

"When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him"
(Deuteronomy 18:22).

Saul was reluctant to go to the prophet because he did not have anything to offer him as a gift. This was not a matter of paying the prophet for his services. Instead it was a gift of appreciation and respect for the prophet and his work. Notice that Saul said they did not have any food to give as a present. Today, one would often think of giving money and letting the person get what he wanted with it. But in those times, food was often given as a gift in matters such as these, and even as gifts to kings. The servant found a piece of money which could be given, and so Saul agreed to go talk with the prophet.

1 Sam. 9:11-14 **"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? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place: As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway 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. 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."

"As they went up the ascent to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before thee: make haste now, for he is come to-day into the city; for the people have a sacrifice to-day in the high place: as soon as ye are come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he goeth 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 are bidden. Now therefore get you up; for at this time ye shall find him. And they went up to the city; and as they came within the city, behold, Samuel came out toward them, to go up to the high place." (ASV)

As they approached the city where the prophet was, they met the young women who drew water for the people. They asked them if the prophet was there, to which they were told he was. The maidens told them they needed to hurry because the prophet was going to a feast. The reason they urged them to hurry was because the feast was a "closed feast," only for the invited guests. As they entered the city they met Samuel as he was going to the feast.

Regarding their asking if the prophet was in the city, one might recall that Samuel went to several places during the year for the purpose of judging the people (1 Sam. 16:2).

1 Sam. 9:15-17 **"Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, To morrow 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. 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."

"Now Jehovah had revealed unto Samuel a day before Saul came, saying, To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over My people Israel; and he shall save My people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon My people, because their cry is come unto Me. And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah said unto him, Behold, the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have authority over My people." (ASV)

These verses are direct proof that GOD'S providential hand was working in these affairs. GOD told Samuel the day before that He would send the man who would be the "**captain**" (king) over His people. He did not tell him who that individual would be until this moment of introduction. Notice that it was at the moment Samuel saw Saul that GOD announced him as the new king. They were in the street, but no one heard these words except Samuel.

These passages also show one the work of Saul: delivering the people from the Philistines. As is later seen, Saul's first leadership of Israel would be against the Ammonites, but his primary work would be against the Philistines.

1 Sam. 9:18-21 "Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart. 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? 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?"

"Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day: and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house? 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 to me after this manner?" (ASV)

It seems hard to believe that Samuel would not be known to Saul, yet such seems to be the case. Saul walked up to Samuel and asked where the seer's house was, not realizing that he was speaking to the prophet. Samuel told him he was the seer and invited him to the feast where Saul would be his honored guest.

Something peculiar is found in verse nineteen. Samuel told Saul that on the next day he would let him go and "**tell thee all that is in thine heart.**" This shows that there was more on the mind of Saul than the missing animals. The prophet was about to ease his mind regarding these matters as well as the lost she-asses. But this would have to wait until the next day. Notice that Samuel gave Saul enough information to allow Saul to recognize him as a true prophet. Was Saul considering the terrible condition in which Israel found itself? He might have been wondering how Israel could be delivered from the Philistines and who would lead Israel against them.

Samuel next told Saul that he was the one Israel had been looking for and in essence demanding (1 Samuel 8:5, 19-20). Samuel said the people's desire was upon him and his father's house. To which Saul answered with

all humility and accuracy that he was from the least of the tribes. This was an accurate assessment at this time because Judges chapter twenty shows that the tribe of Benjamin had almost been totally wiped out due to their sin of trying to protect the sodomites among them. But notice Saul's attitude here, the attitude of humility. He could not believe that he had anything special to offer his people. Later, when lots were drawn to determine the king in front of the people, this same humility would be exhibited again.

1 Sam. 9:22-24 "And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. 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."

"And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the guest-chamber, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, who were about thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. And the cook took up the thigh, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold, that which hath been reserved! set it before thee and eat; because unto the appointed time hath it been kept for thee, for I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day." (ASV)

These verses show one that after GOD announced to Samuel that He would show him the new king the next day, that Samuel arranged a feast in his honor. This would explain why Samuel was near the gate area when Saul arrived. He knew that GOD was sending the man who would be their king and

waited for him there.

At the feast, Samuel gave Saul and his servant the chief place of honor. He further had the portion of meat he had reserved (the best portion) brought to Saul. Some believe this was the priest's portion (his own portion), which he gave in honor of Saul. If this was the case, then it would show that the priesthood was giving way to the king in ruling over the people. This writer has seen and been the recipient of this custom in the far-east and must admit that on one occasion I was particularly embarrassed because I had plenty to eat and those around me had very little. To have refused their hospitality would have been extremely offensive to them.

1 Sam. 9:25-27 "And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house. 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. 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."

"And when they were come down from the high place into the city, he communed with Saul upon the housetop. And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us and he passed on, but stand thou still first, that I may cause thee to hear the word of GOD." (ASV)

The roofs of these houses were often flat and served many purposes. They were used as places of social activity and many times were used as a place to sleep in the evening. This writer has also had the privilege of doing

this. What did Samuel and Saul talk about? The Bible does not say, but one does know one thing they did not talk about – the fact that Saul was going to be Israel’s king. Samuel would reveal this the next day.

The spring of the day would indicate early in the morning, possibly even before the sun rose. The NKJV gives a clearer picture that Saul had probably slept on the top of the house, and Samuel called to him to get up so that he could get on his journey home.

“The Hebrew is, ‘And they rose early; for at the spring of the day Samuel called to Saul upon the house-top, saying,’ etc.” (R. Payne Smith; Pulpit Commentary, p. 161)

As they moved toward the end of the city, probably the city gate, Samuel stopped Saul to give him the Lord’s message. The servant was sent ahead to provide the privacy for which this event called. In the next chapter one will see that this was when Samuel anointed Saul as king.

A side note: Can one not envision the curiosity of Saul’s servant considering the circumstances of these two days? Do you think he asked Saul any questions about what the prophet had revealed to him?

1st Samuel — Chapter Ten

1 Sam. 10:1 “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?”

“Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over His inheritance?” (ASV)

Coffman states that there were three phases in the appointment of Saul as king of Israel:

“(1) There was the private, even secret, anointing of Saul (vv. 1-8). (2) Then there was a public presentation of Saul as king, confirmed by the casting of lots, which was

opposed by some of the people. (3) The divinely inspired victory of Saul over the Ammonites propelled him into the universal acceptance of his kingship by all Israel” (Coffman, p. 111).

The first two of these would allow Saul to think upon and prepare himself for this appointment

Notice, it was not Samuel who appointed him as king. GOD appointed him to be the king through His agent Samuel. Upon anointing Saul, Samuel next kissed him, which was a sign of allegiance.

1 Sam. 10:2-8 “When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel’s sepulchre 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? 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 Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands. 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: And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for GOD is with thee. 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 shew thee what thou shalt do.”

“When thou art departed from me to-day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, 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 off caring for the asses, and is anxious for you, saying, What shall I do for my son? Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the oak of Tabor; and there shall meet thee there 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: and they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread, which thou shalt receive of their hand. 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 band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they will be prophesying: and the Spirit of Jehovah will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion shall serve thee; for GOD is with thee. 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 unto thee, and show thee what thou shalt do.” (ASV)

These verses tell of the signs which Samuel gave Saul in order to show him that all he said was going to come to pass. The first sign was the two men Saul would meet at Rachel's grave sight. They were going to tell him that the asses had been found and that his father was worried about him. This gave further evidence that what Samuel had said about Saul's becoming king would come to pass. Signs were used to confirm the words of the speaker as those coming from GOD.

The second sign was the meeting of three men at Tabor. Samuel gave Saul details of the things these men would have with them - three kids, three loaves, and a bottle (skin) of

wine. Of the items they had, they would give Saul two loaves of bread. As one looks back, Saul and his servant had run out of provisions before they met Samuel. This would provide for their needs and some believe was prophetic of the provisions which would be his as their king.

The third sign would take place at the **“Hill of GOD,”** which was Gilgal. There a company of prophets would meet Saul. Again, Samuel told Saul details which would make this impossible to be mere chance. They would have a psaltery (a kind of lyre with ten strings), a taboret (a kind of drum or tambourine or timbrel), a pipe (literally the bored or pierced instrument, a kind of flute), and a harp. These prophets would also prophesy.

The fourth sign was that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon Saul which enabled him to prophesy as well as they. The phrase **“be turned into another man”** seems to indicate that Saul would now have the Spirit, much as did the Judges. His role was to rule the people as the Judges had formerly done, thus he would need guidance.

Later, when one sees Saul going to the witch at Endor, he did so because he had no guidance from GOD and needed help.

The language of verses six and seven indicate that this was going to be much like what happened with Samson. The Spirit of GOD came upon him from time to time in order to accomplish certain things.

“That thou do as occasion serve thee; for GOD is with thee.”

He would be able to do what needed to be done according to the circumstances.

After all of these signs had come to pass, Saul would be convinced that he was indeed to become Israel's king. This opens the way for verse eight, when Samuel would come and give him more instructions regarding his leadership, which Saul would then be more ready to accept.

Samuel told Saul to go down to Gilgal where he would join him in seven days.

“This, according to Josephus, was to be a standing rule for the observance of Saul while the prophet and he lived, that in every great crisis, as a hostile incursion on the country, he should repair to Gilgal, where he was to remain seven days, to afford him time for the tribes on both sides Jordan to assemble, and Samuel to reach it” (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, Vol. 1, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI 1990).

Considering these thoughts, it might be well to notice several instances where this was the case (1 Sam. 11:12-15; 13:8-10; 15:12-13).

1 Sam. 10:9-13 **“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. 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. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime 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? 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? And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.”**

“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. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a band of prophets met him; and the Spirit of GOD came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied with 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? And one of the same place answered and said, And who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets? And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.” (ASV)

Here one is told that all the signs which had been told to Saul by Samuel came to pass and that he had a new heart from the moment he left Samuel. But what does it mean, “he had a new heart?” Before his meeting with Samuel, Saul was more concerned with the physical things around him, personal things, local things. He did not think as a king or statesman; instead his mind was occupied with the things of a farm and domestic animals. Now he was to be the leader of a nation. His thoughts were focused on the spiritual, as is evidenced by his going to the high place after the signs came to him.

Information is given with regard to the reaction of the people who knew Saul before he prophesied. It may be that their words signified surprise at his prophesying. Others suggest that since he was the son of a well to do and prosperous family, these words were meant as ridicule. It should be remembered that this shows their amazement at what had just happened. His prophesying further sets the stage for acceptance by the people when Samuel announces him as king.

1 Sam. 10:14-16 **“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. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you. 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.”**

“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 not found, we came to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what

Samuel said unto you. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But concerning the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not." (ASV)

Saul's uncle questioned Saul and the servant about where they had been. Upon learning that he had spoken to Samuel, he asked him what the prophet had said. His curiosity could well have been sparked by the fact that the people were looking to Samuel for word of who would be their king. At the least there would be great interest in anything Samuel said. From chapter three (verse nineteen), one knows Samuel's words never failed.

Saul told his uncle what Samuel had said about his father's asses being found, but he told him nothing about his being anointed as the next king. Why did he not tell his uncle this news? Some have speculated that it was because of Saul's obvious humility at this time. This writer believes the answer lies in the fact that Samuel had caused Saul's servant to walk ahead of them so he would not hear the news Samuel gave Saul. It is obvious that for the time being this was news which should not be broadcast. It may very well be that Samuel instructed Saul not to reveal his message. At the proper time, GOD would reveal Saul to Israel.

1 Sam. 10:17-19 "And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpah; 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: 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."

"And Samuel called the people together unto

Jehovah to Mizpah; and he said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you: but ye have this day rejected your GOD, who Himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses; and ye have said unto Him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before Jehovah by your tribes, and by your thousands." (ASV)

How much time passed before Samuel caused the people to assemble at Mizpah is not known. As will be seen, this was for the purpose of granting the people's request for a king.

Once again GOD had Samuel rebuke the people for rejecting Him. He reminded them that it was He who had delivered them from all of their enemies. Nevertheless, they rejected GOD (cf. 8:7).

1 Sam. 10:20-24 "And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. 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. Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. 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. 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."

"So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken. And he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families; and the family of the Matrites was taken; and Saul the son of Kish was taken: but when they sought him, he could not be

found. Therefore they asked of Jehovah further, Is there yet a man to come hither? And Jehovah answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the baggage. 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. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him along all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, Long live the king.” (ASV)

How Saul was shown to be king is not revealed. It could have been by the method of casting lots, the use of Urim and Thummin, or some other method. Whatever the method, it showed the people that Samuel had not made this choice. GOD determined the outcome.

“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD” (Proverbs 16:33).

When they sought for Saul, he could not be found. Apparently, in his humility he had hidden himself. So they enquired of the Lord where he was and GOD obviously answered them. Notice, this is a direct answer of some kind, not through lots or some other means of communication.

Saul was found among the baggage of the camp. The goodly nature of Saul was seen by the people, who would not be able to say that GOD had given them an inferior specimen to be their king. It also points out an old adage *“that absolute power absolutely corrupts.”*

The term **“GOD save the king”** is to be literally translated as *“Let the king live”* (Winter, p. 130).

“To live, exist, enjoy life; to live anew; to recover; to be well; to make alive, enliven, animate, quicken; to preserve; to refresh; to rebuild” (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

1 Sam. 10:25 “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.”

“Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jehovah. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.” (ASV)

Notice that this was written down, a permanent record of this was made. When such a record is kept, there can be no misunderstanding later as to what had been said and done. It should also be noted that this record was laid up before the Lord, i.e., it was placed in the tabernacle, or among the items used in worship. The priests were obviously to keep this document for future referral.

Not only did GOD determine who their king should be, He also spelled out the boundaries of this king. The king was suppose to follow the commands of GOD in all matters.

After these ceremonies and festivities were finished, Samuel sent everyone home.

1 Sam. 10:26 “And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts GOD had touched.”

“And Saul also went to his house to Gibeah; and there went with him the host, whose hearts GOD had touched.” (ASV)

BAND — *“It means might, strength, power; able, valiant, virtuous, valor; army, host forces; riches, substance, wealth. The main meanings of this noun are ‘strength,’ ‘army,’ and ‘wealth.’”* (Zodhiates, CD).

TOUCHED — *“To smite, beat, strike; to punish; to touch, cause to touch; to reach, cause to reach; to arrive; to inflict plagues; to obtain. The essential meaning is to physically contact something or someone...1 Samuel 10:26 describes touching in the sense of emotional involvement”* (Zodhiates, CD).

Saul went home to Gibeah, and a group of men, a host or army, went with him. These were men whom GOD apparently influenced to go with Saul to support him. These are the kind of valiant men who could form the core of an army — the elite, the best of the best.

1 Sam. 10:27 “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.”

“But certain worthless fellows said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.” (ASV)

BELIAL — *“It means worthlessness, wickedness; perdition, a wicked man; a destroyer”* (Zodhiates, CD).

As always, some were not happy with their chosen leader even though he was directly chosen by GOD. These were wicked and worthless men. They asked, “How can this man save us?” This indicates they looked at his background as being from the smallest tribe and least important family in the tribe. It may also have something to do with his humility and obvious shyness. Men want brash leaders, often ignoring the meek for leadership positions.

The worthless dissenters brought no gifts to Saul. This implies that the rest of the people did bring gifts to Saul. These were probably provisions which helped him take care of the host which followed him. Later, the kings would take from the people, but at the present time they simply gave through respect.

It is also worthy of note that Saul apparently takes no personal offense at the ill treatment he received from these wicked men. Again, this shows an attitude which is commendable. This was the same attitude Samuel was to have (8:7), and it is the same attitude one ought to take when people treat one in an ill manner as one serves the Lord. They are really GOD’s enemies and are doing these things to Him.

In verses twenty-six and twenty-seven a contrast is seen between two kinds of people. The first group is composed of worthy and righteous men who uphold the decisions of GOD. Upon this kind of men great things may be accomplished. The second group is worthless. Instead of being able to build in a

worthwhile way, such men are nay-sayers and destructive. The contrast between these two kinds of people is described even further by the use of terms found in the Septuagint. According to R. Payne Smith,

“The Septuagint, on the contrary, strengthens it by rendering ‘sons of strength’ and ‘pestilent sons’” (Pulpit Commentary, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, p. 188).

The text says Saul **“held his peace”** toward those who spoke against him. What if Saul had attacked them in some way? Such action could have led to a feud, possibly violence, and maybe even civil war. His humility and wisdom were on display. At this time he truly showed himself worthy of being a leader. Personal attacks were ignored for the good of the nation as a whole.

1st Samuel — Chapter Eleven

1 Sam. 11:1-4 “Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. 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. 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. Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.”

“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. And Nahash the Ammonite said unto them, On this condition will I make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out; and I will lay it for a

reproach upon all Israel. And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the borders of Israel; and then, if there be none to save us, we will come out to thee. Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and spake these words in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voice, and wept." (ASV)

Nahash appears to be the king of the Ammonites, according to First Samuel 12:12. The Ammonites were the descendants of Lot through his incestuous relationship with his daughter (Genesis 19:36-38). They lived northeast of the Dead Sea and were often found in conflict with the Israelites, though the Israelites were commanded not to attack them. Yet, Israel often had to defend itself from Ammonite aggression.

Nahash led his forces against Jabesh-gilead. Apparently the people of this city were afraid of him, because they offered to sign a treaty with him. Nahash agreed, but only if the people allowed him to put out their right eyes. This would have not only rendered them useless as warriors but would have also been a detriment for any of them to be accepted as leaders. Further, his actions were meant to be a disgrace to them, because they could not defend themselves, and against Israel as a whole, because it could not protect Jabeshgilead.

The Ammonites seem to have been an extremely cruel nation, as witnessed by their demand here. In Amos 1:13, one learns more of their cruel nature:

“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border:”

Verse three tells one of something very unusual. The men of Jabesh-gilead asked for time to call for Israel to defend them, and Nahash allowed them to do so. He gave them

seven days. What was his thinking process? One can only speculate. Maybe he did not think anyone would try to help them, since everyone seemed to know the desperate straits of Israel (who was in bondage to the Philistines at this time. Maybe he thought he could defeat any army which might try to help them). He let them send messengers to the Israelites who went to Gibeah, the home of Saul. Why did they go there? Was it only one of many stops they made, or did they know about Saul being the king? The later does not seem plausible. When the people of Gibeah heard the news from Jabesh-gilead, they began mourning and weeping. It is obvious they did not believe there was any hope for them. Further, this shows that their estimation of their own abilities to do anything was zero. This would indicate that Saul's army was small in number and that there was not really a standing army in Israel at this time.

1 Sam. 11:5-7 “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. And the Spirit of GOD came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. 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.”

“And, behold, Saul came following the oxen out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. And the Spirit of GOD came mightily upon Saul when he heard those words, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul

and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the dread of Jehovah fell on the people, and they came out as one man.” (ASV)

Here one sees another indication of the initial humility of Saul. He had been declared the king of Israel, yet he went home when Samuel sent the people home. Many in his situation would have expanded the chest and gone about with a certain amount of haughtiness, demanding that others bow before them and serve them. Saul was content to go back to working in the fields with the oxen.

When Saul heard the mourning and weeping, he asked why the people were so upset. Upon hearing the news, the Spirit of GOD came upon him, and his anger exploded. He was being directed by the Holy Spirit, just as Samson had previously been directed to destroy the enemy. He showed himself to be a man of action by taking a yoke of oxen, cutting them into pieces, and sending them throughout Israel. This reminds one of the events in Judges 19, where the concubine was cut into pieces and sent throughout Israel as a call to arms. With the pieces of oxen he also sent a simple message: *“If you do not join Samuel and me in this war, then the same thing will be done to your oxen.”* It may be that he was referring to what an invading army would do to them. But considering Samuel’s promise that GOD was on his side when the Spirit of GOD came upon him (1 Samuel 10:6-7), he knew he would be victorious, and he would exact this punishment upon any who would not join him in this war. This reminds one of the promise made by Gideon against the cities of Succoth and Penuel in Judges chapter eight. The people responded to Saul’s threat, so that all of Israel rose up to defend Jabesh-gilead with Saul as their leader. They had said they wanted a king to lead them in war; now they had one.

1 Sam. 11: 8-10 “And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were

three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabeshgilead, To morrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed it to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.”

“And he numbered them in Bezek; and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have deliverance. And the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.” (ASV)

Israel’s army gathered at Bezek, where it was discovered that they had a fighting force of three hundred and thirty thousand (of which thirty thousand came from the tribe of Judah). It should not surprise one that Judah is independently mentioned, since Judah was to always take a prominent position in war from the time of Jacob’s prediction on his deathbed (Genesis 49:8-12). Yet, these numbers are small when compared to Numbers 1:46, where the fighting men of Israel were numbered at over six hundred and three thousand. The tribe of Judah at that time was numbered with over seventy-four thousand fighting men (Numbers 1:27). The decrease may be the result of years of almost constant war, but most likely it was the result of their disobedience to GOD. Disobedience to Him reduced their blessings and would reflect itself in the size of their population. There may also be another reason for mentioning Judah here. When the numbers are crunched, the average for the other tribes is only about five thousand less than those of Judah. The question might

be asked, "Was Judah holding back?" Later, Judah's armies would hold off the rest of the tribes by themselves.

A message was sent to Jabesh-gilead to let them know help was on the way. The message said they would have their help by noon the next day ("**time the sun is hot**"). Upon receiving the news that a rescue party was on the way, the men of Jabesh told Nahash they would come out to him the next day. The time given was probably given in order to throw Nahash off, making him think the victory was his. This would also allow the forces of Saul to surprise the Ammonites, as seen in verse eleven. What they did not tell him was that they were not coming out as servants but rather with swords.

1 Sam. 11:11 "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."

"And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and smote the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they that remained were scattered, so that not two of them were left together." (ASV)

Saul's strategy was similar to that of Gideon (Judges 7:16ff), where the people were divided into three companies and attacked in the night. The major difference being the number of people involved in these two campaigns. Saul attacked in the early morning hours in what was known as the "morning watch." This would be between two and six A.M. They caught the Ammonites completely off guard. The slaughter was so great that no two Ammonites could be found together of those who escaped. This was a complete and total victory for the forces of

Saul.

"The people of Jabesh-gilead did not forget this deliverance. Later when Saul was slain in the war with the Philistines, they rescued his body (1 Sam. 31:11-13)" (Winter, p. 51).

1 Sam. 11:12-15 "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. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel. Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. 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."

"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. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel. Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Jehovah in Gilgal; and there they offered sacrifices of peace-offerings before Jehovah; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." (ASV)

The victory was complete, and now some wanted to punish those with death who had initially opposed Saul. Saul showed great wisdom by telling the people that no one would die this day. By doing this he would gain the favor of those who had formerly opposed him. He also showed the people a benevolent spirit, which one wishes had continued all his days. Later he will be seen to have the opposite spirit toward his imagined rival — David.

Notice another wise thing which Saul did: he attributed the victory to GOD. He gave

GOD the credit for their victory, thus showing a marvelous spirituality. All victories over the foe should be attributed to GOD.

“Submit yourselves therefore to GOD. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to GOD, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up” (James 4:7-10).

Regarding Saul’s character at this time, there is no flaw to be found. He has exhibited these traits in order: humility, piety, courage, and a gracious spirit.

Samuel then admonished the people to go to Gilgal, where the kingdom would be renewed. This speaks of affirming the kingdom now that all were willing to recognize Saul as their king. They then offered peace offerings. These seem to be more of what one would think of as offerings of thanksgiving. The kingdom, with its king, was now firmly established.

1st Samuel — Chapter Twelve

1 Sam. 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. 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. 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. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.”

“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. 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 youth unto this day. Here I am: witness against me before Jehovah, 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 taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, Jehovah is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they said, He is witness.” (ASV)

Samuel gave a description of himself as a gray-haired old man. But this was not a retirement speech. While it is true that he would no longer be serving the people as a judge (that job would be left to the king), he would still serve the nation for a number of years as a priest and prophet. When necessary, he would step forth with power and authority in the affairs of Israel.

Samuel addressed the people for the purpose of emphasizing his integrity and gaining their acknowledgment that he had not abused the power which he possessed. They could not blame him with wrong-doing as the basis for their demand for a king.

“He is not claiming sinless perfection, but knows that he has discharged his duties in an upright and unblameable manner” (Winton, p. 60).

This fact is very interesting. Over the years, Samuel had probably made judgements in

thousands of cases between individuals. Yet, not one of those whom he had ruled against stepped forward to accuse him of wrongdoing. All recognized the upright way in which Samuel had acted as a judge. How absolutely amazing this is that not ONE person spoke against him. Further, in making this admission, they condemned themselves. GOD's plan of ruling through judges had been successful by their own testimony. An oath was also taken on this occasion by the people that Samuel had not mistreated or abused them in any way.

“By their own acknowledgement, he had given them no cause to weary of the Divine government by judges, and that, the blame of desiring a change of government rested with themselves” (JFB, p. 161).

1 Sam. 12:6-15 “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. 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. 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. And when they forgot 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. 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. 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. 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. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. 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: 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.”

“And Samuel said unto the people, It is Jehovah that appointed Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand still, that I may plead with you before Jehovah concerning all the righteous acts of Jehovah, which He did to you and to your fathers. When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto Jehovah, then Jehovah sent Moses and Aaron, who brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them to dwell in this place. But they forgot Jehovah their GOD; and 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. And they cried unto Jehovah, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken Jehovah, and have served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve Thee. And Jehovah sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and ye dwelt in safety. 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 Jehovah your GOD was your king. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have asked for: and, behold, Jehovah hath set a king over you. If ye will fear Jehovah, and serve Him, and hearken unto His voice, and not rebel against the commandment of Jehovah, and both ye

and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of Jehovah your GOD, well: but if ye will not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah, but rebel against the commandment of Jehovah, then will the hand of Jehovah be against you, as it was against your fathers.” (ASV)

In this section one sees a contrast between the present generation and that of their fathers. Samuel began by reminding them of the oppression their fathers had suffered at the hands of the Egyptians and of how GOD delivered them through the hands of Moses and Aaron. The emphasis was on GOD’s choosing them to lead and giving them the ability and tools to successfully lead GOD’s people to freedom. GOD had also chosen His leaders, the judges, to deliver and guide His people. It might be observed that the time Israel spent in Egypt was similar to the time of the judges. Israel had been in bondage, had cried to GOD for deliverance, and GOD had sent a deliverer. The difference being as to why they had been in Egyptian bondage.

After stating that fact, he then commanded them to listen to what he was about to say, emphasizing that he would speak to them, remind them, of the righteousness of the Lord in dealing with them and their fathers. Notice: **“The righteous acts of the Lord, which He did to (with, RK) you and to (with, RK) your fathers.”**

Samuel then returned to the fact that they had been brought out of Egypt by GOD and placed in the land which they then dwelt in, the land of promise - Canaan. But in the course of time, the people forgot the GOD who had delivered them from all of their enemies. This necessitated His sending oppressors upon them in order to humble them and bring them back to Him. Samuel reminded them of the captivities they endured by mentioning three of them: Sisera, the Philistines, and the Moabites. After the people were oppressed for a while, they would remember GOD and put away the false gods

they had served, and in turn GOD would send them a deliverer. As long as they remained faithful to GOD, they remained free of oppression. This should remind one of the recurring cycle seen in the book of Judges.

- (1) Apostasy
- (2) Oppression
- (3) A cry to GOD in repentance asking for deliverance and
- (4) GOD sending a deliverer to them

The false gods they had served were represented by the terms Baalim (male gods) and Ashtaroth (female gods).

In verse eleven, Samuel listed four of the judges which GOD had used to deliver them from their enemies: (1) Jerub-baal (Gideon), (2) Bedan (Barak), (3) Jephthah, and (4) Samuel himself. Notice that Samuel introduced these men by stating that GOD had sent them to deliver Israel. Notice that Samuel includes himself in this list. Some have tried to explain this away by saying some scribe had inserted this in the margin of the text and it eventually became a part of the text. The fact that the Holy Spirit caused him to put his own name in this list is not so strange when one looks back at verse seven. There it is emphasized that Samuel was going to talk to them about what GOD had done to **them** and their **fathers**. The deliverance achieved by GOD through Moses and Aaron, Gideon, Barak, and Jephthah had occurred during the times of their fathers. But the same GOD had delivered the present generation from the hand of the Philistines by the hand of Samuel. GOD was still fighting their battles, and He would continue in the future if they would let Him by their faithfulness. But now this generation did not want GOD as their King. They were a little bit like Jonah, who wanted to get away from the authority of GOD. They wanted a human king to deliver them from their enemies like the nations around them did. As Winton rightly observes, *“A mighty poor exchange”* (Winton, p. 53). Today, people are no different from the

Israelites of Samuel's day when they follow (want to be like all the people around them) a multitude to do evil. When the Lord's church follows the lead of the denominations in changing the worship or adding things GOD has not authorized they are just like these wicked Israelites in the present text.

“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment” (Exodus 23:2).

Samuel told them to look upon the king whom they had demanded. GOD chose the man who would serve as their king, but they were responsible for his existence in this role. They would answer for refusing GOD as their king and choosing to have a man rule over them. One might observe that GOD chose the best man available at this time. But the best man available turned out to be an extremely poor substitute for GOD. This is **always** the case when man determines to follow a man instead of GOD.

Verses fourteen and fifteen are a contrast between what would happen if they obeyed GOD or refused to obey Him. If they obeyed GOD (including the king), then GOD would bless them. If they and their king rebelled against GOD's commands, then GOD's hand would be against them, just as it had been against their fathers when they rebelled against Him. GOD does not change simply because there is a new generation and its new surroundings. Samuel is encouraging Israel to maintain their faith and obedience to GOD, which is the duty of His children no matter which dispensation one finds himself (patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian).

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear GOD, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

1 Sam. 12:16-18 **“Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will**

do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to day? 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. 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.”

“Now therefore stand still and see this great thing, which Jehovah will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto Jehovah, that He may send thunder and rain; and ye shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of Jehovah, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto Jehovah; and Jehovah sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared Jehovah and Samuel.” (ASV)

The time of the wheat harvest was in the end of June and July (Keil says middle of May to the middle of June, p. 140). Jerome says he had never “*seen rain in the end of June, or in July, in Judaea*” (Jerome as quoted by Barnes, p. 29). Keil says “*during this time it scarcely ever rains*” (IBID). To have the rain and thunder was so unusual that it caused the people to realize the message Samuel gave them was from GOD.

This event was another sign that GOD was displeased with their demand for a king. The word fear in this passage deals with the idea of awe and respect for another, primarily because of his authority and power. Mixed with respect would be a healthy fear because of an understanding of what that one can do. They had “fear” for GOD and Samuel, but it did not last for long. It should ever be remembered that when one has respect for GOD, he will also have respect for GOD's messenger.

“He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me” (Matthew 10:40).

1 Sam. 12:19-25 “**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. 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; And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. 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. 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: Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things He hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.**”

“And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto Jehovah thy GOD, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not; ye have indeed done all this evil; yet turn not aside from following Jehovah, but serve Jehovah with all your heart: and turn ye not aside; for then would ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. For Jehovah will not forsake His people for His great name's sake, because it hath pleased Jehovah to make you a people unto Himself. Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you: but I will instruct you in the good and the right way. Only fear Jehovah, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.” (ASV)

VAIN — “A worthless thing, confusion, emptiness, vanity...Although it is impossible to grasp the full import of this word, it is obvious that it has a negative and disparaging tone. It represents chaos, confusion, and disorder, all

things that are opposed to the organization, direction, and order that God has demonstrated” (Zodhiates, p. 1214).

Upon seeing the demonstration of GOD's power, a power that rebuked them, the people asked for forgiveness. In their statement they admitted that they had been sinful in the past and had continued that “tradition” in asking for a king. Now their fear caused them to ask Samuel to pray for them. Can fear be a proper motivation for repentance? The answer is clearly “yes,” based upon this text and many others in the Bible.

In verse twenty, Samuel told them not to fear death because this sin was now in the past. They had asked for forgiveness, and it had been granted. However, they were warned to be faithful in the future.

“Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (John 5:14).

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:30).

Notice verse twenty-one, where they are warned about going after “**vain things.**” These vain things are idols. They are vain, empty, worthless objects. That is an apt description of idols.

“What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it. But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence

before him” (Habakkuk 2:18-20).

Paul stated:

“Concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other GOD but one” (1 Corinthians 8:4).

The Lord had not forsaken His people, but many times His people have forsaken Him. GOD is always there, right where He was before man forsook Him. He waits and hopes that fallen man will return to Him. His name was to be glorified in the birth of His Son through Jewish seed. In order for GOD’s people to remain His people and be blessed, they must be obedient to Him. A choice must be made by man. It is the choice of serving GOD and being eternally rewarded by Him or of disobeying Him and receiving the punishment of eternal damnation.

“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:14-15).

As the choice was then, so it is today, and so it always will be. Choose obedience to GOD and live. Choose disobedience and die.

Verse twenty-three teaches the lesson that because someone has done you wrong does not mean that you should in turn do them wrong.

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use

you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:44-45).

They had rejected Samuel (and GOD), yet he would continue to pray for them. He would not stop caring about them and working for their benefit. Samuel shows that to stop praying for these rebellious people would be a sin against GOD. *“Intercessory prayer was a fundamental attribute of a prophet. Gen. 20:7, 17”* (Smith, p. 274). He would continue to teach them what GOD would have them know and obey.

Israel was told to serve the Lord in truth (v. 24). What would spur them to serve GOD in truth? The remembrance of all that GOD had done for them. What is truth? It is what GOD delivers to man.

“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” (v. 14)

“GOD is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

“To the only wise GOD our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 3).

Verse twenty-four also shows the gratitude which one ought to have for all that GOD has done. This gratitude is shown by ones effort to obey Him in all things.

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

“He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be

loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21).

And then there was a final warning. If they continued to do that which was wicked, then GOD would consume them. This was accomplished when Babylon conquered Judah. The ultimate overthrow of Jerusalem by the Roman authorities under Titus should also be kept in mind. Then consider the day of judgment which is yet to come.

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

1st Samuel — Chapter Thirteen

1 Sam. 13:1-4 “Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. 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. 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.”

“Saul was forty years old when he began to reign; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel, whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mount of 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. 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. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were gathered together after Saul to Gilgal” (ASV)

ABOMINATION — *“To have a bad smell, to stink (Ex. 7:18, 21; 8:14; 16:20); to be foul or loathsome; to be hateful (1 Sam. 27:12); to act wickedly (Prov. 13:5); defamed, to become odious, abhorrent, abominable. The word describes objects which have a bad odor, bad relationships between people, and evil deeds which are rotten to God”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

The first part of verse one talks about the beginning of Saul’s reign as king of Israel. The phrase **“Saul reigned one year”** is a summation of his first year as king with no details given. After this phrase, details are given about events which happened in the second year of his reign. Jumping ahead, one sees Saul’s reign to have lasted for forty years (Acts 13:21).

“Josephus states that Saul reigned for eighteen years before Samuel died, and twenty-two years after the prophet died” (Winton, p. 58; See *Antiquities*, Book VI, Chapter XIV, Section 9, p. 146).

Zerr says that the peculiar language of verse one means *“that nothing much of importance occurred in the first year of Saul’s reign”* (Zerr, p. 18). This would have to refer to the time when all of the people accepted him as king – after the battle with Nahash the

Ammonite. Saul chose three thousand men to fight against the Philistines. He divided his force into two groups, two thousand men with him and a thousand with his son, Jonathan.

Jonathan is then seen defeating a garrison of Philistines at Geba. Saul immediately proclaimed this news to the people of Israel and of course the Philistines heard of it as well. The call to arms was issued by both nations. Because of their attack, the people of Israel were viewed by the Philistines as an abomination; they were viewed as something loathsome, wicked — stinking. This reminds this writer of a phrase used by a preacher of his acquaintance who, when talking about an infamous person in the community, would say that person was “a stinking no-good-for-nothing.” The place where the Israelites gathered around Saul was at Gilgal.

1 Sam. 13:5-7 “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 sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven. 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. 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.”

“And the Philistines assembled themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea-shore in multitude: and they came up, and encamped in Michmash, eastward of Beth-aven. 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 coverts, and in pits. Now some

of the Hebrews had gone over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead; but as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.” (ASV)

STRAIT — sarar — “A verb meaning to bind up, to tie up, to be distressed, to be troubled, to be oppressed, to be cramped” (Baker and Carpenter, p. 970).

These verses show the positioning of the two forces (Israelites in Gilgal, and Philistines at Michmash). It is also seen that the Philistines gathered a large formidable force, which greatly frightened the Israelites.

“Most of the scholars dispute the figure of 30,000 chariots, giving the number as either 3,000 or even 300” (Coffman, p. 149).

The point is that the Philistine army greatly outnumbered the Israelites. Many of the Israelites, upon seeing the force assembled against them, fled, hiding anywhere they thought safety could be found. Some even crossed over Jordan to escape what they thought would be a sure defeat. Where had their faith in GOD gone?

This passage reminds one of James 1:6-7, which is specifically speaking about wisdom. The principle of these verses could be applied in the present text. The people had desired freedom from Philistine rule and had obviously prayed to GOD about this desired freedom. Yet, they did not fully believe GOD would deliver them.

“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”

This writer has no doubt that Saul had been instructed by Samuel to declare war on the Philistines. Samuel’s instructions came from GOD, who had determined to free His people from this bondage. They needed to believe instead of fleeing.

1 Sam. 13:8-15 “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. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. 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. 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; 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. 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. 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. 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.”

“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. And Saul said, Bring hither the burnt-offering to me, and the peace-offerings. And he offered the burnt-offering. 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. 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 assembled themselves together at Michmash; therefore said I, Now will the Philistines come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not entreated the favor of Jehovah: I forced myself therefore, and offered the burnt-offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of Jehovah thy GOD, which He commanded thee: for now would Jehovah have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: Jehovah hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and Jehovah hath appointed him to be prince over His people, because thou hast not kept that which Jehovah commanded thee. 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.” (ASV)

The battle lines were drawn while Saul waited for Samuel. When reading this text, it is apparent that a command had been given by GOD for Saul to wait until Samuel came before doing anything. It is also apparent from this text that the Israelites normally offered sacrifices before going into battle. As Saul waited, he saw his army dwindling down to nothing. Remember, he had had three thousand men (v. 2), and now he had only about six hundred.

Finally, Saul's patience was gone and he called for an offering that he would make. There were two offerings which would be made: (1) a burnt offering, and (2) a peace offering. After Saul offered the burnt offering, Samuel came upon the scene. It is evident that his coming was between the two sacrifices. Saul immediately went to greet Samuel (some speculate because of a guilty conscience).

Samuel asked why Saul had done this, and he offered a number of excuses. At the heart of his excuses was the same ploy seen with Adam and Eve — they tried to blame someone else. The fact is that Saul decided to do what he knew was wrong; try to blame it

on someone else; and ask for Samuel's blessing. How many today do something wrong but then want GOD's blessings for the evil they committed?

“Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22-23).

Notice Saul's three basic excuses:

- (1) The people were deserting me. (So what? As long as GOD does not desert us, the victory is ours),
- (2) You did not come when I thought you should (Behold I thought).
- (3) The enemy is gathering nearby.

Verse twelve shows Saul's lack of faith. *“Because I was worried the Philistines would attack before we were ready, I offered the sacrifice.”* He did not trust GOD to put a “wall” between their armies. He did not trust GOD to win the battle for them. He took things into his own hands and thus violated GOD's law. What law was Saul violating? There were two: (1) GOD had told him to wait, and he did not, and (2) He offered a sacrifice which only the priests were qualified to make. (The first violation is the same principle violated by many preachers and elders today. GOD said He would provide the increase, and then some will try to provide it for Him with gimmicks.

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but GOD gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but GOD that giveth the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

They fail to wait for GOD to work in the hearts of men through His word.) Notice that he said he forced himself to offer the burnt offering. This indicates that he knew it was wrong for him to do so, but he felt that the physical

necessities around him gave him no choice. One should always remember that GOD blesses man for obedience to Him regardless of what happens around him. Jesus said,

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”
(Revelation 2:10).

Literally He was saying, *“You be faithful even if it costs you your life, and then I will give you a crown of life.”* Nowhere does the Bible teach that when the going gets tough, and we are about to suffer or are suffering, then it is all right for one to bend or break GOD's rules. Perceived *“emergencies”* do not give one the right to violate GOD's laws. Being faithful means putting one's trust in GOD and then doing what GOD says to do, the way GOD says to do it.

Samuel said that Saul had acted foolishly [*“Acting in an indefensible manner, without reason, in foolish haste”* (Baker and Carpenter, p. 778)]. All sin is foolishness on the part of the one committing it. When men violated GOD's laws, He said,

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22).

When man thinks his own way of doing things is better than GOD's way — that man always becomes a fool in GOD's eyes.

One is next told that Saul's kingdom was going to be taken from him and given to another. This speaks of the kingdom being taken from his family; there would be no dynasty for the family of Saul. Instead, the kingdom would be given to a man after GOD's own heart. What kind of man is one whose heart is the one of which GOD approves? This text is obviously a prophecy concerning David. What made his heart acceptable to GOD? What made David acceptable to GOD was not a sinless life, for David committed several sins which have been recorded for history through the pages of the Bible. It was the fact that when David was charged with a sin and realized he had sinned, he made no excuses and immediately repented. That is

the kind of heart which is acceptable to GOD.

After speaking to Saul, Samuel got up and left for Gibeah in Benjamin. Of the three thousand chosen men of war, only six hundred proved themselves as a wise choice. Cowards in the Lord's army cannot be tolerated and certainly cannot expect the rewards of victory (heaven).

1 Sam. 13:16-18 “**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. 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: And another company turned the way to Bethhoron: and another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.**”

“And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Geba of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. 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; and another company turned the way to Beth-horon; and another company turned the way of the border that looketh down upon the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.” (ASV)

SPOILERS — *sahat* — “A verb meaning to spoil, to ruin, to destroy, to pervert, to corrupt, to become corrupt, to wipe out” (Baker and Carpenter, p. 1124); “To decay; to mar; to destroy, devastate; to ruin” (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

This is the same word which is used to describe the angel GOD sent to punish the Egyptians in Exodus 12:23 (“**destroyer**”). The NKJV calls them “*raiders*.”

The tactic used by the Philistines seems to have been to send out raiding parties from their main camp at Michmash. This could

serve the dual purpose of demoralizing the people and gaining supplies they needed for their army. In those times, the armies often lived off the land they conquered, without the huge supply lines which are commonly generated in times of war. Keil suggests that these raids may have been carried out in order to draw the Israelites out of a secure position (Keil, p. 133). If so, this would have made it easy for the vastly superior forces of the Philistines to slowly decrease the forces of their foe.

1 Sam. 13:19-23 “**Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. 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. 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. And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.**”

“Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock; yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to set the goads. 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. And the garrison of the Philistines went out unto the pass of Michmash.” (ASV)

FILE — *siyrah* — “Price, charge” (Thayer, CD Rom Version); “A feminine noun meaning price,

charge. It indicates the cost for getting various agricultural tools sharpened” (Baker and Carpenter, p. 912).

Verse nineteen states that there was no blacksmith in Israel, therefore arms for an army could not be made. This had been enforced by the Philistines, who wanted to make sure the Israelites could not wage war against them. Without blacksmiths, the only weapons they would have had would have been farming implements. This also indicates that when the Philistines originally conquered the Israelites, they had disarmed the people.

Verse twenty shows that if the Hebrews wanted their common agricultural tools sharpened, they had to go down and get the Philistines to do it for a price. These verses set the stage to show that GOD would give the victory the Israelites would gain. They did not win because of overpowering numbers or superior weapons. They would win the coming battle because GOD gave them the victory.

In this passage one finds the word “**file,**” which today is associated as an instrument used to sharpen metal tools. Lexicons (see above) show this word means the charge the Israelites were required to pay for the service of sharpening their tools. Recent archeological finds have found a measurement of weight with this word (*siyrah*) on it. It represents two-thirds of a shekel. Thus, the Philistines were charging the Israelites two-thirds of a shekel to sharpen their agricultural instruments (Treasures From the Bible, Leon Publishing Corp., Belleville, MI, p. 116).

Verse twenty-two shows that the only Israelites who had swords were Saul and Jonathan, because of the Philistines’ tight controls on smithing.

1st Samuel — Chapter Fourteen

1 Sam. 14:1-5 “Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said

unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father. 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; And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD'S priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. 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. The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah.”

“Now it fell 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 yonder side. But he told not his father. And Saul abode in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate-tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men; and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of Jehovah in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. And between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side, and a rocky crag on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The one crag rose up on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.” (ASV)

Here one sees the bold and brave disposition of Jonathan. He saw the Philistines making their raids and possibly even taunting the Israelites when they went out to the passage at Michmash. So he took the young man who was his armor bearer and went out to meet the Philistines. He did this without the knowledge of anyone in the Israelite camp. Why did he not tell his father or anyone else what he was doing? Did he

believe his father would forbid his plan? Was it his desire to maintain secrecy so that his plan could not be leaked to the enemy? A secret shared with another is no longer a secret.

In verse three one sees that Ahiah, the great-grandson of Eli is now acting as high priest — he wears the ephod. Barnes states

“This fragment of a genealogy is a very valuable help to the chronology. The grandson of Phinehas, the son of Eli, was now High Priest; and Samuel, who was probably a few years older than Ahitub the son of Phinehas, was now an old man. All this indicates a period of about fifty years or upward from the taking of the Ark by the Philistines” (Barnes, p. 33).

When the text speaks of the “**sharp rocks,**” it is probably referring to cliffs or craggy bluffs. These would make great places to set up camp because it would be very difficult for an enemy to attack them. Imagine the Philistines’ surprise when Jonathan suddenly appeared before them.

1 Sam. 14:6-15 “And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, 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 save by many or by few. And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. 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. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us. 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. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him. And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow. 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.”

“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 Jehovah will work for us; for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few. And his armorbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thy heart: turn thee, behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto the men, and we will disclose ourselves unto them. 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. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up; for Jehovah hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be the sign unto us. And both of them disclosed 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. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armorbearer, Come up after me; for Jehovah hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armorbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armorbearer slew them after him. And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his

armorbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land. And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled; and the earth quaked: so there was an exceeding great trembling." (ASV)

In verse six one sees the confidence Jonathan had in GOD. Most of his countrymen were so afraid that they had fled from these Philistines, which showed their lack of faith in GOD. Jonathan anticipated that GOD would give the victory, so he proposed that he and his armor bearer approach the enemy. His armor bearer had at the least, complete trust in Jonathan, but this writer also likes to think his heart was like Jonathan's with regard to his belief in GOD. Every brave leader needs men who will stand beside or behind him in his endeavors for truth. This armor bearer was such a man.

The idea of "**discovering themselves,**" is the idea of revealing themselves from hiding. Jonathan next proposed a test to see what they should do. If the Philistines told them to come up to them, then Jonathan said that would be a sign from GOD that the victory was theirs. Indeed the victory did belong to Jonathan and his armor bearer. It is interesting that the text talks about the "first slaughter" which they made. This indicates that they had a second slaughter. It may be that this referred to the great battle which soon followed, but it may also indicate that they killed twenty men in their first approach and then made a second assault on them. This was accomplished in a half-acre of land, a relatively small place.

One sees GOD's hand in Jonathan's victory. GOD helped them by sending an earthquake, and it is called "**a very great trembling.**" The margin of this writer's Bible indicates that this could read "*a trembling of GOD.*" GOD helped their cause by causing a panic among the Philistines.

1 Sam. 14:16-23 "**And the watchmen of**

Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another. 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 armourbearer were not there. 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. And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand. 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. 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. 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. So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Bethaven."

"And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went hither and thither. 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 armorbearer were not there. And Saul said unto Ahijah, Bring hither the ark of GOD. For the ark of GOD was there at that time with the children of Israel. And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the tumult that was in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thy hand. And Saul and all the people that were with him were gathered together, and came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was

against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture. Now the Hebrews that were with the Philistines as beforetime, and that 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. Likewise all the men of Israel that had hid themselves in the hill-country of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle. So Jehovah saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over by Beth-aven." (ASV)

After Jonathan's victory, the Philistines began to flee and at the same time began attacking each other. This appears to be the same thing which happened when Gideon and his men attacked the Midianites and Amalekites (Judges 7). The watchmen of Saul's camp saw the Philistines fleeing and heard the uproar.

For some reason, Saul interpreted this to mean that someone from his camp had attacked the Philistines, and he wanted to know who it was. The "roll" was taken, and it was discovered that Jonathan and his armor bearer were missing. Saul called for the priest and asked for the ark to be brought to him. It should be pointed out that some believe the term "ark" is not correct here and that it should be "ephod." Whatever the case, it is obvious from the phrase "Withdraw thy hand" that Saul was inquiring of the Lord on this occasion. He probably asked the Lord what to do. The noise of the Philistines grew ever louder, and the watchmen could see the Philistine host fleeing. Saul impatiently abandoned his enquiry of the Lord and gathered his troops to pursue the defeated Philistines.

When Saul got to the battlefield, he found the host of the Philistines fighting among themselves. One also notices that there were some "Hebrews" who had been among the Philistines. They were fighting for the Israelites but who were these people? They were probably either defectors or captives, possibly even both. The text states that all of

those "brave" souls who had fled and hid had come out of their holes to fight the Philistines.

The victory did not belong to Jonathan, or Saul, or the people. The victory belonged to GOD, as verse twenty-three clearly states.

1 Sam. 14:24-30 "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. And all they of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground. 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. 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 an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. 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. 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. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

"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 it be evening, and I be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted food. And all the people came into the forest; and there was honey upon the ground. And when the people were come unto the forest, behold, the honey dropped: but no man put his hand to his mouth; for the people feared the oath. 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 the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth food this day. And the people were faint. 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. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for now hath there been no great slaughter among the Philistines.” (ASV)

With all of this great victory being accomplished, one is told that the men of Israel were distressed. Why? Because of a rash and baseless vow made by Saul. What was his vow? If any man ate any food before evening, a curse would be placed upon him. What was the curse? From verse forty-four it is learned that the curse was death. The reason Saul gave for this vow was that he wanted to be **“avenged on mine enemies.”** In this text there is a peek at the arrogance and pride which would come over Saul in later years. These were the enemies of GOD’s people, yet he seemed to take this a bit too personally.

As Israel’s armies fought, they came to a wood where honey was found on the ground. Some believe that this condition abounded here because there was so much honey (GOD did say He would bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey - Exodus 3:8). Coffman believes this was honey which was dropped by their fleeing enemy. He based this thought on the fact that Jonathan talked about the people being much better off if they had been allowed to partake of the spoils of their enemies.

Jonathan partook of some of this honey through ignorance of his father’s orders to the contrary. When one looks at the laws GOD assigned to vows in Numbers 30:1-8, it appears that when a vow was made which only affected the individual, that vow stood.

When a vow affected others, the vow needed to be mutually agreed upon. Jonathan was not legally bound by the vow his father made. When Jonathan ate the honey, the text says his eyes were **“enlightened.”** *“This is a Hebrew idiom that simply means ‘he was refreshed’”* (Willis, as quoted by Coffman, p. 166). The fact that he was refreshed was seen in his face, especially his eyes. Someone once said that the eyes are the mirror of the soul, and to a large extent that is true.

The people told Jonathan about his father’s vow, and Jonathan’s response was that his father’s oath had caused trouble for Israel that day. If the people had been able to gain sustenance from the spoils of their enemies, they would have been able to maintain their strength, and the victory would have been more complete — the people were weary. Saul’s vow was a foolish vow which prevented total victory over the Philistines.

1 Sam. 14:31-35 “And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint. 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. 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. 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. And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.”

“And they smote of the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people

were very faint; 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. Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against Jehovah, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, ye have dealt treacherously: roll a great stone unto me this day. 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 Jehovah in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew them there. And Saul built an altar unto Jehovah: the same was the first altar that he built unto Jehovah.” (ASV)

Aijalon is estimated to have been between fifteen and twenty miles from Michmash. In modern times this does not seem to be a great distance, but on foot, and fighting at the same time, this was a lot of ground to cover. The text further states that the people were very weary because of their lack of food. Apparently at Aijalon, they came upon great quantities of food, and their hunger overwhelmed them. They began to slaughter the animals and eat them without properly bleeding them. Moses had given them GOD’s laws against eating the blood of animals.

“Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times”
(Leviticus 19:26).

But this was not the first time GOD had issued such a law.

“But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat” (Genesis 9:4).

Further, the same prohibition is given in the New Testament.

“That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well” (Acts 15:29).

From these passages, one learns that this

was a law GOD has given to men of all dispensations of time — a universal law; raw meat is not to be eaten.

When Saul heard that the people had broken GOD’s law, he commanded that a great stone should be rolled to him. It seems that the animals killed on this stone would be separated from the blood which flowed from them. They would be properly bled according to their dietary restrictions.

In verse thirty-five one sees Saul build an altar to the Lord. It may be that he used the very stone which had been rolled to him. A footnote in this writers Bible says, *“that altar he began to build unto the Lord.”* It should also be pointed out that some believe this was an altar for worship, while others believe it was an altar of memorial.

1 Sam. 14:36-42 **“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 whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto GOD. 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. And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. 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. 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. Therefore Saul said unto the LORD GOD of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.”**

“And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and take spoil among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto GOD. 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. And Saul said, Draw nigh hither, all ye chiefs of the people; and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For, as Jehovah liveth, who 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. 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. Therefore Saul said unto Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, Show the right. And Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot; but the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.” (ASV)

Saul was anxious to continue the attack and suggested that they pursue the Philistines in the night in order to totally destroy them. The priest suggested that they inquire of the Lord before proceeding. Saul agreed to this and asked counsel of GOD, which was probably through the Urim and Thummin. GOD did not give him an answer. GOD’s refusal to answer Saul indicated that He did not want him to pursue the Philistines. It seems that, because he did not receive an answer, Saul knew something was wrong — someone had transgressed.

Saul divided the people from himself and Jonathan, the lot was cast, and Jonathan was shown to be guilty. Saul had said whoever was guilty would be put to death, and now his son had been shown to be the one upon whom he had pronounced the sentence of death.

1 Sam. 14:43-46 “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. And Saul answered, GOD do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. 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 to the ground; for he hath wrought with GOD this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.”

“Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did certainly taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand; and, lo, I must die. And Saul said, GOD do so and more also; for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? Far from it: as Jehovah liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with GOD this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. Then Saul went up from following the Philistines; and the Philistines went to their own place.” (ASV)

Once Jonathan was pointed out, Saul asked him what he had done. Jonathan admitted what he had done and meekly submitted to the punishment decreed. Saul declared that if he did not follow through with his vow, then the Lord should do to him what he said would be done to Jonathan. It is interesting to point out that Saul had already been told that the kingdom would be taken from him because of his sin. Could it be, in making this second oath, that Saul had predicted his own death?

The people came to the rescue of Jonathan. They declared that it was Jonathan working with GOD who had given them this great victory, and they would not let Saul put Jonathan to death. After this, Saul quit chasing the Philistines, and everyone went home, including the remaining Philistines. This was a pattern one sees repeated by Saul

with David. In his rage at David, he would pursue him. When the error of his way was shown, then he would quit the pursuit. Is it possible that Saul now recognized the errors he had committed this day? Though the Philistines were weakened, they were not totally defeated. They would continue to be a major problem for Saul and the Israelites throughout his reign and would eventually defeat and kill him.

1 Sam. 14:47-48 “**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. And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.**”

“Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he 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 put them to the worse. And he did valiantly, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them. (ASV)

These two verses are a summary of the kingship of Saul with regard to his prowess as a military leader. The first thing one is told is that he now took the kingdom. This indicates that before his military victories he was king in name only. Then a summary of the nations, the enemies of Israel, which he defeated is given. GOD had said that the king would lead his people in victory over their enemies and so it was that Saul triumphed.

Regarding the phrase “on every side,” *“Moab and Ammon were on the east, Edom on the south, Zobah on the Northeast, and the Philistines on the west”* (R. Payne Smith, Pulpit Commentary, p. 256).

1 Sam. 14:49-51 “**Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchishua: and the names of his two daughters were these; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: 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. And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.**”

“Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishvi, and Malchishua; and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the first-born Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: 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. And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.” (ASV)

These verses simply give the family of Saul, with the exception of Abner (who was Saul's general). There is also a prominent omission in this list - the fourth son of Saul, Ishbosheth (1 Chron. 8:33; 9:39). It is also known that he had a concubine named Rizpah (2 Samuel 3:7).

1 Sam. 14:52 “**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.**”

“And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any mighty man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.” (ASV)

This verse shows the result of Saul's unwise decisions, which led to the Philistines not being totally defeated when the opportunity presented itself. The constant wars he fought with the Philistines could have been avoided even before this time if Israel had cleansed the land of Palestine as GOD had commanded when they crossed the Jordan River. The Philistines became a thorn to Saul, and he had bitter fighting with them all

the days of his life. In the end, Saul was fighting them when he lost his life (1 Samuel 31).

When the people demanded a king, one of the things GOD warned them about was that the king would take their sons and daughters in his service. Here one sees Saul taking every strong and valiant man he could find to serve in his armies.

1st Samuel — Chapter Fifteen

1 Sam. 15:1-3 “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. 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. 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.”

“And Samuel said unto Saul, Jehovah sent me to anoint thee to be king over His people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt. 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.” (ASV)

Verse one is a reminder to Saul that it was GOD who had appointed him as King over His people. The implication could rightly be drawn that GOD could also remove him from this position at any time. This was a strong statement reminding Saul that he had an obligation to listen to, and obey, GOD’s instructions. This was a clear statement by Samuel that it was GOD who had given the instructions which Saul was about to receive.

Verse two tells one that GOD remembered the sins of Amalek. What were these sins? In Exodus 17:8-16, one finds the account of what they did to deserve the terrible destruction which they were about to endure. Israel had successfully left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea. As they journeyed to Sinai, at a place called Rephidim, they were ambushed by the Amalekites. After Joshua successfully repelled their attack, GOD told Moses to write what the Amalekites had done in a book and that they would be totally destroyed - no longer remembered. (Their lineage would disappear from the earth.) Hundreds of years had passed between the time of the text and the time the Amalekites had attacked Israel in the wilderness. To the human mind, the temptation would exist that GOD had forgotten and had failed keep His word. What man often forgets is that “time” is an instrument which has meaning only to man. Time means nothing to GOD (2 Peter 3:8-9). In His own appointed time, GOD dispenses justice or mercy in judgment. If one sows evil, he can expect punishment; if he sows righteousness, he can expect a reward (Galatians 6:7-8).

The words “**utterly destroy**” come from a Hebrew word which means

“To ban, devote, destroy utterly, completely destroy, dedicate for destruction, exterminate” (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“To ban, devote, dedicate; to curse; to destroy utterly; to be doomed; to be exterminated. The basic idea was that of setting something aside strictly for God’s use. It was considered most holy by God and therefore could not be sold or redeemed by any substitutionary measure”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

Every living thing was to be destroyed and just as had been the case with Jericho, it all belonged to GOD. This was, like Jericho, to be considered a holy war in which everything belonged to GOD; nothing could be kept for

personal use. Was it cruel to kill the women and children? If they had been allowed to live, would not the women have taught their children the idolatry of their forefathers? Would not the women train their children to seek revenge? Would not the children have been without any hope of redemption? In point of fact, the innocent young would gain heaven, just as all of the very young are safe.

“Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3-4).

1 Sam. 15:4-9 “And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, 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.”

“And Saul summoned the people, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to the city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. 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. And Saul smote the Amalekites, from Havilah as thou goest to Shur, that is before Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.” (ASV)

Verse four shows a contrast between the army of six hundred that Saul had formerly had (600), and an army now of two hundred thousand. Yet, this number is substantially smaller than the number used to defeat the Ammonite (1 Samuel 11).

Who were the Kenites, and what kindness had they done to the Israelites when they came out of Egypt? The Kenites were related to Moses through his father-in-law, Jethro. They had been friendly to the Israelites and helped them in the wilderness, going to the land of promise with them. It is also noticed that it was a Kenite woman who sealed the victory of Israel over Sisera by killing him with the tent peg (Judges 5:24).

“Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.”

When given the opportunity to flee, the Kenites took advantage of their opportunity and fled.

Verse seven tells one that Saul was victorious in this campaign against the Amalekites. Verses eight and nine state that he was again disobedient to GOD’s instructions. In these three chapters (13-15), a pattern of disobedience and unwise-ness on the part of Saul is seen. In chapter thirteen, he did not wait upon Samuel as GOD had commanded, and he offered a sacrifice which it was lawful for him to make. For that he was

told that the kingdom would be taken away from his family. In chapter fourteen, one saw the rashness he exhibited in not waiting for instructions from GOD and in issuing a command for the Israelites not to eat until evening. This brought about the escape of many Philistines and the sin of the people in eating blood. In this chapter, his absolute refusal to obey GOD is seen. To obey in part is not obedience. Obedience to GOD requires one to obey all GOD tells one to do.

Saul had been instructed to **“go 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”** (v. 3). Instead, he saved the king, Agag, and the best of the animals of the land. In verse eight, one is told that he **“destroyed all of the people.”** This is like one saying that all of the congregation is gathered here today. Not all of the congregation is here, but the vast majority are. It is known that Saul did not destroy all of the Amalekites, because later a prominent Agagite appears on the scene of Biblical history. Who was this Agagite? It was Haman, who plotted to have the Israelites annihilated from history during the time of their captivity.

“After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him” (Esther 3:1).

One also sees some of the Amalekites defeated in battle during the times of Hezekiah (1 Chron. 4:43). Also, David fought against Amalekites (1 Sam. 27:8).

Notice which things Saul did destroy - those things which were **“vile and refuse.”**
VILE - *“Vile, despised, disdained, held in contempt”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version).

REFUSE - *“Wasted, worthless”*

(Thayer, CD Rom Version).

Those things which he and the people considered worthless, the things they held in contempt, were destroyed. On the other hand, everything which was good, useful, and pleasing to them, they saved. What could have been pleasing about Agag that they would save him? This was probably due to Saul's pride in capturing the king of another country. The animals could be useful for food, work, etc. But in sparing these things, Saul showed that he was not truly interested in serving GOD. As long as Saul's plans fit his own perception of how things ought to be he followed GOD's instructions. Like many in every generation, Saul thought he knew better than GOD in some areas. Disobedience in one area makes one just as guilty of breaking GOD's law as one who breaks all of GOD's laws.

1 Sam. 15:10-16 “Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, 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. 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. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 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. 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.”

“Then came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel, saying, 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 Samuel was wroth; and he cried unto Jehovah all night. And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a monument, and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 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 Jehovah thy GOD; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.” (ASV)

GOD was not happy about the situation regarding Saul’s disobedience; and so he talked to Samuel. He told Samuel that it repented him that He had made Saul the king. The word “**repent**” simply refers to a change of mind. Zerr commented on the word repentance here, saying, “*When man repents he changes his will; when GOD repents he wills a change*” (Zerr, p. 23).

GRIEVED - “*To be hot, furious, burn, become angry, be kindled*” (Thayer, CD Rom Version); “*To burn, be kindled, glow with anger, be incensed, grow indignant; to be zealous, act zealously*” (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

Notice that GOD’s pronouncement “**grieved**” Samuel. The word “**grieved**” shows that Samuel was angry. With whom was he angry? Certainly it was not with GOD, for GOD would not let that kind of anger go unpunished in one of His prophets (Jonah). His anger was directed toward Saul. Saul had begun so well, with such great promise; now he was totally turning away from following GOD. Saul had become self-willed. From

what has been seen of Samuel and of his character, he only wanted the best for Israel, and that would of necessity include wishing the best for their king. Notice that this whole transaction upset Samuel so much that he cried (or prayed) to the Lord all night.

Samuel was next seen going to meet Saul and was told that he had been to Carmel. This is probably not the famous mountain, but rather a town in Judah. What had Saul done there? He had set up a monument to himself, obviously extolling the greatness of his triumph. (Hebrew - “‘a hand,’ i.e. a monument” - R. Payne Smith, p. 266.) When Samuel caught up to Saul, Saul went out to meet him. Notice two more character flaws in Saul here. First, he tried to flatter Samuel. Second, he flat out lied. He knew he was guilty of violating GOD’s laws and so he spoke smooth words of flattery to GOD’s man, hoping no doubt to avoid the words of condemnation he knew he deserved.

Samuel asked Saul a simple question which exposed Saul’s lie. In essence he was saying, “*If it is true that you have obeyed the Lord, then why do I hear the sheep and oxen?*” Look at Saul’s answer. He tried to blame his actions on the people. He was not man enough to take the blame for his own actions. As GOD’s commander, Saul could have, and should have, ordered the people to obey GOD’s command (This is assuming they actually had imposed upon him to save the best.) This is the second time he tried to blame the people for his sin (At an earlier time, he offered the sacrifice because the people were deserting him). Secondly, he said that the best were saved in order to make a sacrifice to GOD. But GOD had not told him to capture the animals and make a sacrifice with them; He told him to utterly destroy them.

One of the things seen so often in man is the belief that an act of worship can make any sinful action all right in GOD’s eyes. Samuel will thoroughly denounce this idea in the next section of scripture. GOD requires obedience

in order for ones worship to be acceptable to Him.

STAY - *“To be quiet”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“Be slack, be remiss, be idle”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version). Samuel told Saul to be still (to be quiet) for the purpose of telling him what GOD had said.

1 Sam. 15:17-23 “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? 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. 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? 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. 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. 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. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king.”

“And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel; and Jehovah sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but

didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah, and have gone the way which Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy GOD in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, He hath also rejected thee from being king.” (ASV)

Verse seventeen seems to be a rebuke of Saul. GOD had made Saul king with the authority of a king, and yet Saul submitted to the will of the people instead of following GOD’s commands. He did not follow the examples of Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb who stood firm in the face of the people in the wilderness (Numbers 14). By standing for what GOD said, they had been blessed.

Verse eighteen repeats the command Saul had been given - to utterly destroy the sinners. It is also noticed that the command included fighting with the Amalekites until they were all destroyed, which (as has already been noticed) Saul did not do.

Samuel asked Saul why he had so eagerly taken the spoils and thus sinned against GOD. Saul’s answer showed the arrogance which he assumed. He claimed to have obeyed the will of GOD, yet the evidence was crying out against him even as he spoke. How could he have utterly destroyed the Amalekites and yet have kept Agag alive? How could all of their stuff have been destroyed, yet the sheep were bleating all around them? Saul was lying and seemed to think that because he said it, it would be believed. Yet, again notice that GOD said he had eagerly taken of the spoil.

Next Saul tried to blame his sin on the

people. It was all their fault, but was he not the king with the authority to overrule their decisions? Saul was starting to backtrack, as though he realized the mistake he had just made. Or, it may be that he was saying, *“I did everything GOD told me to do, but the people disobeyed,”* with the implication that he was not at fault. As their leader he was responsible, especially since he let them do this. He further tried to escape blame by stating that these animals were saved in order to sacrifice them to GOD. The argument may have been that these things belonged to GOD whether they destroyed them on the spot or offered them later as a sacrifice. [Does this remind one of Pilate washing his hands at Jesus’ trial (Matthew 27:24)?]

Samuel showed him the fallacy of his thinking by showing him that obedience to GOD is the first priority of man. Sacrifices to GOD are good and acceptable when done according to His dictates. Saul had been told to destroy them. To try to sacrifice these things was a violation of GOD’s express commands. The lack of obedience always makes worship void.

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear GOD, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Next, one is shown that rebellion and stubbornness to GOD’s Word is no different than practicing witchcraft or idolatry. What is the difference? One sin is just as bad as another. When one refuses to obey GOD in one area he may as well violate GOD’s will in another - he is guilty.

Notice the penalty imposed. Before, GOD had said that the “kingship” would not be enjoyed by Saul’s family; there would be no

dynasty. Now GOD said Saul was personally rejected as being king. In accordance with that, one sees Samuel being sent to anoint a new king in the next chapter. What a tragedy that the man who was chosen by GOD was now rejected by GOD. What a change in attitude one has seen in Saul, who though once humble enough to hide in the baggage when he was chosen to be king, was now found in open rebellion to GOD.

1 Sam. 15:24-31 **“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. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. 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. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent. 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. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.”**

“And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of Jehovah, and thy words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship Jehovah. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee; for thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, and Jehovah hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, Saul laid hold upon

the skirt of his robe, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, Jehovah hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for He is not a man, that He should repent. Then he said, I have sinned: yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship Jehovah thy GOD. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped Jehovah.” (ASV)

STRENGTH — *“Eminence, perpetuity, strength, victory, enduring, everlastingness”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“It means a goal; splendor, glory”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version). The word is used in this text as a name or description of GOD.

Saul made a confession of his sins, yet the context shows his confession was not accepted. Why was this so? Samuel had just told him that he had been personally rejected as king. Upon hearing that, Saul said he had sinned in transgressing **“the commandment of the Lord, and thy words.”** Previous to Samuel’s pronouncement, Saul had tried to blame everyone else for this transgression of GOD’s commands. Immediately after saying, **“I have sinned,”** he again tried to blame his sin on the people **“because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.”** There is absolutely no evidence of the people ever demanding anything of Saul. There are only his words which appear to try to justify his actions. Further, even if the people had insisted on sparing the best of the herds and flocks, Saul as king had the responsibility of insisting on their obedience to GOD’s commands. He needed to have the backbone that Moses had when facing the people in the wilderness. Further, all evidence points to the people’s blindly following his lead, except in the case of killing Jonathan (1 Samuel 14). That being the case, if he had insisted that they obey GOD instead of taking the spoils, that is probably what would have been done.

Saul next asked for pardon from his sin and for Samuel to turn back to worship with

him. The possibility is that Saul wanted to offer a sacrifice and had learned his lesson that he was not allowed to offer it himself. Also, by getting Samuel to go with him, Saul probably felt the people would in turn honor him, for Samuel was still highly regarded and feared by the people.

Samuel said he would not turn back with Saul. The reason he gave was that Saul had violated the trust put in him to the point that the man of GOD wanted nothing else to do with him in an official sense. This seems to be the same principle found in Matthew 7:6.

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”

There comes a point in time when efforts to help the rebellious obey the Lord are just a waste of time and effort. At such a time one needs to go do the Lord’s work where it is appreciated and where it can, and will, bring forth fruit.

As Samuel turned to leave, Saul reached out and grabbed his mantle and tore it. [MANTLE - *“Robe...a garment worn over a tunic by men of rank”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version).] Upon doing this, GOD again spoke to Saul through Samuel, telling him how the kingdom was going to be taken from him - by violence. Such was the case as Saul and his sons died violently, leaving the kingdom to David. Samuel also told Saul that the kingdom would be given to a neighbor of his, but notice that he did not tell him who this new king would be. GOD would reveal him at the right time. Saul was also told that this new king was better than he. With Saul’s emerging attitude one can imagine how this pronouncement must have eaten at his pride.

Verse twenty-nine shows that GOD’s pronouncement in this matter would not be changed. It was too late; Saul had crossed a line from which the consequences of his actions could not be undone.

In verses thirty and thirty-one, Saul again admitted that he had sinned and asked Samuel to honor him before the elders. Saul had previously asked Samuel to return with him, but he would not. Now Samuel did return with him. Why? Coffman believes there are three possibilities for his action here:

“1. Samuel sincerely desired to help Saul in the presence of the people, for he deeply loved the man. ‘Had Samuel refused the honor due to Saul’s rank, it would have been an occasion of intrigue and resistance against Saul’s government and could well have been a step towards bringing back the old anarchy.’

2. Another possibility is that Saul might have threatened to take Samuel’s life if he refused. His seizing Samuel’s robe was in itself an act of violence; and Saul was certainly capable of killing anyone whom he considered to be a threat to himself.” (GOD would not have allowed Saul to hurt His prophet, and Samuel surely knew that.)

3. The third alternative is that Samuel’s action here constituted a sin on the prophet’s part. We consider this to be the least likely of the reasons cited here, and that the first reason is probably correct” (Coffman, p. 186).

This writer believes it probably had something to do with maintaining order under the system of government they had. The case for this thought seems to be fortified by what later happened when David came to the throne and many of the people rallied around Saul’s descendant. It should also be pointed out that there are two instances in these verses where Saul repents. The first one obviously seems to be a false repentance. The second may very well be true repentance and therefore Samuel returned with him to sacrifice.

1 Sam. 15:32-33 **“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. 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.”

“Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him cheerfully. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. 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 Jehovah in Gilgal.” (NKJV)

The word rendered **“delicately”** in the KJV comes from a word which means *“dainty (food), delight”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version). This has led some to believe that the text is saying Agag went before Samuel in confidence, thinking that he had nothing to fear. Since he had been spared with the best of the stuff, he may indeed have pondered this possibility. The NKJV has the word *“cautiously”* in this place, which may indicate that he approached carefully, gingerly, guardedly or warily. The Septuagint translates the word as *“trembling.”* This word is also found in Job 38:31 where it is rendered *“bands.”* It has been this writer’s view that this is the way Agag approached Samuel — in fear. Agag was asking for leniency upon the grounds that much blood had already been shed. What would be accomplished by more being shed? Agag’s life was not to be spared. GOD had commanded by the law that any thing dedicated to Himself could neither be sold or redeemed (Leviticus 27:28-29). GOD had commanded that all of the Amalekites be killed, and Samuel was going to obey GOD!

The text tells one that Agag had caused many mothers to become childless. Now his mother would become childless.

“Be not deceived; GOD is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For

he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Galatians 6:7-8).

1 Sam. 15:34-35 “Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. 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.”

“Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death; for Samuel mourned for Saul: and Jehovah repented that He had made Saul king over Israel.” (ASV)

In these verses one sees Saul and Samuel returning to their respective homes. It is further stated that Samuel never went to see Saul again, until his death. Some have tried to say there is a contradiction between this passage and the one found in 19:24. But compare the two verses carefully:

“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.”

“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?”

In 19:24 it was not Samuel going to Saul, as the context clearly shows, but Saul went to Samuel. The passage in 15:35 says that Samuel never went to Saul again, until the day of his death. **NO CONTRADICTION!**

Whose death is spoken of in this passage? It is Saul’s. How did this come to pass and where is the record found? It is

found in First Samuel 28:9ff, where Saul went to the witch of Endor because GOD had forsaken him. The spirit of Samuel did indeed come to Saul, who died that very day (Remember the night belonged to the daylight which followed it – 6:00 P.M. to 5:59 P.M. was a day.).

Notice the attitude of Samuel toward Saul. Even though he would have nothing to do with Saul anymore because of his disobedience, yet he mourned for Saul. He still cared about Saul. This teaches a valuable lesson on how one should consider those who become the enemies of GOD and His people. One may have to turn away from them in order to place his efforts into a more fruitful endeavor, but he should still consider them in his prayers. Their souls are valuable, and a desire for their repentance from a lost condition should cause one’s soul to yearn for their salvation. When a careful consideration is made of the Bible’s description of the condition of those lost for eternity, it ought to cause one to “mourn for Saul.”

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:37-38).

GOD is not going to change (repent) His mind with regard to removing Saul from his office of king. It was fully determined that the wrong man held this position and another, better man would replace him.

1st Samuel — Chapter Sixteen

1 Sam. 16:1-5 “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 Bethlehemite:

for I have provided Me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto Me him whom I name unto thee. And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? 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.”

“And Jehovah said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite; for I have provided Me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And Jehovah said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to Jehovah. 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. And Samuel did that which Jehovah spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably; I am come to sacrifice unto Jehovah: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.” (ASV)

One finds Samuel mourning for Saul and GOD telling him to quit mourning. GOD had rejected Saul as king and Samuel was to accept that (See Leviticus 10:3, 6-7.). Anytime GOD has made a decision on any matter, man must learn to simply accept His judgment. Instead, GOD told Samuel to get up and go anoint a new king. He told him to go to the house of Jesse the Bethlehemite, i.e., one from Bethlehem. Samuel was also told that it was one of Jesse's sons who would be the new king, but that does not surprise a Bible student who has read the genealogy of

Jesse in Ruth 4:18-22 or Matthew 1:5. In fact, the text has just revealed David to be the next king.

Verse two shows Samuel's fear as to what Saul might do to him if he anointed a king, even stating that Saul might kill him. One of the things to notice here is the change which has taken place in Saul's heart. The details of this change are not given, but the end result of his being willing to commit murder shows the change has occurred. One might also remember the violence shown toward Samuel by Saul in the last chapter. GOD told Samuel to take a heifer with him for the purpose of making a sacrifice. If anyone questioned Samuel, he could say that he was going to make a sacrifice. He actually would hold a sacrifice, so he was not lying. Notice that GOD was commanding prudence. Smith asks, “Is it always necessary, or even right, to tell in all cases the whole truth?” Obviously from this text, the answer is no! Yet, it is never right to lie. An example of this thought would be that brother “X” used to be a drug dealer and had even killed a man while doing so. He repented many years ago and paid his debt to society. Now after living many years as a faithful Christian, what good would be accomplished by someone who knows his past bringing it up. Too many times parents make the mistake of telling their children about the way they lived ungodly lives before becoming a Christian. By doing so they plant the seed that the child can do these things too and that there will be time to repent and live godly lives.

It was not the right time to publicly announce the new king, just as was previously seen in the case of Saul himself. To announce David as king at this point could very easily have caused a civil war. One should remember that after Saul died and David was placed on the throne, the nation divided and fought each other from time to time over whether a descendant of Saul or of David should be king.

At Bethlehem, Samuel was to specifically call Jesse and his sons to this sacrifice, where GOD would reveal who the new king would be. When Samuel came to Bethlehem, the elders approached him with fear. Why? There are two possibilities: (1) Sometimes when a prophet came he would pronounce a judgment against those people and they may have feared such a thing. (2) The word had probably spread that Samuel and Saul were not on speaking terms, and they may have been afraid of a reaction by Saul because Samuel came to them. At any rate, he assured them that he had come in peace to make a sacrifice. Samuel ordered them to prepare for the feast through sanctification and specifically invited Jesse and his sons.

To sanctify means to set aside for some use; specifically in the Bible it means to set aside for a spiritual use. The rules GOD set down for sanctifying oneself are clearly stated. Their clothes were to be washed (Exodus 19:10). They were to purify themselves, not being able to touch a creeping thing (Leviticus 11:44-45) or have sex with a woman (1 Samuel 21:5; Exodus 19:15). They were to remain pure during the feast and/or ceremonies which followed.

1 Sam. 16:6-13 “And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD’S anointed is before him. 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. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen

these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.”

“And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely Jehovah’s anointed is before him. But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Jehovah hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And Jehovah said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.” (ASV)

GOD ordered Samuel to go to Bethlehem to anoint a king to take Saul’s place. In particular, GOD sent him to the house of Jesse. The oldest son was brought before Samuel, and Samuel thought Eliab (called Elihu in 1 Chronicles 27:18) must be the one

GOD had chosen. Notice that his conclusion was drawn after looking at Eliab. This would be natural after Saul had been chosen, for they both appear to have had good looks, etc. But GOD told Samuel not to make a judgment based on outward appearance only. This is good advice for everyone. One should never look at appearance in making judgments, but take the time to look beyond the appearance to the heart. It is the heart of someone which truly determines his beauty.

“Men in their shallowness of wisdom, look on the outward more than the inward; they place greater value on physical beauty and size than on the spiritual qualities of the soul. This is a very common practice in our world; it is manifest in virtually every relationship and activity” (Winton, p. 78). This thought is further emphasized in the church which seems to care more about the physical than the spiritual in our time. The evidence for this assertion was clearly seen in our time when a number of hurricanes wreaked havoc upon the people of the United States in the gulf region (2005). Our brethren almost overnight contributed multiplied millions in physical property and money to help these people, but they have failed miserably in giving the financial support to promote evangelism for lost souls.

Seven of Jesse’s sons were brought before Samuel, but none of them was chosen. Samuel asked if there was anyone left. He was informed that the youngest son was in the field tending the flocks. This son was David, who was then brought before Samuel. A description of David is given in verse twelve. He was “ruddy” [*“Red”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version),] which may be speaking of the color of his hair, as was the case with Esau. It is also said that he had a “beautiful countenance” [(Beautiful – *“fair, beautiful, handsome”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version).] GOD did not chose David because of the way he looked on the outside, but rather He chose the eighth son of Jesse by the way he looked on

the inside.

It should be remembered that GOD chose Saul on the same basis, but later Saul changed his heart to an evil one and was then rejected by GOD.

Samuel anointed David to be the new king. From subsequent events, it appears that Samuel simply anointed David, without telling the people why David was anointed. It may be that David was told, but that is not clear either. What one does know is that the Spirit of the Lord came upon David, just as it was said He came upon the judges of the past and upon Saul. This indicates some divine guidance and possibly strength when one considers the incident of the bear and lion, as well as Goliath later. This also indicates that the words David spoke at times were guided by the Spirit.

“The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and His word was in my tongue” (2 Samuel 23:2).

“Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus” (Acts 1:16).

In passing, one might notice that First Chronicles 2:13-15 shows only seven sons of Jesse. There is no indication as to the difference found in these two accounts. One speculation is that one of the sons had died between the account of Samuel and that of the chronicler.

1 Sam. 16:14-23 “But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul’s servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from GOD troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an 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. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, 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. Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. 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. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from GOD was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

“Now the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from GOD troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, that are before thee, to seek out a man who is a skilful player on the 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. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered one of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is skilful in playing, and a mighty man of valor, and a man of war, and prudent in speech, and a comely person; and Jehovah is with him. Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, who is with the sheep. 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. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his

armorbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from GOD was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.” (ASV)

The Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, leaving him alone and frightened. There is no profession of understanding all there is to this, but there are a couple of things one can understand. First, this was not something which was done to Saul to cause him to be evil and do evil things. He had already shown himself to be evil in his actions and thoughts; that is why the Spirit of the Lord left him.

“Saul had knowingly intruded into the duties assigned to the priests when he took upon himself the right to offer sacrifice (1 Sam. 13:12-13); he violated his God-given orders when he spared Agag (1 Samuel 15:20-23). These violations deprived him of the heavenly guidance and strength he had earlier enjoyed. At the same time, he was deprived of God's protection, leaving him vulnerable to the malignant depression and intense jealousy that drove him to commit certain outrages which he would not have done in his earlier days”(Winton, p. 79)

Second, it seems obvious that this spirit was sent upon him for the purpose of punishment. When this punishment came upon him, he suffered **“terror.”** The Hebrew word for **“troubled”** means

“To terrify, startle, fall upon, dismay, be overtaken by sudden terror” (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“To be frightened, to overtake, to strike with fear, to be afraid, to dread, to be terrified, to be overtaken by a sudden terror. It is the strongest form of intimidation”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

Because of these fits of terror which came upon Saul, his servants suggested that he get a musician who could play for him, allowing the music to soothe him. In this section (vv. 14-23), one finds a Biblical statement about the power of music. In certain instances, music has the ability to soothe the troubled and afflicted. This writer knows of a child who was born with tremendous physical problems. During the pregnancy, his father sang to him on a daily basis. At his birth he had to be isolated in an intensive care unit where he was constantly in an agitated condition. The only time he calmed down was when his father came and sang to him. Saul was troubled, a musician was sought to soothe him during these episodes, and the music accomplished its purpose. Many people today try to argue that music with lewd and violent lyrics has no effect upon people. But the Bible shows that music has a great deal of power in influencing people for either good or bad.

One of Saul's servants had either heard David play or had heard of his ability with musical instruments. This may suggest that David had already begun writing psalms and was well known for them. David's services were requested for the king. When David came before the king, he made a great impression upon Saul. First, he and his father had shown respect for the king by bringing a gift to him. Second, one sees that initially Saul loved David and made him his armor bearer. This fact shows that he was trusted.

This all seemed to be a time of testing and trial, for Saul then asked Jesse if David could permanently remain in his service.

It should be remembered that these verses act as a summary of the chapters which follow, the details of which will be seen in the next chapter.

It should be emphasized that when David played for Saul, Saul was refreshed [*"To breathe easily, be relieved"* (Thayer, CD Rom Version)]. If music can refresh one, it also stands to reason that it can irritate one as

well.

The position in which David found himself, in the court of the king, was no doubt part of GOD's plan to prepare him to be the next king. Here he would learn court manners. He would also become well-known by those in power. As they saw the greatness of David, they would be drawn to his humble nature. Many would see the hand of GOD guiding David and learn to trust him.

1st Samuel — Chapter Seventeen

1 Sam. 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 Ephesdammim. 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. 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. 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. And he had an 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. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. 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. 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. 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. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.”

“Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle; and they were gathered together at Socoh, which belongeth to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. 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 place of the wagons, as the host which was going forth to the fight shouted for the battle. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and encamped in the vale of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them. 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. And he had a helmet of brass upon his head, and he was clad with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a javelin of brass between his shoulders. And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and his shield-bearer went before him. 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. If he be able to fight with me, and 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. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. And when Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.” (ASV)

The events of this chapter are approximately twenty-seven years from the defeat of the Philistines at Michmash (Coffman, p. 200). It appears that it had taken

the Philistines all of these years to recuperate from that defeat. The text states that the two armies were facing each other across a valley. Smith describes this place as a valley within a valley. Either army which attempted to cross this valley to attack his opponent would have been at a distinct disadvantage and would have suffered significant casualties and probably defeat. This explains why these armies did not attempt to attack each other across this valley.

In ancient eastern cultures, it was not uncommon for a battle to be fought between two individuals, which decided the fate of both armies. The Philistines had a champion named Goliath who was a giant of a man. His height is given as six cubits and a span. The cubit is generally considered to have been eighteen inches (measured from the elbow to the tip of the little finger). The span was about nine inches (measured from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the extended small finger; sometimes measured across the palm of the hand). Whichever the span measurement was, this still puts Goliath at over nine feet tall.

It might also be noted that Goliath was from the city of Gath. This is

“One of the places mentioned in Joshua 11:22 as still retaining a remnant of the sons of Anak; Gaza and Ashdod being the others” (Barnes, p. 42).

In verses five through seven, a description of his armor is seen, which is estimated to weigh around two-hundred pounds by Coffman. What this says is that Goliath was not just a big man; he was a powerful man as well. The **“target”** of verse six was probably a small shield worn on the chest to protect the heart, etc. The **“greaves”** were shin guards.

Each day Goliath challenged the men of Israel to combat, but none of the Israelites accepted the challenge. Why? Verse eleven shows that they were all afraid of him. They did not trust GOD to give them the victory, and

so no one went out to meet his challenge. This is the problem many face when the trials of life are upon them and they give in to the temptations which surround them — they do not trust GOD to deliver them. This is the problem when the “giants” of denominationalism challenge the church and the church is afraid to take a stand. It is the problem the church faces when the “politically incorrect” crowd shouts his mantra of sin as being legitimate practices and no one has the right, they claim, to say they are wrong.

“Whatsoever is born of GOD overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

When Peter kept his attention on the Lord he was able to maintain a faith which allowed him to walk on the water. When he began to look around him the fears presented by the world (storms) temporarily overcame his faith and he began to sink (Matthew 14:28-31).

When men have true faith in Him, as will be seen in David, there is no obstacle which cannot be overcome in this world. He will give the ability to overcome every temptation one faces.

1 Sam. 17:12-23 “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. And the three eldest sons 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. And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul. But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. 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; And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. 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. For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army. 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. 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.”

“Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man was an old man in the days of Saul, stricken in years among men. And the three eldest sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the first-born, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. And David was the youngest; and the three eldest followed Saul. Now David went to and fro from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to thy

brethren; and bring these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the vale of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. And Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, army against army. And David left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the army, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.” (ASV)

The first thing one notices is the recounting of Jesse as the father of David. The three oldest sons of Jesse are listed too. One also notices that Jesse is very old at this time, thus unable to go to war. His three oldest sons are in the army, and David is mentioned as the youngest, possibly even implying that he is too young for military service (had to be twenty years old to serve.). Yet, before one says that he is not old enough to serve in the military, see the passage in 16:18, where David is called a **“valiant man, and a man of war.”**

It appears from the information here, that David did not always sit in the court of Saul, but that he was called from time to time to soothe Saul with his music and act as his armorbearer. On this occasion he was back with his father caring for his flocks.

In verse sixteen one comes back to Goliath and to how he made his challenge twice a day. He had done so for forty days. In this section one sees the possibility that the two armies were in positions of strength. If either attacked the defending force had a great advantage. Otherwise, one must ask why the Philistines did not attack Israel if they had a superior fighting force? It was during this time that Jesse sent David to the army to check on the welfare of his sons and also to take them provisions. It may be that during this time of the kingdom, families were responsible (at least in part) to provide the

provisions for their family members who went to war.

It should be remembered that the **“corn”** refers to grain, which means he was taking barley or wheat which had been roasted. This roasting was done before the grain was ripe, and the resulting product could be used by those who traveled. Jesse also sent ten **“wheels”** of cheese to his sons’ captain or leader. Jesse told David to find out how his brothers were and to take a **“pledge”** from them. This Hebrew word means

“Bargain, exchange, pawn, surety; pledge”(Zodhiates, CD Rom Version);
“Pledge, token, bond, surety, thing exchanged” (Thayer, CD Rom Version).

It indicates that Jesse wanted an assurance as to the well-being of his sons.

Verse nineteen indicates that there was some kind of action going on between the two armies during the forty days in which the giant challenged the Israelite army. It may have been skirmishes or small battles, in which no one could gain an advantage. Or it may simply have been the arraying of themselves before each other across the valley. When David arrived, the armies were preparing themselves for battle, and he saw and heard Goliath make his challenge.

The idea of a **“trench”** is not the idea which is commonly associated with the word in this time. Instead, it referred to the place where the baggage (carriage) for the army was stored.

“Strictly the word means a wagon-track, but the primary meaning of the verb is to be round. This was the shape of camps in olden times, and they were protected against surprise by having the wagons and baggage placed round them” (Smith, Pulpit Commentary, p. 323).

1 Sam. 17:24-27 **“And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and**

were sore afraid. 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. 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? And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.”

“And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. 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. 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? And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.”
(ASV)

In these four verses one finds a classic example of the way the Hebrews wrote. Verses twenty-four and twenty-five are the answer to the question which will be asked in verse twenty-six. The answer is revealed and then the question which prompted the answer.

All of the men of Israel were afraid of Goliath and fled before him. After all these years they had not yet learned to place their full trust in GOD. Because of this, Saul had offered a great reward to anyone who fought and killed Goliath. Great riches, his daughter's hand in marriage, and freedom for his father's house. This freedom is thought to be freedom from taxation (see NKJV) and

other obligations toward the government such as military service, et cetera.

1 Sam. 17:18-20 **“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. And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause? And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.”**

“And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why art thou come down? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause? And he turned away from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.”
(ASV)

David had asked about the situation involving Goliath and, in essence, asked why nothing had been done about this uncircumcised Philistine. He was told the facts and was told about the reward offered by Saul for anyone who would kill him. David's oldest brother rebuked him for making these enquiries, accusing him of (1) abandoning his responsibilities (sheep) and (2) pride. All of his charges were clearly false, for Jesse had sent David to the battle site to find out if his sons were safe and to send provisions for them.

David calmly replied to his brother that he was there for a cause. The obvious cause was to deliver the food, etc.; but it is possible that GOD had revealed another cause to him

in the mean time? David turned from his reproachful brother and again asked about the giant. He was told the same thing he had previously been told regarding the reward Saul had offered to the one who vanquished Goliath.

1 Sam. 17:31-40 “**And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. 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. 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: 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. 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. 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. And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, 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. 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.”

“And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul; and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. 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. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant was keeping his father's sheep; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, 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. Thy servant smote 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. And David said, Jehovah 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 Jehovah shall be with thee. And Saul clad David with his apparel, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his apparel, 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. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his wallet; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.” (ASV)

The news of David's questions and statement regarding the Philistine's defying the army of the living GOD came to Saul. Upon being called to Saul, David volunteered to fight Goliath. Hebrew is “*took him.*” The idea is he commanded David to come to him. Saul objected on the basis of David's age. Many pictures portray David at this time as a young lad, but as Coffman points out, they forget that David must have been close to the size of Saul, or it would have been pure foolishness for Saul to offer him his armor and for David to try to put it on. Remember, David did not refuse to wear it because it was too

big, but because he had not proved or tested it.

To Saul's objection was also added the idea that Goliath had been trained from his youth up, implying that Goliath had many years of experience over David. How could David possibly expect to win against such a battle-tested soldier? David provided the answer by telling Saul that he had killed a lion and a bear which had tried to take his father's sheep. The real key to his victories was his reliance upon GOD. GOD was his strength. In the Psalms, David often talked about GOD being his strength. As an example:

"I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my GOD, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower" (Psalm 18:1-2).

David felt that he could not take the armor of Saul into battle because he had not tested these items. Being, at this point, unskilled in the use of these items, they would have been a hindrance to him rather than a help. So, David took Saul's armor off and instead used what he knew best - the sling.

"Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss" (Judges 20:16; Benjamites).

The sling was a devastating weapon in the hand of a skilled slinger, as the above passage from Judges shows. As David crossed the brook, armed only with his staff and sling, he gathered five smooth stones for his sling; but only one would be needed. Smooth stones were chosen because they would be more accurate than irregularly shaped stones.

Clarke described a sling as *"composed of two strings and a leathern strap; the strap is in the middle, and is the place where the*

stone or bullet lies. The string on the right end of the strap is firmly fastened to the hand; that on the left is held between the thumb and middle joint of the fore finger. It is then whirled two or three times around the head; and when discharged, the finger and thumb let go their hold of the left end string. The velocity and force of the sling are in proportion to the distance of the strap, where the bullet lies, from the shoulder joint. Hence the ancient Baleares, or inhabitants of Majorca and Minorea, are said to have had three slings of different lengths, the longest they used when the enemy was at the greatest distance; the middle one, on their nearer approach; and the shortest, when they came into the ordinary fighting distance in the field. The shortest is the most certain, though not the most powerful" (Clarke, p. 264).

1 Sam. 17:41-47 "And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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."

"And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance. 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. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the GOD of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will Jehovah deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from off thee; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day unto the birds of the heavens, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a GOD in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that Jehovah saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is Jehovah's, and He will give you into our hand." (ASV)

Here one sees the preliminaries to the battle about to be fought. David entered the field of combat, and the Philistine approached him. When the Philistine beheld David, he despised him (held him in contempt); because he was a mere youth. Not only was he a youth, but he came out against Goliath, a mighty warrior, with a stick (staff) - as he thought of it. The Septuagint translates this as "*With a staff and stones.*" Goliath was insulted that he was thought so little of.

YOUTH — naar — "*A masculine noun referring to a boy, a young man, a servant. It is used of a young person, a boy; one old enough to serve in battle or as a personal private force; or*

as a helper in the army" (Baker and Carpenter, AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN, copyright 2003, p. 742).

Goliath cursed David by his god (Hebrew is singular) and declared that he would quickly kill David and feed him to the birds of the air. David quickly told him that just the opposite was true, and not only would Goliath die this day but a great victory would take place over the Philistine host. How would this be possible? The victory would come through the living GOD whom Goliath had defied (v. 45). Goliath relied on physical strength and strong weapons; David relied upon GOD for the victory.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"
(Philippians 4:13).

"What shall we then say to these things? If GOD be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things"
(Romans 8:31-32)?

1 Sam. 17:48-49 **"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. 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."**

"And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth." (ASV)

Here is the simple statement of the events which brought the death of Goliath and the defeat of the Philistine army. The opponents moved toward each other, David let loose his sling, and the stone hit the giant in the forehead with such force that it embedded itself in his forehead. Imagine the anxiety which went through the host of the Philistines as they watched these events. They may have thought that their champion had merely stumbled and fallen, but he was not going to get up. It is often heard that superior weapons will win the battle, but ask Goliath if his superior size and weapons were any match for the primitive weapons of David. Ask the Russian army if its vast array of tanks gave it the winning advantage when fighting men on horseback in Afghanistan. GOD still rules in the affairs of men. When He determines an army is to be defeated, the most inferior weapons can be used for the victory.

1 Sam. 17:50-54 “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. 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. 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. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.”

“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. Then David ran, and stood over 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 that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou comest to Gai, 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. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent.” (ASV)

Verse fifty and fifty-one are a repetition regarding Goliath’s death. He was killed with the sling and stone when the rock embedded in his forehead. As one writer stated it, “*he was as dead as if he had been shot between the eyes with a deer rifle*” (Coffman, p. 213). Cutting off the head was the emphasis and proof needed to cause the Philistines to realize that their champion was dead. David had rejected carrying the sword of Saul, so he used Goliath’s own sword to accomplish this task. (David told him he was going to cut his head off (v. 46).

Goliath, in challenging the Israelites each day, had stated that the defeated would be the servants of the victor. Instead, the Philistines fled. The Israelites pursued them, wounding and killing many of them. They drove them back into their own territory, as the references to Gath and Ekron show.

As the Israelites returned, they took the spoils of the Philistine camp. It is also shown that David celebrated the victory by placing the armor of Goliath in his own tent as a kind of trophy. The tent here seems to imply the tabernacle, as that is where David later retrieved the sword of Goliath. One also sees David taking the head of Goliath to Jerusalem. This is interesting from the standpoint that Jerusalem was not under the control of the Israelites at this time, but rather it was under

the control of the Jebusites. Why did David take the head of Goliath to this place and when did he do so? One can only speculate, because the Bible does not tell why or when. Some have thought it might have been a warning to the Jebusites. Others think he might have taken it there to throw into the valley of Hennon as a show of contempt. As to when he took the head there, it may have been after conquering Jerusalem a number of years later.

1 Sam. 17:55-58 “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. And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is. 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. 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.”

“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. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is. 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. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.” (ASV)

The question Saul asked in verse fifty-five is not about the identity of the person but about the family from which he came. This information is often missed by students who somehow think Saul did not know did not know who was going against Goliath. It would have been necessary for Saul to know from which family David came in order to fulfill his

promise of verse twenty-five.

1st Samuel — Chapter Eighteen

1 Sam. 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. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 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.”

“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. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.” (ASV)

When one looks at the actions of David and Jonathan, it is easy to see why they would become such fast friends – they had the same spirit. They were both brave men who stood for what was right; but most importantly their faith in GOD was supreme. Notice the victories GOD had given Jonathan and also those given to David, where both attributed their victories to GOD.

Verse two shows that David was no longer allowed to split his time between the palace and his father's house. From this point on, David would live at the court or near the king. By the victory over Goliath, David had been thrust onto the national scene and now would have a wife, as he had been promised.

In verses three and four one sees a covenant (agreement, alliance, pledge) made

between David and Jonathan. To seal this covenant, Jonathan gave David his robe (probably the royal robe), sword, bow and girdle. The significance of this very well may have been that Jonathan knew that David was going to be the next king. It is possible that everyone knew the kingdom had been taken from the family of Saul to be bestowed on another. With the faith and attitude evident in Jonathan, it is very possible that he understood who would replace his father. Is it possible that David had revealed what Samuel had told him to Jonathan?

1 Sam. 18:5 “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.”

“And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.” (ASV)

Here is a statement which covers a great amount of time. David was now a full-time servant of Saul, who sent him on a number of military missions (and possibly some that were unmilitary in nature). In every case, no matter what the mission, David behaved himself wisely. The word “**wisely**” means

“*To be prudent, be circumspect, wisely understand, prosper*” (Thayer, CD Rom Version); “*To be circumspect, be prudent*” (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

In looking up the words “prudent” and “circumspect,” this writer was struck with the similarity of synonyms for these two words — “*Careful, cautious, deliberate, discreet, farsighted, levelheaded, reasonable, vigilant, wary.*” These synonyms help one understand the total concept of how David behaved himself in all of the jobs Saul gave him and why David was so successful. How was David

able to act so wisely? Apparently he always did the right thing. There is only one way for a man to be able to do that – Divine guidance.

With David behaving himself so wisely, and obviously being quite successful in his endeavors, it is not hard to see why the people accepted David as a military leader.

When looking at the text, it is tempting to think that all of these events happened rapidly. As mentioned above, it took a number of years for all of this to transpire. This time would allow David to become familiar with the inner workings of the court and develop alliances which would help him in the future. It was with time that Saul's jealousies gradually overcame him so that he turned from loving David to trying to kill him.

1 Sam. 18:6-9 “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 musick. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. 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? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.”

“And it came to pass as they came, when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with timbrels, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women sang one to another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and this 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? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.” (ASV)

It is obvious that the events in this chapter are not in chronological order, for it was after the slaughter of the Philistine that Saul made David a leader in his army. The events of these verses took place immediately after the slaughter. There is also the possibility that the word “**Philistine**” should be “**Philistines.**” If that is the case, then this text is chronologically correct.

The language of verse seven is figurative, showing the high regard the people had for David. Saul had given them great victories, but they were saying that David had given them even greater victories over their enemies.

Instead of being happy over the great victory David had brought to Israel, Saul was angry. Why? Because he was jealous of David. He wanted to be thought of as the great one, the deliverer of Israel. But, the people were acknowledging David as accomplishing more than Saul. Saul realized that David had the heart of the people and there was only one more thing for him to gain — the kingdom. It is doubtful Saul would ever forget the words of Samuel regarding his kingdom being taken from him and given to one who was better than himself. He probably kept his eyes open from that time forward, looking for the man who would take his throne.

From that day forward, Saul kept a constant watch over David. He might have hoped David would make some mistake, or that he would not come home from one of his missions. Jealousy and hatred are terrible attitudes to harbor as will soon be seen.

1 Sam. 18:10-11 “**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. 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.”

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that an evil spirit from GOD came mightily upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as he did day by day. And Saul had his spear in his hand; and Saul cast the spear; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall. And David avoided out of his presence twice.” (ASV)

The “**evil spirit**” is said to have come from GOD, which seems to indicate a punishment which was rendered upon Saul. There is a similar incident of madness coming upon an individual in Daniel chapter four. There Nebuchadnezzar was struck with insanity for the space of about seven years, for the purpose of causing him to recognize the living GOD as the King of heaven and earth. Here, Saul is afflicted for short bits of time, but unlike Nebuchadnezzar, he did not change but ever grew worse.

Zodhiates tells one the word “prophesied” in verse ten means

“To cause to bubble up; to pour forth words abundantly; to prophesy, speak or sing as a prophet (by divine power); to rave, play the madman, act insane (1 Sam. 18:10) through agitated, spasmodic movements often applied to false prophets”(Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

The ASV has “raved” instead of “**prophesied.**” It appears that as David was playing, Saul was carrying on in this fashion.

Saul had a javelin in his hand, which is a small throw spear. Saul hurled this at David because of his insane jealousy, intending to pin him to the wall, thus killing him. This did not happen once, but twice. On both occasions David was able to avoid Saul's attacks. Some explore the possibility that Saul did not actually throw the javelin at David on this occasion. An example of this thinking is the following:

“Instead of ‘Saul cast the javelin,’ the Septuagint in the Alexandrian codex and the Chaldee render lifted, i.e.,

retaining the same consonants, they put vowels which refer the verb to another root. But even with the present vowels it may mean 'made as though he would cast,' or aimed 'the javelin'" (Smith, p. 341).

1 Sam. 18:12-16 “And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.”

“And Saul was afraid of David, because Jehovah was with him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and Jehovah was with him. And when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them.” (ASV)

Notice the reason for Saul's fear of David - the Lord was with David, but He was not with Saul. Saul had been told that his kingdom would be taken away from him and given to another; now he sees that GOD is with David. How does he know this? Because all that David does prospers. Because of this, Saul removed David from being his armorbearer and placed him in charge of a thousand men. Was this because Saul wished to honor him, or was there a sinister motive behind his actions? Verse seventeen indicates a sinister motive. But David continued to behave himself wisely, and this only increased the fear Saul had of him. Because David behaved himself so wisely, Saul may have

feared having him nearby because that would make an assassination attempt more possible. Little did Saul understand the attitude David had toward GOD's anointed.

A distinction is made in the text between Judah and the rest of Israel. GOD was bringing the prominence of this tribe to the forefront again, just as Israel had long ago prophesied that it would be.

“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be” (Genesis 49:8-10).

This also shows that David's popularity was not found only in his home tribe of Judah but also throughout the nation. This popularity was so great that Saul's jealousy formulated a plot to bring about David's death.

1 Sam. 18:17-19 “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. 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? 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.”

“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 Jehovah's battles. For Saul said, Let not my

hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him. 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? 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." (ASV)

Saul had promised that whoever killed Goliath would have his daughter as a wife. Saul told David that his oldest daughter (Merab) would be his wife. This was not to happen immediately as the text indicates, for first David had to prove himself by being a valiant soldier fighting the Lord's battles. The latter part of verse seventeen tells the real reason that Saul placed him as a leader of a thousand and told him to be valiant. Saul was hoping that the Philistines would kill David. In that way Saul could not be held accountable by the people, whom he knew dearly loved David.

Verse eighteen shows the humility of David. He did not feel worthy to be the king's son-in-law. He expressed the idea that he was not important nor was his family of such rank that he should be considered for such a honor. Nevertheless, the time came when Merab should have been given to David, but Saul cheated him. Instead, she was given to Adriel. Not only was Saul jealous; he showed himself to be dishonorable. This was a man who truly could not be trusted. (In Second Samuel 21:8-9, the Bible tells of the tragic deaths of Adriel and Merab's sons at the hands of the Gibeonites.) Saul's action was a tremendous insult to David and may have been done to provoke some rash action from David which Saul could use as an excuse to openly move against him.

1 Sam. 18:20-29 "And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 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. 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. And Saul's servants spake those 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? And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David. And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an 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. 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. 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. And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually."

"And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 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 a second time. 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. And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be the king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly

esteemed? And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David. 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. Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. 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; and 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 number to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. And Saul saw and knew that Jehovah was with David; and Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul was David's enemy continually." (ASV)

Saul discovered that his daughter, Michal, loved David. Saul believed he could turn this love against David, making Michal a snare to David. The word "**snare**" means

"Bait, lure, snare" (Thayer, CD Rom Version); "To ensnare, lay a snare; to be snared, caught. The part. is used with reference to a fowler who sets a trap. Although yaMqoMsh often refers to setting a trap for the purpose of catching prey, it is also used in a metaphorical sense of the entrapment of people" (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

Saul believed he was setting a trap for David which would cause him to be killed and he used his own daughter as the bait.

Saul sent his servants to David to propose the marriage. But David told them he did not have a dowry to pay for her. David's answer indicated that he was interested in marrying Michal, and it is further verified later in these verses. Saul's answer was that the "only" dowry he wanted was a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. The only way these would be obtained would be the death of the uncircumcised Philistines. But to accomplish this, David must put himself at risk in battle. Not only that, Saul apparently put a time limit

for David to accomplish this feat (v. 25 - "**the days were not expired**"). He probably hoped that the time limit might cause David to do something foolish in order to accomplish the goal in the allotted time frame.

When David heard the conditions Saul set, he immediately set out to accomplish the task. Instead of one hundred foreskins, David collected two hundred and gave them to Saul. Saul's plans had again been thwarted and Michal was given to David as his wife.

With all which happened before and to this point, Saul knew that GOD was with David. Further, he saw that his daughter truly loved David. All of this made Saul even more afraid of David than he had been before. With the marriage to Michal, David was in a position to possibly inherit the kingdom. His fear caused him to view David continually as his enemy. It would appear that Saul was now paranoid with regard to David. He probably thought that GOD's promise of replacing him would be accomplished through a coup or assassination led by David. Such a man could never understand the noble nature of a man like David.

1 Sam. 18:30 "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."

"Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, as often as they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by." (ASV)

The Philistines probably went forth here to avenge the deaths of the two hundred slain by David, but they could not defeat him. David behaved himself prudently, wisely, and won victory after victory. This endeared him to the people, who came to honor him more and more and to recognize him as their champion. They thought of him as being precious. The term "**set by**" means

“To esteem, be prized, be valuable, be precious, be costly, be appraised”
(Thayer, CD Rom Version).

He was a man who could be depended on to deliver them from their enemies, a precious commodity indeed. David always met his enemies with courage, wisdom, skill, and victory.

1st Samuel — Chapter Nineteen

1 Sam. 19:1-7 “**And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. 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: 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. 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: 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? And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.”**

“And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should slay David. But Jonathan, Saul’s son, delighted much in David. And Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to slay thee: now therefore,

I pray thee, take heed to thyself in the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: 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 if I see aught, I will tell thee. 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: for he put his life in his hand, and smote the Philistine, and Jehovah wrought a great victory for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As Jehovah liveth, he shall not be put to death. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as beforetime.”
(ASV)

Saul had repeatedly tried to put David in danger so that the Philistines could kill him, but all of his schemes had failed. It should be remembered that Saul had done those things in such a way that he would not be blamed for David’s death if it should occur.

“Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him” (18:17).

Saul next ordered his son and his servants to kill David. The text does not list the charges which Saul might have leveled at him, but the reasons why are given — jealousy and fear. The servants were probably his armor-bearers, body guards, captains of his forces, etc. Smith takes a different view of this, saying:

“The translation of the last clause is untenable; it really means ‘about killing David,’ and so both the Septuagint and the Syriac render it” (Smith, p. 360).

Next one sees the intervention of Jonathan on David’s behalf. The first thing he did was to get David into a position of safety by warning him of the danger and moving him to a hiding place. Jonathan next planned to talk to his father in order to make a plea for

David's life. Jonathan was acting as an intercessor for David. His defense of David was threefold: (1) David was a faithful servant to Saul and had only done good toward Saul, (2) David had not sinned against Saul, so in essence, why should Saul want to kill him? (3) He rehearsed the fact that David had placed his life on the line for Saul and Israel by fighting Goliath (And it would seem that the implication would force Saul to remember all the times David had fought the Philistines for Saul since that time.), and (4) He pleaded with his father not to sin by shedding the innocent blood of David.

Saul listened to his son's arguments, and David was temporarily restored to his former position in the court. This was accomplished by an oath which Saul made; but then, as has already been observed, and shall further be seen, Saul's oaths were not worth very much.

In a number of commentaries this writer has read, the observation has been made that David could hear the conversation between Saul and Jonathan. Because David was in the same field does not necessarily mean that he could hear the conversation between these men. Or, if he could "hear" the conversation, he may not have been able to understand the words (Acts 9:7; 22:9). How could you hear but not hear? Hearing the sound but being unable to distinguish meaningful words.

1 Sam. 19:8-10 "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. 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. 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."

"And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled

before him. And an evil spirit from Jehovah was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the spear; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the spear into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night." (ASV)

There **"was war again"** with the Philistines. These wars appear to have been constant in nature. Again, David arose to the occasion and with the Lord's help put the enemy to flight (Remember that one has constantly been told that the Lord was with David and not with Saul.).

The evil spirit of envy and jealousy returned to Saul because of David's victories and he again tried to kill David as he played soothing music to him. The text says that "the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul." This is a good time to consider that GOD allows things to happen and often sent punishment upon men. Then the Bible will attribute this to Him as an "evil." But when one considers such things, it must be remembered that

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights"
(James 1:17).

GOD is not the author of evil but of good. One should remember the words GOD said to Satan concerning Job,

"He holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest Me against him, to destroy him without cause"
(Job 2:3).

The context clearly shows that GOD did not literally do any of the evil things which were done to Job — BUT HE ALLOWED SATAN TO DO THEM. There can be no doubt that the same thing is happening in the present text to Saul. Satan, the devil, is the author of envy, jealousy, murder, etc., of which Saul allowed himself to be overcome.

Saul was sitting in his house with the javelin in his hand. This seems to point to the "palace." It was the custom of many oriental

rulers to sit with a javelin which was often used as a scepter. Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the javelin, which is now the third recorded time he had personally tried to kill David (18:11). By now David had learned not to fully trust Saul, and so he was probably prudently watchful on this occasion.

Barnes correctly states, *“This was the beginning of David’s life as a fugitive and outcast, though for no ‘offence or fault’ of his”* (Barnes, p. 48).

1 Sam. 19:11-17 **“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 to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain. So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped. 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. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick. And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats’ hair for his bolster. 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?”**

“And Saul 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 to-night, to-morrow thou wilt be slain. So Michal let David down through the window: and he went, and fled, and escaped. And Michal took the teraphim, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats’ hair at the head thereof, and covered it with the clothes. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick. And Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed,

that I may slay him. And when the messengers came in, behold, the teraphim was in the bed, with the pillow of goats’ hair at the head thereof. And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me thus, and let mine enemy go, so that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?” (ASV)

When Saul tried to kill David, he fled to his own house. Saul sent messengers after him, intending to surround David’s house. When David came out in the morning, they would kill him. But Michal somehow learned of their plot and warned David to flee that very night.

Verse twelve states that Michal helped David escape by letting him down through a window. Next she took an **“image”** and placed it in the bed, so that it looked like David was asleep. This **“image”** is from a Hebrew word which means

“Idolatry, idols, image(s), teraphim, family idol – a kind of idol used in a household shrine or worship (Thayer, CD Rom Version); “This noun appears only in the pl. form. It refers to domestic or household gods, family idols, images, cultic masks, or a deed of ownership, it may have been a symbol of divine presence....The identity of the tEraMphi2m in 1 Sam. 19:11-17 is problematic. Archaeologists have found no tEraMphi2m which approximate the size of a full grown man. All known tEraMphi2m were small figurines. Therefore, this particular passage may refer to the bust of a human head or cultic mask” (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

What this may show is that Michal may have secretly worshipped false gods. David had shown a strong faith in GOD and therefore cannot be imagined to have engaged in such worship. It is possible that he allowed his wife to continue such worship, but this writer believes it to be highly unlikely.

The third thing that Michal did to help

David was to tell her father's messengers that David was sick. Apparently they did not look closely at the bed, but took this information back to Saul. Saul wanted him dead, so he instructed them to bring David on his bed to him. Upon learning of the trick pulled on him, Saul asked his daughter why she had deceived him. She told him that David had threatened her. Michal told two lies in this brief section of scripture, and neither were justified. The "situational ethics" crowd would say that she had lied to accomplish good, so her lies were justified. But a lie is never justified! Her lies show a lack of trust in GOD, who would have delivered David even if he had stayed there all night. Another thing her lies show is that she apparently feared what her father might do to her, and it seems to imply that she thought he might kill her.

1 Sam. 19:18-24 "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. And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. 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. 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. Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Secu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah. 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. 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?"

"Now 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. And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of GOD came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. Then went he also to Ramah, and came to the great well that is in Secu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of GOD came upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?" (ASV)

When David fled, he went to Samuel. This showed his trust in the man of GOD, and thus his trust in GOD Himself. Samuel took David to Naioth, which simply means "dwellings." From verse twenty-two, it is learned that Naioth was in Ramah. Samuel did not move David to another city, but to a part of the city of Ramah which was special. What was so special about this place? It is believed that this was the place where the prophets were gathered in a school of the prophets (sons of the prophets). Notice in verse twenty that Samuel was "standing as appointed over them," which indicates that he was their leader, much like Elijah and Elisha are seen later in the same position.

Saul sent out inquiries concerning David's whereabouts, and he was told that David was at Naioth in Ramah. Saul sent troops to capture David, but when they got to Naioth, they prophesied like the prophets. Three

times Saul sent soldiers to take David, and all three times they could not, because they began prophesying. Do you think Saul should have learned something here? This was GOD's way of protecting His servants. Next Saul went himself, probably thinking, "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself."

Saul arrived at Ramah at a well named Sechu. When he asked where David and Samuel were, he was told. Before he could anything to them, the Spirit of GOD came upon Saul, and he too began prophesying. What is seen is a perfect picture of GOD protecting His servants. There was nothing Saul could do to harm them — GOD was/is in charge!

It is said in this text that Saul was "naked." Zodhiates says this

"Adj. Comes from 'aMram. It means nude, naked (Job 1:21), bared, half-dressed, ragged, badly clad" (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

Most commentators believe that Saul was stripped down to an inner garment which Smith speaks of in his dictionary; but a few, such as Coffman, believe he was without any clothing at all (Coffman, p. 236). As can be seen from the evidence offered by the linguist Zodhiates, it is more probable that he was wearing an undergarment.

"The inner garment was the most essential article of dress. It was a closely fitting garment, resembling in form and use our shirt, though unfortunately translated 'coat' in the A.V. The material of which it was made was either wool, cotton or linen. It was without sleeves, and reached only to the knees. Another kind reached to the wrists and ankles. It was in either case kept close to the body by a girdle and the fold formed by the overlapping of the robe served as an inner pocket. A person wearing the inner garment alone was described

as naked" (Smith as quoted by Zerr, p. 32).

1st Samuel — Chapter Twenty

1 Sam. 20:1-3 "And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? 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 shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so. 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."

"And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? And he said unto him, Far from it; thou shalt not die: behold, my father doeth nothing either great or small, but that he discloseth it unto me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so. And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father knoweth well that I have found favor in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death." (ASV)

While Saul was in the midst of prophesying, David slipped away and went back to Ramah to talk to Jonathan. David believed that Jonathan would know why Saul was trying to take his life. Thus, he extensively questioned Jonathan as to what he had done to make Saul angry.

Jonathan was sure that his father was not trying to take David's life. The basis for his belief was that, since he was the king's son,

surely his father would confide in him if he were going to do such a thing. But his father had not revealed any such plans to him. It should be remembered that Saul had previously told Jonathan and his servants to kill David (19:1). This must have been a hard position which Jonathan found himself. On the one hand was his closest friend whom he loved enough to give his life for; on the other hand was his loyalty to his father. Jonathan did not want to believe that his father would do such a thing. He might have attributed the past attempts on David's life as moods of insanity which temporarily came over Saul. He then told David that if his father was planning on doing such a thing, *"Why would he hide it from me?"* David's answer was that Saul knew the very close friendship that they had. Notice that David tried to put a kind reason for Saul's refusing to tell Jonathan; he did not want to grieve Jonathan. Then David reaffirmed his position of being close to death because of Saul. (Today we would say, *"He is but a heart-beat away from eternity."*)

1 Sam. 20:4-10 **"Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee. And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow 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. If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. 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. Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father? 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? Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly?"

"Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee. And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow 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. If thy father miss me at all, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Beth-lehem his city; for it is the yearly sacrifice there for all the family. If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be wroth, then know that evil is determined by him. Therefore deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of Jehovah with thee: but if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father? And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee; for if I should at all know that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee? Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me if perchance thy father answer thee roughly?" (ASV)

Verse four shows Jonathan in effect asking David if he had a plan to determine whether or not Saul was trying to kill him. Further, Jonathan offered to do anything David asked him to do in the matter.

Verse five is David's plan of action to test Saul. The feast of the new moon was an important feast and David would have been expected to celebrate it with the king and his court (See Numbers 10:10; 28:11-15 for details about this celebration.). David proposed to skip the feast and instead hide in the nearby field. The reaction of Saul to his absence would demonstrate Saul's intentions. If Saul missed David, Jonathan was to make an excuse for him, actually lie to his father. A feast like this would be a perfect time for Saul to set a trap for David. On the other hand, if Saul became angry then they would know that his intentions against David were evil.

Verse eight is David's reminder of the covenant of friendship which he and Jonathan

had together. But further he stated, "If there be in me any iniquity, slay me thyself." David was saying that if there was a reason why he should die, then he wanted Jonathan to be the one to execute him. This was a bold statement by David, declaring that if he was guilty of some crime, then he should pay the penalty for that crime. It is also the statement of an honest man who is sure that he has not committed a crime. David's statement reminds one of the apostle Paul as he stood before Festus (Acts 25:11).

In verse nine, Jonathan reassured David that if he had knowledge of any evil planned against David by his father, he would warn him. David next asked how he would get the message, whether good or bad (cf. v. 7). And what happened if Saul treated Jonathan roughly? [ROUGHLY – "*hard, cruel, severe, obstinate*" (Thayer, CD Rom Version).] David had good reason to ask this question, since Saul had tried to kill him on more than one occasion. Further, remember how Saul reacted to Michal's deception to protect her husband, accusing her of turning against him.

1 Sam. 20:11-17 "And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field. And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD GOD of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to morrow any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee; The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew 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. And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: 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. So

Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul."

"And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field. And Jonathan said unto David, Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, be witness: when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow, or the third day, behold, if there be good toward David, shall I not then send unto thee, and disclose it unto thee? Jehovah do so to Jonathan, and more also, should it please my father to do thee evil, if I disclose it not unto thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and Jehovah be with thee, as He hath been with my father. And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the lovingkindness of Jehovah, that I die not; but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever; no, not when Jehovah hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, And Jehovah will require it at the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, for the love that he had to him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul." (ASV)

As they went into the field, Jonathan made a pact with David. He would tell him the results of the test David proposed. This was all done in the form of a vow, in which Jonathan proposed a curse upon himself if he did not follow through with his promise.

Jonathan extracted a vow from David. When one looks at this text, it is hard to fail to see the premonition which Jonathan seems to have had. He seemed to understand that GOD was going to destroy all of David's enemies, and that would mean the death of his father, if his father had indeed turned on David. Further, he seemed to understand that he might also die, though not because he was an enemy of David's or because he would try to stop him from gaining the throne.

"Jonathan, through filial loyalty, would not desert his father even when that

inevitable day of reckoning would come" (Coffman, p. 245).

Jonathan also seemed to be thinking about the customs of that time. Often when a royal family, or even usurpers, came to the throne, they would seek out all of their opponents to the throne and kill them. This would prevent rebellion to them. Jonathan clearly saw the day coming when David would be the king, and he made a covenant with David so that he and those of his family would be able to live when that time came.

Regarding Jonathan's loyalty to David, Winton writes:

"Jonathan was so committed to David that he sided with him against his father, and was so committed to his father that he willingly entered the battle with the Philistines in which both he and his father were slain (1 Sam. 31). He was so committed to God's will that he risked his life for David and gave it for the people of God" (Winton, p. 100).

As the years passed, David was completely loyal to his vow.

"The king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of GOD unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet....And David said unto him (Mephibosheth, R.K.), Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually" (2 Samuel 9:3, 7).

1 Sam. 20:18-23 "Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. 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. And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark. 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 no hurt; as the LORD liveth. 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. And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between thee and me for ever."

"Then Jonathan said unto him, To-morrow is the new moon: and thou wilt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. And when thou hast stayed three days, 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. And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark. And, behold, I will send the lad, saying, Go, find the arrows. If I say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee; take them, and come; for there is peace to thee and no hurt, as Jehovah liveth. But if I say thus unto the boy, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way; for Jehovah hath sent thee away. And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, Jehovah is between thee and me for ever." (ASV)

In verse eighteen, Jonathan says that David would be missed because his seat would be empty. If our seats are empty are we missed?

These verses show the signal (code) agreed upon by David and Jonathan. On the third day, David would go to the stone of Ezel and wait for Jonathan. Upon arriving, Jonathan would shoot three arrows. If he told the young man with him that the arrows were beyond him, then David would know that it was not safe for him to return to the court. But if Jonathan told the young man that the arrows

were between him and Jonathan, then David would know that he was safe. With this arrangement, if anyone came with or followed Jonathan, no words would have to be spoken directly between them. Thus, no one would know or even suspect that David was there, but David would get the message of safety or danger.

Going back to verse nineteen, the time allowed before David was to be in his appointed place would have given David plenty of time to travel to the feast at his father's house.

Verse twenty-three is a reminder of the vow made between them.

1 Sam. 20:24-26 “So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat. 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. Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.”

“So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat food. And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon the seat by the wall; and Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat by Saul's side: but David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul spake not anything that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.” (ASV)

These verses simply show the immediate events before Saul's new rage toward David erupted. David hid himself as he and Jonathan had agreed upon. When the feast of the New Moon came, Saul sat in his normal place. The significance of Jonathan's standing and Abner's sitting next to Saul is possibly that Jonathan gave his seat to Abner. It may also mean that when Saul came in to sit down, Jonathan arose out of respect. It could

imply that he was sitting somewhere else (talking with friends, etc.) and arose so as to take his rightful place. There is little doubt that the son would sit in a more honored position than would Abner.

Saul did not say anything about David being absent from the feast on the first day. Why? Because he thought something had made David unclean and that was why he was not attending the feast. These words imply that there was no other reason David would absent himself from the king's table (in Saul's mind). The rules of cleanliness would strictly apply to this feast since it was a religious observance connected to the New Moon feast.

1 Sam. 20:27-29 “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 to day? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem: 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 favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.”

“And it came to pass on the morrow after the new moon, which was the second day, 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 to-day? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Beth-lehem: 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 is not come unto the king's table.” (ASV)

The second day of the feast came, but David did not come to the king's table. On the first day, Saul had thought that David was

probably unclean and therefore could not come to the feast. But since a person was only unclean until the evening of that day (Leviticus 11:24-32), he reasoned that David should be there. Thus, he enquired of Jonathan, *“Where is David?”* He probably asked Jonathan because he knew of the friendship they had for each other. Jonathan rehearsed the story that he and David had concocted to test Saul’s reaction, adding that David’s elder brother had commanded him to attend the family feast.

1 Sam. 20:30-34 “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? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done? And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. 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.”

“Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame, and unto the shame of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore should he be put to death? what hath he done? And Saul cast his spear at him to smite him; whereby Jonathan knew that is was determined of his father to put David to death.

So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no food the second day of the month; for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.” (ASV)

PERVERSE — *“To be bent, make crooked; to writhe; to act perversely, sin. Do wrong, commit iniquity, be perverse; subvert (to distort, twist); to turn upside down; to make impassable. Its essential meaning is to deviate from the proper path”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

In the original the word **“woman”** is not found. Saul was not speaking against Jonathan’s mother or belittling her in any way. Instead the words **“perverse”** and **“rebellious”** were aimed at Jonathan. Saul was saying that Jonathan had been perverse and rebellious from his birth. Secondly, Saul declared that Jonathan had chosen David over his own family and to his own hurt. How would it be **“hurt”**? He would not become king if David remained alive. The term **“thy mother’s nakedness”** refers to the shame she would feel at having borne a son who would not advance his cause of taking the throne by eliminating David.

Verse thirty-one shows that Saul knew David would be the next king. It also seems to indicate that Saul thought that by killing David he could stop GOD from accomplishing His purpose. Satan seems to have thought the same thing regarding Jesus. Then Saul demanded that Jonathan turn over David so that he could be murdered. Jonathan demanded to know why Saul wanted him killed and demanded to know what David’s crime was.

Saul became so angry that he tried to kill his own son. Notice that he did not try to manufacture some sin on David’s part, nor did he try in any way to mask his intentions. He has gone beyond the point of no return. This action caused Jonathan to realize that Saul was determined to kill David. It should be remembered that Jonathan had not initially

believed David when he told him that his father was trying to kill him (20:2). Jonathan had not believed that his father would commit such a horrible crime. Now he was faced with the reality that his father was indeed as bad as David had said he was.

Jonathan arose from the feast in anger. Why was he so angry? Was it over the injustice of his father? Was it over the fact that his father had tried to kill him? Was it over the betrayal of trust he had put in his father? Possibly it was all three reasons and others as well. The text further states that he did not eat because he was grieved for David and what these events meant for David's life. David would now be forced to live the life of a fugitive. Further, they would not be able to communicate with each other as good friends desire to do.

1 Sam. 20:35-42 “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. 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. 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? And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city. 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. 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.”

“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. And he said unto his lad, Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 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? And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew not anything: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his weapons unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city. 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. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of Jehovah, saying, Jehovah shall 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.” (ASV)

The arrangement made in these verses had been done so that, if anyone was with Jonathan, they would not know that David was near. This pretense had to be maintained even with the little boy. If anyone told Saul that Jonathan had made David's escape possible, the consequence could have been Jonathan's life. This truth is later seen more clearly with what Saul did to Ahimelech, the priests, and their families because of the aid given to David. It might be added that one has just seen Saul cast a javelin at Jonathan. Saul would do anything to kill David and now anything to those who would aid him.

The arrows were shot, the lad was sent back to the city, and Jonathan and David saw each other for the last time. They kissed each other (probably the oriental kisses on the cheek) and wept. David's grief exceeded

Jonathan's, i.e., his grief was more pronounced than Jonathan's. This is a tremendous picture of friendship – heart-felt and unselfish on the part of both men.

Finally the time of departure was at hand, David fled for his life and Jonathan went back into the city. One cannot help but wish that in latter times David could have been seen on the throne with faithful Jonathan by his side. What a pair they would have made in executing GOD's commands.

1st Samuel — Chapter Twenty-one

1 Sam. 21:1-6 “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? 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. Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. 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. 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. So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.”

“Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech came to meet David trembling, and said unto him, Why art thou

alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know anything of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed the young men to such and such a place. Now therefore what is under thy hand? give me five loaves of bread in my hand, or whatsoever there is present. And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under my hand, but there is holy bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days; when I came out, the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was but a common journey; how much more then to-day shall their vessels be holy? So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread, that was taken from before Jehovah, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.” (ASV)

Nob was a priestly city, and the ark was there at this time. One knows from later passages that there were eighty-six priests there, including the high priest. The city was located approximately two miles northeast of Jerusalem (Coffman, p. 255). Ahimelech was the high priest at this time. When David approached, it frightened Ahimelech because David did not have his army at his back. That is what is meant by **“Why are you alone?”** The later text shows that David had a few men with him, but apparently they were not his soldiers. This writer is inclined to believe that Ahimelech probably saw David without his army and possibly believed some great tragedy had happened in Israel, maybe a defeat of the armies.

In verse two David lied to Ahimelech. There was no excuse for his behavior under any circumstances. He told Ahimelech that the reason he was “alone” was because he had sent his soldiers to another place and that they would meet there.

Next David asked for food, but the priest did not have any **“common”** food available. All he had was the bread which had been

removed from the tabernacle: the shewbread. This bread was baked once a week, and on the sabbath day it was replaced by fresh loaves. This bread was considered holy and was to be eaten only by the priests.

“And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto Him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute” (Leviticus 24:5-9).

Ahimelech said that the men could have the bread if they had kept themselves from women. The point here was that they be ceremonially clean. One of the conditions for being ceremonially clean was not to have had sexual intercourse with one's wife.

“He said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives” (Exodus 19:15).

David declared that they had been away from their women for three days. He further stated that the bread would be sanctified by the vessel in which it would be placed, i.e., the human body.

When considering the actions of the high priest here in light of what Jesus said in Matthew 12:3-4, it would appear that he looked upon this as an act of mercy. In the text in Matthew twelve, the Jews attacked Jesus' disciples because they ate grain with unwashed hands. Jesus pointed out that if

they attacked them, why did they not say anything about David eating the shewbread. In both cases the men were hungry and needed sustenance, and both were filled through their partaking of the food available. In David's case, the law was violated. In the second case, no GOD-given law had been violated (only a man-made law had been violated).

1 Sam. 21:7-9 **“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. 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. 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.”**

“Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before Jehovah; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chiefest of the herdsmen that belonged to Saul. And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thy hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the vale 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.” (ASV)

Here is found a brief mention of Doeg, but it is one which had devastating results later. Four things are said about Doeg: (1) He was a servant of Saul, (2) He was detained before the Lord, (3) He was an Edomite, and (4) He was Saul's chief herdsman. That he was a servant of Saul's was recognized by David,

and later he recalled his fear of Doeg at that time. Second, one is told that he was “detained” before the Lord. Thayer says this word means

“To restrain, retain, close up, shut, withhold, refrain, stay, detain” (Thayer, CD Rom Version).

There are any number of guesses as to how or why he was detained. Barnes gives us this brief list:

“Either to fulfill a vow, or on account of uncleanness, or under the law of lepers, or as a proselyte. It is not impossible that Doeg may have been in custody or in sanctuary for some crime” (Barnes, p. 52).

Third, he was an Edomite, i.e., a descendant of Esau. The Edomites had long been enemies of Israel and had little regard for holy things. Thus, when Saul wanted the priests killed, Doeg did not hesitate. Fourth, one sees that he held a position of honor and responsibility in the house of Saul — chief herdsmen.

David then told another lie in asking for a weapon. It was true that he had not had time to gather his weapons before leaving, but it was not because the king’s business required haste. David was told that the only weapon there was the sword of Goliath, which David gladly took.

1 Sam. 21:10-15 **“And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the 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? And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And he changed his behaviour 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. Then said**

Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me? 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?”

“And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the 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? And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. 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. Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad; wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Do I lack madmen, that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?” (ASV)

KING — Zodhiates tells us this word means, *“A king, a ruler, a prince; god; a false god; an idol-king. Officials of many levels were designated by this title”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

SCRABBLED — *“To scrabble, limit, mark, make or set a mark”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version).

From Nob, David went to the city of Gath. It is interesting that he chose the very city of the man whose sword he carried. The king of this city was Achish, whom David apparently was going to see; possibly for the purpose of gaining asylum. After all, they had a common enemy – Saul. But the men of Gath quickly pointed him out as the man whom Israel proclaimed as slaying his ten thousands (He had gained this recognition for killing Philistines.). When David heard them talking he realized that he was in danger, so he pretended to be insane. He marked on the doors of the gate, some believe this means he clawed on them. He appeared to froth at the mouth by allowing his spit to run into his

beard. Because of this, Achish wanted nothing to do with David, which one will see, makes his escape possible.

Orientalists of that time had superstitions about those who were insane. They felt that they were touched by the gods, and therefore they would not harm them. Many tribes of American Indians felt the same way about those who were insane. Achish is saying that if he wanted a mad man in his house, he could find one from his own land.

“Later, in chapter 27, David was allowed to stay at Gath. The situation had changed by that time. David had a band of 600 men then, and it was widely known to the Philistines that Saul was trying to kill him” (Winton, p. 107).

1st Samuel — Chapter Twenty-two

1 Sam. 22:1-2 “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. 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.”

“David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave of Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. 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 captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.” (ASV)

ADULLAM — *“This place was near the border between Philistia and Judah where the Shephelah meets the rugged mountainous terrain of Judah, an area where there are literally hundreds of caves”* (Coffman, p. 263). *“The limestone cliffs of the whole of that locality are pierced with extensive excavation,*

some one of which is doubtless the ‘cave of Adullam’ the refuge of David” (Zerr, p. 36).

DISTRESS — *“A masculine noun meaning distress, anguish. It refers to hardships and anxiety; especially brought on from disobeying the Lord but also from general social and political conditions”* (Baker and Carpenter, p. 654).

DISCONTENTED — *“Bitter, bitterness”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“It means bitter (literally or figuratively), sad, embittered, fierce, violent, wild”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

After leaving Gath, David went to an area which was full of caves (see above). David's family joined him there. Since David had been made an outlaw, his family probably had good reason to fear Saul's anger. At Adullam a small army started to gather around David. It was made up of his family and those who were in distress, in debt, or discontented (bitter). He quickly had an army of four hundred men. In a very short time that army grew to six hundred men. These men were indeed a force to be reckoned with. As such, they protected the shepherds and villages around them, which will be seen later in this book. These men came from a background which might be looked down upon by many (distressed, debtors, discontented), but they were actually quite noble as they served David. As will be seen later, they did not mistreat or steal from those who were around them in these villages. They were also valiant in combat.

1 Sam. 22:3-5 “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. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold. 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.”

“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. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the stronghold. And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the stronghold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hereth.” (ASV)

HOLD — *“Fastness, stronghold”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“A feminine noun meaning a stronghold. It refers to a wilderness or mountainous places for hiding, defense, and gathering supplies for battle”* (Zodhiates, p. 654); *“A fortress, stronghold”* (JFB, p. 193).

GAD — *“prophet who advised David as he fled from Saul (1 Sam. 22:5) and who brought God’s options for punishment after David took a census of Israel (2 Sam. 24:11-14). Gad also brought David God’s orders to build an altar, apparently on the site of the future Temple (2 Sam. 24:18-19). The Chronicler pointed his records of David’s reign by Gad (1 Chron. 29:29) and of Gad’s assistance in showing David God’s plan for Temple worship (2 Chron. 29:25)”* (Holman, CD Rom Version).

From the cave of Adullam, David took his band to Mizpeh in the land of Moab. Why would the king of Moab agree to care for David’s parents? Possibly because his great-grandmother was a Moabite (Ruth). As long as David was an outlaw, the king of Moab took care of them. It was not long until the prophet Gad was sent to David to tell him to go back into the land of Judah and dwell there. Did GOD send Gad directly to David, or did he send him through Samuel? It is not known, but one does know that the message ultimately came from GOD. GOD was in

essence telling David that he was going to take care of him. Just where the forest of Hareth was is not known.

Not much is known about the prophet Gad. Where did Gad come from? Had he been associated with David in the past? Had he been one of the **“sons of the prophets?”**

Where was this **“hold”** where David had found a place of safety? Jamieson, Fausset and Brown believe this was Masada (p. 193-194). In noticing the definition of the Hebrew word, one sees that it describes a fortress, a stronghold — a place of safety. JFB then quoted Josephus for a description of Masada:

“As a lofty rock of considerable circuit, overhanging the Dead Sea, surrounded by profound valleys, unfathomable to the eye. It was inaccessible to the foot of animals in every part, except by two small paths hewn in the rock. One of these, the least difficult, was on the west; the other, on the east, was carried up from the lake itself by zig-zags cut along the crags of the precipice, and was exceedingly difficult and dangerous. ‘A fortress was built on it,’ adds the Jewish historian, ‘by our ancient kings, as a place of safe deposit for their wealth during war, and as a place of safety for their persons’” (JFB, p. 194).

Whether the **“hold”** was Masada or not, this place was obviously a high place, which was easier to defend than other places in the area.

1 Sam. 22:6-10 **“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;) 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; That all of you**

have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth 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? 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. And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

“And Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him: now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk-tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him. And 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, will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that discloseth to me when my son maketh a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or discloseth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of Jehovah for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.” (ASV)

Saul received word of David's whereabouts after David returned to Judah. Saul was in Gibeah of Ramah, which appears to be his capital. Notice that all of his servants were standing around him (his court). Who were these servants? Verse seven indicates that they were Benjamites. He appealed to them, asking if another king would give them fields and place them in positions of authority. This implies that if David were king, he would favor his own tribe, just as Saul had done with his. Saul was appealing to their sense of greed.

In verse eight one notices his twisted

mind-set in seeing a conspiracy all around him, even accusing his own son of getting David to lie in wait against him. He had a “*pity party*,” saying that no one felt sorry for him in the position he imagined for himself. This is often the way tyrants behave, always fearful of someone taking their power from them.

Doeg, who was mentioned in the last chapter (21:7), told Saul what he wanted to hear. Notice the tactic of Doeg: he told a partial truth. He made it appear that the priest (Ahimelech) favored David over the king. Apparently, Doeg had ill feelings toward the priests and saw an opportunity to cause them trouble. This appears to be proven in that he did not hesitate to kill them. Further, he went so far as to kill all of their families. In essence Doeg accused them of conspiracy against Saul. He failed to inform Saul that David had lied to Ahimelech in order to gain food and the sword of Goliath. With the frame of mind that Saul was in, this spelled disaster for anyone he suspected of aiding the “enemy.” As to Doeg's position as head of the servants, the Septuagint says he was over the mules of Saul (JFB, p. 194). The ASV says he “stood by the servants of Saul.”

1 Sam. 22:11-19 “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. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord. 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 enquired of GOD for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? 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? 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. And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. 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. 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 did wear a linen ephod. 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.”

“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. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord. 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 at this day? Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who among all thy servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and is taken into thy council, and is honorable in thy house? Have I to-day begun to inquire of GOD for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute anything unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father; for thy servant knoweth nothing of all this, less or more. And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. And the king said unto the guard that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of Jehovah; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew that he fled, and did not disclose it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of Jehovah. 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 he slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. 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.” (ASV)

Upon Doeg's report, Saul summoned Ahimelech and his house. If you had conspired against the king and he called you, would you go to him or try to escape? The fact that they answered the summons of Saul at this time is another indication of their innocence. If they had conspired with David, they would have fled to him for protection.

Saul accused Ahimelech of conspiring with David against him. He accused him of three things: (1) giving him food, (2) giving him a weapon, and (3) inquiring of the Lord on his behalf. He then tied all of these things to the charge of rebellion and the attempt to overthrow Saul (even kill him). From this text and everything which has been seen, one knows that at least one of the three initial charges was a lie. Ahimelech did not inquire of the Lord for David. All of Saul's last charge was a lie. David had not risen against him, nor had he laid in wait against Saul; in fact, he had tried to avoid Saul and let the Lord take care of this matter. It was not David chasing Saul in order to kill him, but the other way around.

Ahimelech answered Saul much in the same way as Jonathan had done earlier. He declared the faithfulness of David, saying the king had no one he could rely upon more than David. He had always faithfully followed Saul's orders and had been his chief commander against the Philistines. Next he protested the charges against him. He had not done what Saul accused him of, i.e., conspiring against Saul with David. He had done nothing wrong or against the king, and asked him to take back the charge against him and his family. He maintained that he knew

nothing about these matters.

Here one sees the utter corruption of Saul; he is in the complete control of Satan. He ordered his servants (bodyguard) to kill Ahimelech and all the priests. As Coffman points out, this is as good as a declaration of war against GOD Himself. But Saul's servants had respect for the priests of GOD and refused to kill them. The refusal of his most loyal troops, those who would die to the last man to protect him, ought to have opened Saul's eyes to the terrible deed he was about to commit. It did not, because he had allowed himself to go beyond the point of no return. So Saul turned to Doeg the Edomite, who willingly and eagerly killed eighty-five of the priests and then every living thing in the city of Nob. Was the bodyguard of Saul innocent in this affair? They did not raise their swords against GOD's priests. By refusing to protect them, however, they were just as guilty as Doeg and the men who helped him accomplish this terrible deed.

At this point one should review First Samuel 2:27-36. There GOD had told Eli that because of the sins of his sons, the priesthood would be stripped from the family. This was not completed at the death of Hophni and Phinehas. The process was started with their deaths. Now with the death of Ahimelech and all of his family (save one) one sees the process almost completed. The final elimination of Eli's house from the office of High Priest came shortly after Solomon became king. In a treasonous act, Abiathar took the side of Adonijah in a rebellion against Solomon.

“And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh....And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar” (1 Kings 2:26-27, 35).

Thus, the office of High Priest passed from the family of Eli to another, the family of Eleazar by Zadok.

Coffman points out an interesting thought. Saul had refused to utterly destroy the sinful Amalekites when GOD commanded him to do so but now condoned and commanded that the priests of GOD be utterly destroyed (Coffman, p. 269). The hatred of Doeg must have been great against the priests, for like a mad dog he turned from killing the priests to murdering their wives, children, and even their animals.

1 Sam. 22:20-23 “And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD'S priests. 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. Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.”

“And one of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar told David that Saul had slain Jehovah's priests. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew on 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. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: for with me thou shalt be in safeguard.” (ASV)

ABIATHAR — “Personal name meaning, ‘father of abundance.’ The son of Ahimelech and the eleventh high priest in succession from Aaron through the line of Eli. He survived the slaughter of the priests at Nob and fled to David, hiding in the cave of Adullam from King Saul (1 Sam. 22). Having escaped with the ephod, Abiathar became the high priest and chief counselor for David (1 Sam. 23:6). Repeatedly, he inquired of the Lord for David (1 Sam. 23:9; 30:7; 2 Sam. 2:1; 5:19). Abiathar shared with Zadok the responsibility of taking the ark to Jerusalem (1 Chron. 15:11-12; 2 Samuel 15:24). While Abiathar remained faithful to David during Absalom’s rebellion (2 Sam. 15), he later supported Adonijah as successor of King David instead of Solomon (1 Kings 1:7). Solomon deposed him from the priesthood and banished him to Anathoth, his home town, fulfilling the prophecy to Eli (1 Sam. 2:31-35). Only because of his faithful service to Solomon’s father, King David, was he spared the death penalty (1 Kings 2:26-27)”(Holman, CD Rom Version).

Only one of Ahimelech’s sons escaped the slaughter, though the details of his escape are not given. He told David what had happened, and David manfully took the blame for the death of his entire family. Why should David take the blame for this tragedy? How could he have known what Saul would do with the information Doeg gave him? But then, what if David had not told Ahimelech a lie? If he had done what was right and left it in the hands of GOD, would events have turned out differently? Or was this simply an occasion presented to have GOD’s will fulfilled? This writer believes this is the fulfilling of GOD’s will. Ahimelech came from the family of Eli, and GOD had told Eli that his family would no longer be the priests, beginning with the death of Hophni and Phinehas. Because of his feelings of guilt, David assured Abiathar that he would protect him.

1st Samuel — Chapter Twenty-three

1 Sam. 23:1-5 “Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors. 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. 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? 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. 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.”

“And they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and are robbing the threshing-floors. Therefore David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And Jehovah said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we are afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? Then David inquired of Jehovah yet again. And Jehovah answered him, and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thy hand. And David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and slew them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.” (ASV)

Who told David that the Philistines were attacking the city of Keilah? It may have been someone from the city itself or simply someone nearby who knew of these events. What is known is that David was interested in the well-being of these people.

Next, David inquired of the Lord as to whether he should save the city or not. How

did he enquire of the Lord? That detail is omitted. It may have been through the prophet Gad who was with him. Another possibility would be that GOD gave David the answer directly. This knowledge was probably not given to him through the use of the Urim and Thummin. These objects would have been at the Tabernacle with the High Priest. It was not until after David had conquered the Philistines at Keilah that the new High Priest (Abiathar) joined him with the **“ephod.”**

The threshing floors were wide flat places where the grain could be separated from the husk. This was done by tossing the grain into the air after it had been gathered and trampled on or had a sled run over it. This place needed to be where the wind gently blew on a steady basis. After separation from the husk, the grain would be piled up and later stored.

The thing which is most important to observe is that David did nothing without enquiring of the Lord first. He did not take it upon himself to decide what the Lord wanted done, as so many in every generation have done. David was inclined to help these people, but he left the decision up to GOD. He took the problem to the Lord and was told that victory was to be his. David knew that if he had the blessings, he could not fail. This is a valuable lesson for all of GOD’s servants to learn.

“What shall we then say to these things? If GOD be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31)

When David told his men what they were going to do, they expressed fear. They were in Judah where Saul might attack them at any time and possibly feared antagonizing the Philistines as well. Then they would be facing an enemy on two fronts. Again, David got assurance from GOD that this campaign would be successful. The battle was fought, David won and went away with great spoils which would help his small army.

What will be seen in the next nine verses is ingratitude. Ingratitude is a common sin among mankind, especially as it relates to the blessings GOD gives. One who does not show gratitude toward his fellow-man for the favors they have bestowed upon him is incapable of showing gratitude to GOD for His many blessings.

1 Sam. 23:6-14 “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. 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. And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. 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. 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. 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. 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 forbore to go forth. And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but GOD delivered him not into his hand.”

“And 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. And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, GOD hath delivered him into my hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars. And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. And David knew that Saul was devising mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. Then said David, O Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, thy servant hath surely heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And Jehovah said, He will come down. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver up to me and my men into the hand of Saul? And Jehovah said, They will deliver thee up. Then David and his men, who 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 forbore to go forth. And David abode in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill-country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but GOD delivered him not into his hand." (ASV)

David delivered Keilah from the Philistines, and Saul found out that he was in the city. Saul believed that GOD had delivered David into his hands. This is interesting when one considers that GOD had already informed Saul that He was no longer with him, i.e., on his side to help him. How then could Saul think such a thing? The answer is found in the truth expressed in Second Corinthians 4:3-4:

"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of GOD, should shine unto them."

The Gospel represents truth and truth is hidden by the devil himself from those who desire to do wrong. Satan had deceived Saul into thinking that GOD was still on his side

and would deliver his enemies into his hands. How many times through history have opposing armies declared that GOD was on their side? Saul blinded himself to the truth, just as many do today. Many in the denominational world believe that GOD is with them, yet they blatantly disobey His commands. One cannot have it both ways.

Again, notice that David turned to GOD in order to determine what he should do. He asked two questions: (1) Will the men of Keilah betray him, and (2) will Saul come against me here? Both of the questions were answered in the affirmative. David and his men fled into the wilderness to strongholds. It appears from this, and subsequent passages, that David and his men moved quite frequently. This is a good tactic when one is small in number — never allow oneself to get pinned down. Once a superior force knows where its enemy is, the fight is all but over. Saul was consumed by his attempts to destroy David, seeking him every day. But GOD would not "deliver" David into his hands, would not allow Saul to capture or defeat him.

The text also shows that David's army was growing. It had been four hundred men; now it was six hundred men.

1 Sam. 23:15-18 "And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood. And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in GOD. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house."

"And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in the wood. And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in GOD. And he

said unto him, Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before Jehovah: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.” (ASV)

David knew that Saul was hunting him. While Saul was hunting David, his son Jonathan was comforting and encouraging David. The covenant Jonathan and David made was a sacred thing. Therefore Jonathan’s strengthening of David is said to be in the Lord. It does not seem that this was a new covenant they made, but instead it was probably a renewal of their previous covenant. One cannot help wondering how Jonathan knew where to find David. Is it possible that by some means they were able to secretly communicate with each other?

How did Jonathan strengthen David? By telling him four things: (1) His father’s hand would not find him. Notice that he did not say his father would not find David, but that his father’s **“hand”** would not find him. This indicates the hand of harm, the hand which would bear a weapon of destruction. (2) You will be the next king of Israel. (3) I will support you as king (**“I shall be next unto thee.”**). (4) My father knows you will be the next king. How did Jonathan know these things?

What an attitude one sees manifested in Jonathan! He was willing to take the subordinate role if it was GOD’s will. There was no jealousy manifested by him for his friends when they were placed in positions of authority. His friendship was steadfast, no matter what difficulties were placed in the way of that friendship (His father once tried to kill him because of his friendship with David, and he probably would have tried again if he had known Jonathan strengthened David’s hand.). Notice that Jonathan apparently was not a part of the army which hunted David. He went back to his home rather than joining his father’s forces.

1 Sam. 23:19-24 “Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king’s hand. And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me. Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there: for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah. And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.”

“Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in the strongholds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of the desert? 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 up into the king’s hand. And Saul said, Blessed be ye of Jehovah; for ye have had compassion on me. Go, I pray you, make yet more sure, 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 subtly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking-places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me of a 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 among all the thousands of Judah. And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah on the south of the desert.” (ASV)

The Ziphites offered to show Saul where David was hiding, i.e., do the scouting for Saul. They knew that David was in the vicinity

of their town, but the text goes on to show that they did not know exactly where he was. If they had, when Saul told them to “know and see his place where his haunt is,” they would have said that they knew exactly where he was and led Saul to him; but they did not.

“From the Tell of Ziph a panorama of the whole surrounding district is to be seen. No wonder, then, that the Ziphites saw David and his men passing to and fro in the mountains of the wilderness...” (JFB, p. 197).

Because of their willingness to help Saul, he issued a blessing upon them. Was this blessing worth anything? Would GOD honor any blessing which Saul pronounced upon anyone? Would GOD bless the Ziphites when they were trying to bring harm to the man GOD favored? Obviously the answer to these questions is an emphatic **NO!** Yet, this shows the state of Saul. He thought GOD favored him and would favor anyone who helped him.

Verse twenty-four shows that the Ziphites went to find David, but he had already left the area and gone to another hiding place. Maybe David had his own spies to help him know Saul’s plans.

1 Sam. 23:25-29 **“Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth. And David went up**

from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.”

“And Saul and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down to the rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have made a raid upon the land. So Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth. And David went up from thence, and dwelt in the strongholds of En-gedi.” (ASV)

SELA-HAMMAHLEKOTH — *“The cliff of escapes’ or ‘The cliff of divisions’...a rock or cliff in the wilderness of Maon, southeast of Hebron, the scene of an escape of David from Saul”* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“The Hebrew name is, ‘Sela-hammah-lekoth, i.e., Rock of Smoothness (in the sense of slipping away or escaping).’ Matthew Henry thought that the same meant, ‘The Rock of Division, because it divided between Saul and David”* (Coffman, p. 281).

From Ziph, David went to Maon. Why? Because someone had told David what Saul was up to. It is possible that David had spies among Saul’s troops, or possibly there were those who sympathized with him among Saul’s forces, or maybe David just had people watching the movements of Saul. At any rate, he was warned and fled to Maon.

Saul pursued David into this region, and verse twenty-six shows his army were closing in on David. They were drawing the noose around David, attempting to encircle him. It appears that Saul and his army were about to accomplish their mission. But then a messenger came to Saul, informing him that the Philistines had invaded the land. Saul immediately left his pursuit of David to fight the Philistines. This is a clear indication of

the providence of GOD working for David's well-being. There is a similar incident during the time of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 19). The Assyrian, Rab-shakeh, was threatening Jerusalem, when GOD caused a rumor of an invading army to cause him to return home to defend his land. When David later looked at these events, they must have strengthened him in the days ahead as Saul continued to pursue him. He could know from events like this that GOD was on his side and would protect him.

After Saul left, David next fled to the safer hiding place of En-gedi, which was west of the Dead Sea.

1st Samuel — Chapter Twenty-four

1 Sam. 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 Engedi. 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. And he came to the sheepcotes 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. 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. And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. 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. 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.”

“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. 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. And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet. Now David and his men were abiding in the innermost parts of the cave. And the men of David said unto him, Behold, the day of which Jehovah said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thy hand, and thou shalt do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, Jehovah forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, Jehovah's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is Jehovah's anointed. So David checked his men with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. And Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.” (ASV)

As soon as Saul returned from fighting the Philistines, someone told him that David was in Engedi.

ENGEDI — *“Place name meaning, ‘place of the young goat.’ A major oasis along the western side of the Dead Sea about 35 miles southeast of Jerusalem”* (Holman's Dictionary, Computer Version).

Saul immediately took three thousand of his best soldiers and began pursuing David again.

The reference to the **“rocks of the wild goats”** is not a reference to a particular place. Rather, it describes the terrain of this area. It is wild, with steep mountainous terrain where the wild goats would feel at home. In this area, Saul came upon some sheep-folds, which were near some caves. There are many caves in this area, with some being quite large and easily capable of hiding thirty thousand people (Coffman, p. 285).

“I have seen hundreds of these

sheepcotes around the mouth of caverns, and indeed there is scarcely a cave in the land, whose location will admit of being thus occupied (i.e. by the flocks), but has such a 'cote' in front of it, generally made by piling up loose stones into a circular wall, which is covered with thorns, as a further protection against robbers and wild beasts. During cold storms, and in the night, the flocks retreat into the cave, but at other times they remain in the enclosed cote.... These caverns are as dark as midnight, and the keenest eye cannot see five paces inward; but one who has been long within, and is looking outward toward the entrance, can observe with perfect distinctness all that takes place in that direction. David, therefore, could watch Saul as he came in, and notice the exact place where he 'covered his feet,' while Saul could see nothing but impenetrable darkness" (Thomson quoted in Pulpit Commentary, pp 459-460).

Saul chose to "**cover his feet**" in one of these caves. This term is thought to be a euphemism for going to the bathroom, but "*The Psehitta, an ancient version of the Bible, translates this Hebrew phrase as meaning 'to sleep'*" (Winter, p. 286).

David and his men were also in this cave, hiding from Saul and his army. This must have been a very large cave, for it is remembered that David had at least six hundred men with him at this time. Saul had no idea that they were there, but they were very aware of his presence (see above). David's men believed this was the opportunity they had been waiting for, and one can well understand their desire to put an end to Saul. Further, they believed this was the providence of GOD based on what one is told in verse four.

David approached Saul and cut off a piece of his robe, but later he regretted that action.

Why did he regret it? Because he felt it showed a lack of respect for the position of Saul as GOD's anointed king. Even though Saul was trying to kill him, David could not harm him because of his respect for the position Saul held. One should learn a lesson from this today. The United States had a ruler (President Clinton) whose personal life and actions deserved no respect whatsoever, yet respect must be shown for the office which he held. No man can hold that office without the permission of GOD.

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to His disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23:1-3).

Because of his respect for Saul's position, David constrained his men from harming Saul. Saul deserved death, but David would wait for GOD to take care of this matter.

"David stayed his servants. The verb is a strong one, and means to crush down. It shows that David had to use all his authority to keep his men, vexed by Saul's pursuit, from killing him" (Pulpit Commentary, p. 460).

1 Sam. 24:8-15 "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. And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day 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. 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. The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea. The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.”

“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 bowed with his face to the earth, and did obeisance. And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearkenest thou to men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that Jehovah had delivered thee to-day into my hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee; but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord; for he is Jehovah's anointed. 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 my hand, and I have not sinned against thee, though thou huntest after my life to take it. Jehovah judge between me and thee, and Jehovah avenge me of thee; but my hand shall not be upon thee. As saith the proverb of the ancients, Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness; but my hand shall not be upon thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea. Jehovah therefore be judge, and give sentence between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thy hand.” (ASV)

After Saul left the cave, David followed him out and called to him. In verse eight, one sees the respect that David had for Saul's

position when he bowed himself to the earth. This indicates (and should teach one today) that it is not wrong but rather necessary to show respect for a person's position, even though the person himself may have the worst character imaginable. David then proclaimed that there were those around him who had slandered him (David). They claimed that David wanted to kill Saul, yet David would prove that when he had the chance to do that very thing, he refused to do so. His proof was the portion of Saul's skirt which he held in his hand. For him to have been that close (and Saul not know it) proved that he could have easily killed him. David also advised him that his own men had urged him to kill Saul, but he had refused.

The question may arise, “*Did David do wrong in not killing Saul?*” At first glance, these circumstances would seem to imply that GOD had providentially delivered Saul into David's hands. If GOD wanted David to take Saul's life and David did not, then David would have been guilty of sin. A case in point would be Saul's sparing the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15). David had been chased by Saul all over the nation; Saul had constantly sought David's life. Why would not David have **felt** like GOD had providentially delivered Saul into his hands for execution for his sins? The point is that even though circumstances may seem like GOD's providence, it may be that they are truly circumstantial and not providential. Instead, this may have been a temptation placed before David by the Devil. The warning one needs to consider is that though something in one's life may appear to be providential (the will of GOD), it may not be. It may be that one is being solicited to sin. If there had been an evil heart in David, it would have been easy for him to have killed Saul and declared that he did so because GOD wanted him to kill him. Instead of doing evil, David quoted the scriptures and did righteously. He knew GOD would, in His own time, take care of Saul's punishment. If the

time ever came when GOD ordered him to take Saul's life, he would have done it. It seems apparent that he had not been told by GOD to kill Saul.

David's words have a sense of chiding in them. Saul had sought to kill him on numerous occasions, yet David had done nothing evil to him. David declared in verse twelve that he would let the Lord judge between them, i.e., settle the issues at hand.

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19).

Yet this point should not be missed: David's words clearly declared that Saul was evil and that GOD would take vengeance on Saul – it was only a matter of time. This verse also seems to be a call on David's part for GOD to avenge him against his enemy.

Verse thirteen reminds one of Matthew 7:17-19:

“Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.”

In verse fourteen, David simply used terms meant to show his insignificance compared to that of Saul. In a sense, David was asking Saul why he was wasting his time chasing him. Were there not more important matters for the king of Israel to attend to than trying to capture (kill) someone who could not do him any harm? He ended his speech by again calling for GOD to judge between them and for GOD to deliver him out of Saul's hand.

1 Sam. 24:16-22 “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. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. 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. 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. And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. 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. And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.”

“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. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil. And thou hast declared this day how that thou hast dealt well with me, forasmuch as when Jehovah had delivered me up into thy hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore Jehovah reward thee good for that which thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand. Swear now therefore unto me by Jehovah, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the stronghold.” (ASV)

When David finished his speech, Saul recognized him as his son. Saul rendered tears, probably of grief and shame on this occasion. There can be little doubt from his actions and words that he realized he was in the wrong. He drew a contrast between

himself and David which basically said, “I am evil, and you are righteous.” He admitted the evidence in David’s hand showed that David had no ill will toward him. A man would not let his enemy go if he had personal animosity toward him. Notice also that Saul knew that the Lord was not on his side, for he admitted that the Lord had delivered him into David’s hands that day. It should be considered that Saul’s words in the text may only be what he thought had happened. See the above notes on providence in this chapter. It should be remembered that what one perceives to be the work of GOD may not be so at all.

In verse twenty, Saul admitted his knowledge of the fact that David would surely be king someday. Jonathan had already made that observation in First Samuel 23:17. Notice also that Saul made the same request of David which Jonathan had made in First Samuel 20:15. In those times, new rulers often killed all of the family of their predecessor. Some, like the Egyptians, would even go so far as to try to eliminate all records that the previous ruler had ever lived. As he did with Jonathan, David assured Saul that he would not destroy his family.

At the end of this episode, Saul went home, and David went up to the stronghold. David was wise enough to know that the change of heart demonstrated by Saul was probably only temporary in nature. Saul’s past actions could not be wisely overlooked by David. To ignore a person’s nature because of a strong desire to believe he has changed is often a deadly mistake. As this writer studies this, he cannot help but believe that David accepted Saul’s repentance as genuine; nevertheless, he was smart enough not to ignore the past. There is no doubt that David forgave him, but he still acted prudently with regard to Saul and the future. Today one should take note of this incident and learn from it. Saul had demonstrated that he often acted on impulse. The impulse and emotions of **this** day caused him to repent and stop

pursuing David. As would soon be manifested, Saul’s good will toward David would quickly end (1 Samuel 26).

1st Samuel — Chapter Twenty-five

1 Sam. 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.”

“And Samuel died; and all Israel gathered themselves together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.” (ASV)

The great prophet Samuel died, and all of Israel gathered to mourn him and bury him. Winter says that the terminology here is a reference to the custom of burying one on his own property (Winter, p. 295). In First Samuel 28:3 it is affirmed that Samuel was buried at Ramah.

The text states that at the death of Samuel, David moved to the wilderness of Paran. Why David moved at this time is not known. It may be that David had lost a great counselor in Samuel and since the nation was occupied in mourning him, David could safely and secretly move to another location. It may be that since his army had grown, he needed to be in another area which could more abundantly supply the needs of his army. Whatever the reason for his move at this time, the Bible does not answer our curiosity.

How old was Samuel when he died? It is thought, based on Josepus’ comments and a little mathematics, that he was around seventy at the time of his death. JFB quotes Josephus as saying,

“Samuel governed and presided over the people alone, after the death of Eli the high priest twelve years, and eighteen years in conjunction with Saul the king” (p. 200).

If that is the case, since Saul reigned for forty

years, then it would be another twenty-two years from this text before Saul would die. Another twenty-two years of David living the life of an outcast. It is commonly believed that David was seventy years old when he died. David reigned over Israel for forty years. Add another twenty-two years after Saul's death, which would have made David eight years old at the time of Samuel's death. Obviously, something is wrong with Josephus' account.

At this point, one might consider a memorial of the life of Samuel written by Edwards and quoted by JFB.

“As a man, he was remarkable through life for his eminent holiness, his energy, and indefatigable activity, his dignified consistency, and his devotional habits, which, commencing in his childhood, grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength. As a magistrate, he embodied in all his public acts the principles of the theocratic constitution; and, called as he was to hold the reins of government at a time of newly-acquired liberty and independence from foreign domination, his uniform object was to realize amongst his countrymen the idea of the ‘chosen generation, the holy nation, the royal priesthood, the peculiar people.’ In relation to the Church, his influence was no less beneficial than lasting; for, at a period of great and prevailing corruption, he affected a thorough reformation of religion, re-establishing the authority of the Mosaic law, by enforcing the regular observance of the of the ordinances of worship, especially by instituting the schools of the prophets, from which a supplu of young teachers, duly qualified for instructing the people in sacred knowledge and psalmody, was obtained, and in the formation as well as subsequent continuance of which a

great step was taken in the progressive development of the scheme of grace” (JFB, p. 199).

1 Sam. 25:2 “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.”

“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.” (ASV)

This is not a reference to Mount Carmel but rather to a place which is near Maon in the tribe of Judah. This verse is the beginning of an introduction of the man Nabal. The key thing shown here is that he was very rich.

1 Sam. 25:3 “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.”

“Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail; and the woman was 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.” (ASV)

NABAL — “Fool” (Thayer, CD); “His name means a particular boorish type of ‘fool’ (1 Sam. 25:25)” (Baker and Carpenter, p. 5035); “‘Fool’ or ‘rude, ill-bred’” (Holman’s Computer Version).

ABIGAIL — “My father is joy” (Thayer, CD); “My father is glad, joyful” (Baker and Carpenter, p. 26); “My father rejoiced” (Holman’s Computer Version).

UNDERSTANDING — “Prudence, insight,

understanding” (Thayer, CD); “It means intelligence, success, happiness, discretion, knowledge, understanding, prudence, insight, cunning, good sense, wisdom, policy” (Zodhiates, CD).

COUNTENANCE — “*Shape, form, outline, figure, appearance*” (Thayer, CD); “*A masculine noun meaning form, appearance, beauty. It refers to the contours and outward form of something, e.g., the body of a woman or a man*” (Baker and Carpenter, p. 1211).

CHURLISH — “*Hard, cruel, severe, obstinate*” (Thayer, CD); “*It means hard, difficult, severe, unfeeling, cruel, harsh; inflexible, obstinate, hardened, stubborn*” (Zodhiates, CD).

This verse shows one a little about these two individuals and their characters, so that one might better understand the events which followed. Of Abigail it is said that she was a woman of “**understanding.**” It is also said that she had a “**beautiful countenance.**” On the other hand and in contrast to her, her husband is said to have been “**churlish.**” It is further stated that he was “**evil in his doings.**” Nabal’s name itself means “*fool.*” How would one be named Nabal or fool? Surely no parent would name his child “fool.” Yet one may suppose parents could be so evil as to do such a thing. This writer assumes that he earned this name by his evil deeds. It may be that he took the name on himself in a misguided thought of pride that he was that way.

1 Sam. 25:4-8 “**And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. 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: 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. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now**

thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour 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.”

“And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep. And David sent 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: and thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: thy shepherds have now been with us, and we did them no hurt, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will tell 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 thy hand, unto thy servants, and to thy son David.” (ASV)

The time of the sheep-shearing was a joyous time which often ended with a feast. (Although it must be added that the NKJV’s use of the words “feast day” in verse eight is without foundation in the original.) David heard that Nabal, the rich man, was shearing his sheep. He sent messengers to Nabal with kind greetings, wishing him the very best. Notice that he sent them in “his name,” i.e., by his authority. How many men did David send and why? Ten were sent, which may indicate that he expected a liberal gift from Nabal. This might also have merit based on the way David spoke of him to his servants as one who lived in prosperity.

Nabal’s shepherds and flocks would necessarily need protection because of the bands of thieves which were common. Also, enemies like the Philistines who would try to take all they could from their enemies, the Israelites. David and his men had provided this protection. Now David asked for help in

return; he expected Nabal to reward the protection he had given. This may seem strange to one today, and as one writer stated, it may seem like a “protection racket.” But in that time, this was very common and was not considered to be something illegal or unreasonable. It seems to have been part of the code of conduct at that time. The following text will show that Abigail and Nabal’s servants felt that David was due a reward for protecting the flocks and herds of Nabal.

Nabal should have been grateful for the protection given him so that he might live in peace. Just so, Christians should feel and express gratitude to a secular government which provides the ability for them to practice their religion in peace.

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of GOD our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

1 Sam. 25:9-13 “And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. 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? So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. 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.”

“And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there are many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men of whom I know not whence they are? So David's young men turned on their way, and went back, and came and told him according to all these words. 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 baggage.” (ASV)

David’s men faithfully delivered the message to Nabal, who in turn pretended not to know David. This writer believes that he pretended based on his reference to David not serving his master (Saul) as he should. The text goes on to show that Abigail knew who David was and that he would rule some day. If she knew, surely Nabal also knew who David was. He knew who David was, but he refused to help him, even going so far as to insult him and his family. It should be remembered that David had instructed his young men to tell Nabal to ask his own servants with regard to David’s protection. In every way, Nabal was without excuse in treating David in such a harsh and callous way. One should remind himself of the description of Nabal in verse three. Nabal told David’s servants that he would not give them anything.

David’s servants reported Nabal’s words to David, who immediately told his men to arm themselves for battle. David intended to take what he needed (as was his right under customs of the time) and kill Nabal (v. 22).

The action which he proposed was wrong, and he later acknowledged such (vv. 33-34). He appears not to have consulted GOD on this occasion as he had previously done before going to battle. Further, notice his actions toward Saul in the cave. This incident seems out of character for David and shows his human nature and possibly some of the “demons” he had to face. David was a great man of GOD, but GOD also showed his weaknesses or, as someone once said, “his warts.” David took four hundred men of war to accomplish this task.

Interestingly, the text also shows that he left two hundred men to protect their stuff. Is it wrong to protect one’s stuff, even if it requires force? Not according to the implication of this text.

1 Sam. 25:14-17 “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. 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: They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. 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.”

“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 at them. But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we anything, as long as we went with them, when we were in the fields: they were a wall unto us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his house: for he is such a worthless fellow, that one cannot speak to him.” (ASV)

RAILED — “*To scream, shriek*” (Thayer, CD); “*A verb meaning to pounce upon, to rush greedily*” (Baker and Carpenter, p. 827); “*Flew upon them*” (Barnes, p. 59); “*Literally, ‘flew upon them like a bird of prey’*” (Pulpit Commentary, p. 477).

BELIAL — “*Worthless, good for nothing, unprofitable, base fellow*” (Thayer, CD); “*It means worthlessness, wickedness; perdition, a wicked man; a destroyer*” (Zodhiates, CD).

Here one sees one of Nabal’s servants going to Abigail to tell her what Nabal had done and to warn her that there would surely be retribution rendered to all of Nabal’s house. He told her that his master had screamed at David’s servants. Then he confirmed that David and his men had indeed treated them well, even to the point of protecting them as if they had been in a walled city. In other words, David and his men had acted as a buffer between them and those who might have robbed or hurt them.

Verse seventeen shows why the servant went to Abigail instead of trying to persuade Nabal of his wrong. He says that his master is such a “*Worthless, good for nothing, unprofitable, base fellow,*” “son of belial” (see earlier definition) that no one can talk to him, i.e., talk any sense into him. This servant showed great boldness in his effort to save his masters household. He obviously knew the nature of Abigail, that she would act prudently in this matter. Did this servant have inside information as to David’s plans? This seems highly unlikely. His counsel to Abigail was probably based on customs of the time, which means that he acknowledged the right of David to expect a reward for his service of protection. It also seems to imply David’s right to take a reward if it were not voluntarily given.

1 Sam. 25:18-22 “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. And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. 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. 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. 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.”

“Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched grain, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. And she said unto her young men, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. And it was so, as she rode on her ass, and came down by the covert of the mountain, that, behold, David and his men came down toward her; and she met them. 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 returned me evil for good. GOD do so unto the enemies of David, and more also, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light so much as one man-child.” (ASV)

COVERT — “*Covering, shelter, hiding place, secrecy*” (Thayer, CD); “*A masculine noun meaning a covering, a hiding place, a secret*” (Baker and Carpenter, p. 793).

When Abigail heard the facts of the case, she immediately set about to try to rectify the situation. She knew that her husband had acted wrongly and also knew that she must act quickly to avoid the ruin her servant had told her about. This shows something about

David, i.e., he acted quickly in making decisions, and this fact was apparently well known. She prepared a very generous gift to appease David and had the servants take the gift ahead, while she followed behind. This reminds one of the account of Jacob and Esau. When Jacob returned from serving Laban, he sent gifts ahead to pacify his brother. Once the gifts had been given, he could make a plea on his behalf.

It is observed that Abigail did not tell her husband what she was doing. It may have been that he was drunk (v. 36) or, more likely, because she knew that he would stop her from accomplishing her noble purpose. Interestingly, though she knew how evil her husband was, yet she would try to spare him. The text also says she “came down by the covert of the hill,” which means she came by a secret way to meet David. This was probably done to keep her husband from finding out what she was doing. From the context, one needs to notice that she did not intend to keep this a secret for long. She would tell her husband after she had secured his salvation and when there was a better time.

Verses twenty-one and twenty-two show that David had thought about these events and had determined to utterly destroy the house of Nabal by killing all of the males. Again this writer states that the extent to which David contemplated this action was sin, which Abigail knew and David later confessed.

The entire context here shows another lesson which is important to learn. David obviously made a strong determination, if not a vow in GOD’s name, to take the action against Nabal. But when David realized that his action was sinful, he turned from accomplishing the deed. Unlike Herod in the case of John the immerser, he was humble enough to admit his wrong and refuse to do that which was wrong. This should teach one a lesson today. If one decides on a particular course of action and then realizes it is wrong,

he should humbly refuse to finish his intended course of action. Such would be right and pleasing to GOD.

1 Sam. 25:23-31 “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, 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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; 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.”

“And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and alighted from her ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground. And she fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me be the iniquity; and let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine ears, and hear thou the words of thy handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this worthless fellow,even Nabal; for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thy handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now therefore, my lord, as Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing Jehovah hath withholden thee from bloodguiltiness, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now therefore let thine enemies, and them that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. And now this present which thy servant hath brought unto my lord, let it be given unto the young men that follow my lord. Forgive, I pray thee, the trespass of thy handmaid: for Jehovah will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord fighteth the battles of Jehovah; and evil shall not be found in thee all thy days. And though men be risen up to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul, yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with Jehovah thy GOD; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when Jehovah shall have done to my lord according to all the good that He hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee prince over Israel, that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood without cause, or that my lord hath avenged himself. And when Jehovah shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thy handmaid.” (ASV)

These verses give the account of Abigail’s meeting with David and of how she was able to appease David’s wrath. As soon as she came in contact with him, she bowed herself to the ground in humble recognition of an inferior in the presence of a superior.

She admitted that her husband had acted foolishly and that his name fit him (The same word is used in Psalm 14:1 and is translated “fool.”). Yet, she was willing to take the blame

for what had happened when David's messengers came, even though she had not even known of their presence. This is a remarkable instance of the self-sacrificing love which all married people should have for their mates. Even though she knew that her husband had acted in a wrong manner, she was willing to take the blame and punishment so that he could live. She would sacrifice herself for him, though he did not deserve it. This is the same kind of sacrifice which the Lord made for His bride, the church.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But GOD commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:7-8).

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to GOD for a sweetsmelling savour” (Ephesians 5:2).

In verse twenty-six, she attributed her going to David and stopping him from his murderous intentions as if GOD were stopping him. This may indicate that she had received Divine instructions in this matter, or it may simply indicate that she had a very good knowledge of the Scriptures and knew that David's actions on this occasion would be displeasing to GOD. She recognized the truth and principle of Romans 12:19-21:

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst,

give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:18).

Do not take upon yourself an act of vengeance — let GOD take care of the matter.

Verses twenty-eight through thirty-one show that she believed GOD was going to fulfill His promise to David; i.e., David would surely be the king of Israel. How did Abigail know these things? It could have been through inspiration. It could have been that David's future ascension to the throne was common knowledge. Since Jonathan and Saul had both acknowledged this fact, it is very probable that the whole nation knew these truths. Notice that she referred to David as the prince of Israel, which seems to signify a recognition that GOD was king and that David would be His prince over Israel. She also wanted to be remembered for her kindness when David became king.

Verse thirty-one expresses the idea that if David did what he contemplated at this time, that he would later come to regret his action. This would seem to be true when one considers how he felt when he simply cut off the hem of Saul's robe. How much more would it have bothered David later if he had killed this worthless fellow (Nabal) to satisfy his own sense of vengeance? Notice also the deep remorse David expressed in Psalm fifty-one over his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband and his companions. No doubt the remorse of these actions followed him to his grave.

1 Sam. 25:32-35 **“And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:**

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. 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. 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.”

“And David said to Abigail, Blessed be Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy discretion, and blessed be thou, that hast kept me this day from bloodguiltiness, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, as Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, liveth, who hath withholden me from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light so much as one man-child. So David received of her hand that which she had brought him: and he said unto her, Go up in peace to thy house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.” (ASV)

David's answer to Abigail is seen. She chided him for his intended actions and told him that he would regret them later. David, in answering her, saw the hand of GOD in her actions and words. He believed that GOD had sent her to stop him from taking personal vengeance for the wrong he had suffered at the hands of Nabal. Remember that Abigail had already stated that her husband was in the wrong. David thanked her for coming and blessed her for the advice she gave him; but more importantly, he thanked GOD. David also made his former intentions known to her, i.e., to kill all of the males of Nabal's household. He next sent Abigail home with the assurance that her actions and words had accomplished their desired effect: he would

not attack or harm Nabal and his household in any way.

When one views these events, it is interesting to note that David had restrained himself from taking personal vengeance on Saul for the many injustices he had suffered at Saul's hand. Yet, here he flew into a rage against Nabal for his personal insults --- so much so that he was not only going to kill Nabal but every male in his household. This would have not only harmed Nabal, but would also have brought harm to the wives of these men and their children. Further, the regret David would have felt for the rest of his life would have been amplified by enemies who would surely have charged him with this crime.

True to his nature, David repented upon realizing the sin he had contemplated. He was thankful to Abigail for pointing out the error of his intended course and thankful to GOD for sending her to stop this evil pursuit. How different David reacted to this event than most do. So often when one's sins are pointed out, the sinner attacks the messenger. Quite often he becomes an enemy of the messenger. Such was not the case with Abigail and later Nathan. Nor was David too proud to have his men see his admission of wrong and change his intended course. The opposite of David's attitude may be seen in the account of Herod who killed John the immerser.

1 Sam. 25:36-38 “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. 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. And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.”

“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. And it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, that his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass about ten days after, that Jehovah smote Nabal, so that he died.” (ASV)

Upon returning home, Abigail found Nabal drunk from the party he had thrown. This was probably a party for his sheep-shearers, as was the common custom of the time. She waited until the morning, when the effects of the alcohol had worn off, and then told him all that had transpired. This sounds very much like Nabal had a stroke which left him paralyzed. Ten days later he died. The interesting thing is that the Lord executed vengeance on him for the way he had treated His anointed. Along with everything which one has been told in this context, the Lord's actions clearly show Nabal to be in the wrong and deserving of punishment.

1 Sam. 25:39-42 “And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. 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. 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.”

“And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be Jehovah, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept back his servant from evil: and the evil-doing of Nabal hath Jehovah returned upon his own head. And David sent and spake concerning Abigail, to take her to him to wife. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David hath sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. And she arose, and bowed herself with her face to the earth, and said, Behold, thy handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that followed her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.” (ASV)

Upon hearing of Nabal's death, David gave thanks in two areas: (1) GOD had pleaded his cause, i.e., took his part in this matter and avenged him, and (2) GOD had kept him from committing evil through Abigail. The next thing David did was send messengers to arrange a wedding between himself and Abigail. She accepted and took five of her maids to go meet David. Some have speculated that this brought her former husband's wealth into the hands of David, since no son is mentioned. How much time passed between Nabal's death and David's wedding is not known. The Pulpit Commentary states that a widow's legal mourning lasted seven days. When one views the wisdom which Abigail had shown, it can easily be seen why David might be attracted to her. What a change this would be for Abigail, who had been married to a fool but would not be married to GOD's anointed.

Winters points out that one can learn the following things about Abigail in this chapter. “*She was humble (v. 23), generous (v. 27), god-fearing (v. 29), knowledgeable (v. 30), and affluent (v. 42)*” (Winters, p. 305). Truly, she seems to have been a remarkable person.

Some believe the fact that David took two wives during this time shows that the conditions in which he and his men were living

in were not that severe and possibly more settled than one might imagine. Truly, women in the camp would make it harder to flee when necessary.

1 Sam. 25:43-44 “David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives. But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which was of Gallim.”

“David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they became both of them his wives. Now Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.” (ASV)

Here is the simple account of the beginning of David's polygamy. Michal was his first wife, and now he took two more wives (Abigail and Ahinoam). The text also reveals that Saul had taken Michal and given her in marriage to another (Phalti). Seeing what Saul had become, this may have been done out of spite because Michal had loved David enough to aid his escape from Saul and then lie to her father. All indications are that David deeply loved her as well, for when he became king he demanded that she be returned to him (2 Sam. 3). This action of Saul was probably meant to hurt both of them. Most agree that the “Jezreel” spoken of in this passage is not the famous one found in Issachar, but it was probably a place in Judah.

1st Samuel — Chapter Twenty-six

1 Sam. 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? 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. 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. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed. 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.”

“And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert? 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. And Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come of a certainty. And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had encamped; and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, and the people were encamped round about him.” (ASV)

Saul tried to hunt David down again. Some have tried to affirm that this is another account of the events of chapter twenty-four. But they are quite different. (1) They happen in different places. (2) The first took place in a cave in broad daylight; this took place at night in the middle of Saul's camp. (3) Earlier David cut off the hem of Saul's garment; here he took Saul's spear and water bottle. The three similarities of these events were (1) David spared Saul's life when he could have taken it, (2) Saul had his usual standing army of three thousand with him, and (3) the Ziphites were involved in both instances.

What is the “**trench**” mentioned in verse five? The ASV says, “*Saul lay within the place of the wagons,*” and the NKJV says, “*Saul lay within the camp.*” The wagons and stuff of the army seem to have been circling the camp in what might be described as a circle of defense. In the center leaders could gather

with the army stationed between them and the baggage (wagons). This is where Saul and the captain of his host slept. This was a defensive maneuver so that if the camp was attacked, the leaders would have more safety and the opportunity to rally the troops.

1 Sam. 26:6-12 “Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. 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. 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. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless? 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. 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. 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.”

“Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at

his head; and Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David, GOD hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless? And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle and perish. Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed: but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they gat them away: and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them.” (ASV)

The man Abishai was one of David's most loyal men.

“ABISHAI (uhb' ih shay i) personal name meaning, 'father exists.' Son of David's sister Zeruiah and brother of Joab, David's general (1 Chron. 2:15-16). He was with David when he spared Abner (1 Sam. 26:7) and with Joab pursuing Abner (2 Sam. 2:24) and killing Abner (2 Sam. 3:30). He commanded troops against Ammon (2 Sam. 10). He sought to kill Shemei for cursing David, but the king restrained him (2 Sam. 16; 19:21). He led a third of David's troops against David's son Absalom (2 Sam. 18). He commanded forces against Sheba, who led a northern rebellion against David (2 Sam. 20). He killed Isbi-benob, the Philistine giant who threatened David (2 Sam. 21:15-17). A mighty captain, he was still not among David's elite three (2 Sam. 23:8-19). He was famed for killing 18,000 Edomites (1 Chron. 18:12)” (Holman's Electronic Version).

On this occasion, Abishai volunteered to go with David into the camp of Saul. There he

offered to kill Saul for David, but David would not let him. Instead he took the spear from beside Saul's pillow and his water cruse (canteen) as well. These items would later be used as proof that David could have killed Saul if he had so chosen. David offered three possibilities of how Saul would die: (1) the Lord would smite him, (2) natural causes, or (3) in war. But David refused to be a part of his death. He had just learned a great lesson on vengeance in the affair of Nabal. David would let GOD handle his enemies, knowing full well that GOD was going to avenge him of this enemy.

“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good”
(Romans 12:17-21).

The Lord had a part in this adventure of David's this night, which caused this writer to wonder if He did not send David on this mission. The Lord caused a **“deep sleep”** to come upon Saul and his men. One finds the same phrase in Genesis 2:21, where GOD caused a “deep sleep” to come upon Adam for the purpose of removing his rib to make a woman.

1 Sam. 26:13-16 “Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space being between them: 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? 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. 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.”

“Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off; a great space being between them; 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? 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 watch over thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not good that thou hast done. As Jehovah liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept watch over your lord, Jehovah's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head.” (ASV)

Once David was safely away from Saul on another hill, he called out to Abner, Saul's chief general. David admonished Abner for not doing a better job of protecting the king. Of course the readers of this account know why he had not done a better job in this responsibility, for GOD had delivered Saul into David's hands through the deep sleep. The spear and cruse were then used to prove that David could have killed Saul if he had chosen to. This writer can imagine that when David asked this question probably everyone quickly looked to see if Saul was all right and then looked for the items of which David spoke.

1 Sam. 26:17-20 “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. And he said, Wherefore doth

my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand? 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. 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.”

“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. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in my hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it be Jehovah that hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if it be the children of men, cursed be they before Jehovah: for they have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of Jehovah: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.” (ASV)

Saul recognized the voice of David and called out to him. David responded by asking why Saul was pursuing him. He challenged Saul to show what he had done which was wrong and why he thus deserved this pursuit.

David next put forth two propositions. If GOD had stirred Saul up against him, then perhaps a sacrifice would straighten this matter up. This may have been meant in one of two ways or both. David was saying if I have done something worthy of punishment then a sacrifice will clear the matter. Second, David says, if it was his people (children of men) who had wrongly stirred up Saul against him, then they should be cursed of GOD. The

reason that they should be cursed was that their accusations had caused him to have to live outside of his inheritance in the land GOD had promised His people. By being forced to live outside of the land, he could not go to the tabernacle, not enjoy the national heritage. He was being forced to live in a land where false gods were worshipped.

In verse twenty, David again refers to himself as something which is insignificant. He spoke of himself as “*a single flea*” (Pulpit Commentary, p. 199) or a partridge, who was caused to flee for his life on a constant basis.

“People in the East, in hunting the partridge and other game birds, pursue them till observing them becoming languid and fatigued; after they have been put up two or three times, they rush upon the birds stealthily and knock them down with bludgeons” (JFB, p. 205).

1 Sam. 26:21-25 “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. And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into my hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed. 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. 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.”

“Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my life was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and

have erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold the spear, O king! let then one of the young men come over and fetch it. And Jehovah will render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness; forasmuch as Jehovah delivered thee into my hand to-day, and I would not put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed. 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 Jehovah, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation. Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do mightily, and shalt surely prevail. So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place." (ASV)

Saul admitted that he had sinned in his attempt to take David's life. He then entreated David to return to his home with a promise of safety. But David's answer showed that he could not place his life in the hands of Saul. Instead of going to the camp of Saul, he requested that one of Saul's young men come and get the spear and cruse.

David next called for GOD to bless those who were faithful to Him. He included himself in this blessing, because he had not harmed the Lord's anointed. Saul ended this discussion by saying that David would do great things and prevail (meaning he would come out on top). Each went his separate way.

1st Samuel — Chapter Twenty-seven

1 Sam. 27:1-4 "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. And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath. 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. And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him."

"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 escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me any more in all the borders of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand. And David arose, and passed over, he and the six hundred men that were with him, unto Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. 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. And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him." (ASV)

David had been on the run from Saul for quite some time and now began to despair of saving his life if he stayed in Israel. He made the decision to leave the country. On what was his decision based? Verse one shows that it was his own thinking: "**David said in his heart.**" Earlier, when David had fled the country, "**the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah**" (22:5). It was not GOD's will that David live outside of Israel. There is no indication in this text that GOD had changed His mind about that. Because David listened to his heart instead of consulting GOD, David now moved to Gath.

This incident showed a lapse in David's faith. He was the chosen one of GOD, and GOD had already shown him on numerous occasions that He would protect him. Yet here he decided that if he followed GOD's command to stay in Judah, Saul would eventually kill him. GOD would never have allowed Saul to touch him.

David had once before gone to Gath to escape Saul, but on that occasion he had not stayed because the Philistine princes were

hostile to him (21:10-15). On that occasion he feigned mental illness to escape them. Now David and his men were welcomed by Achish. Some have speculated that he welcomed them because of the six hundred men David led. Others speculate that he had had time to see that Saul really was trying to kill him. Whatever the cause, Achish was willing to accept David into his kingdom.

In verse three, one sees that all of David's men took their households with them, and it is specified that David took his two new wives with him. Saul no longer pursued David, because he had left the land. David's thinking regarding Saul pursuing him proved to be true. Saul probably figured that David was no longer a threat to him. Some have theorized that he was afraid to go into the Philistines' country to pursue David.

1 Sam. 27:5-7 "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? Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months."

"And David said unto Achish, If now I have found favor in thine eyes, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. And the number of the days that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months." (ASV)

David requested a city where he, his men, and their families might live. Such a city would allow David and his men some freedom in movement, as well as allow them to worship GOD in the prescribed manner and avoid the idolatry of which the Philistine city would be

full. If this writer had been David, he too would have felt uncomfortable in the capital city of his former and continuous enemy. At best, this was simply a temporary treaty between David and the Philistines. David was given the city of Ziklag.

1 Sam. 27:8-12 "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. 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. And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. 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. And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever."

"And David and his men went up, and made a raid upon the Geshurites, and the Girzites, and the Amalekites; for those nations were the inhabitants of the land, who were of old, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt. And David smote the land, and saved neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel; and he returned, and came to Achish. And Achish said, Against whom have ye made a raid to-day? And David said, Against the South of Judah, and against the South of the Jerahmeelites, and against the South of the Kenites. And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring them to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell of us, saying, So did David, and so hath been his manner all the while he hath dwelt in the country of the Philistines. And Achish

believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.” (ASV)

Even though David was in the Philistine territory, he continued to fight the enemies of Israel. Notice that the text says he went out against the Geshurites, Gezrites, and Amalekites. These were the enemies of Israel and friends of the Philistines. When David reported back to Achish, he could not tell him that he had been raiding Achish’s friends. So he made it appear that he had been attacking Israelites. He did this by using generalizations which misrepresented his true actions, by saying he had raided against the **“south of Judah,”** the **“south of the Jerahmeelites,”** and the **“south of the Kenites.”** Without more details, this would appear to Achish that he was attacking Israelites. The misrepresentation by David in this text is a lie. David had failed to trust GOD by moving in with the Philistines; now he was lying in order to stay on friendly terms with his host.

“He lied continually about what he was really doing. Achish who believed David, trusted him and aided him was shamefully betrayed and deceived by David. As Willis stated it, ‘Like Saul and Nabal who returned to David evil for good, so David here returned to Achish evil for good’” (Coffman, p. 327).

Achish was led to believe that David had become a great enemy of Israel and was abhorred by them. He thus believed that he could trust David and that David would be his faithful servant. Regarding the slaughter of the people David attacked, it should be remembered that Israel had been commanded long before this to **“utterly destroy”** all of the people of Canaan (Deuteronomy 7:1-2).

A list of those who came to David at Ziklag is provided in First Chronicles 12:1-22.

1st Samuel — Chapter Twenty-eight

1 Sam. 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. 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.”**

“And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their hosts together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me in the host, thou and thy men. And David said to Achish, Therefore thou shalt know what thy servant will do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of my head for ever.” (ASV)

The Philistines again went to war with Israel. This would appear to be a major campaign against the Israelites, for the Philistines called in all of their allies, as is evidenced by Achish calling for David and his men. But what would cause Achish to believe that David would fight against his own people? It was David’s deception in the previous chapter. David had led him to believe that he had been fighting against the Israelites, when in reality he had been destroying the enemies of Israel which existed in those various territories. His loyalty to Israel was steadfast, as seen by his actions. David’s lies would have come back to bite him, if GOD’s providence had not come into play.

Achish thought David was loyal to him, so he called for David to join him in this battle. Verse two shows David’s answer, which is ambiguous. Notice that he did not say, *“I will come and fight against Israel!”* He assured Achish that he was his servant. On the other hand, all he said was, **“thou shalt know what**

thy servant can do.” David was saying, “*You know what I am capable of doing,*” without saying what he would actually do. But Achish considered his words as a commitment to the cause.

Further evidence that David probably would not have fought against Israel is found in verses nine and ten of chapter twenty-six: for to have fought against Israel would have been to fight against Saul. If these events had played out as they appeared destined to do, one cannot help but wonder if David in the midst of the battle would have turned on the Philistines.

Achish answered David by promising to make him the “**keeper of mine head for ever.**” What Achish was saying was that if David proved himself faithful in this war, he would make him the chief of his body guard. This would have been a very trusted position and a position of great honor.

1 Sam. 28:3-7 “**Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. 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 Endor.**”

“Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and

encamped in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of Jehovah, Jehovah answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. 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.” (ASV)

FAMILIAR SPIRITS — “*Necromancer: necromancer, one who evokes the dead; ghost, spirit of a dead one; practice of necromancy*”(Thayer, CD Rom Version); “*This points to necromancy, a spirit of divination, and a conjuring ghost....A necromancer, or sorcerer, is one who calls up spirits from the abyss to foretell future events*”(Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); “*Hebrew, oboth, the plural of ob, a leathern bottle. It is generally taken to refer to the distended belly of the conjurer, into which the summoned spirit of the dead was supposed to enter, and thence speak; for which reason the Septuagint renders the word ‘ventriloquist,’ and is followed by most modern commentators*” (Pulpit Commentary, p. 521).

WIZARDS — “*Means sorcerer, magician, wizard, prophesying spirit*” (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version). Probably the male counterpart of “familiar spirits,” which was used to designate the witch of Endor.

Verse three gives the background for the verses which follow. Samuel had died and probably no other prophet would have anything to do with Saul. Further, Saul had obeyed GOD in getting rid of all the **phony** witches and wizards.

The idea of the “**familiar spirits**” and “**wizards**” is basically that of a medium, i.e., one who speaks to the dead to learn the future. GOD said of them,

“There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the

fire, or that useth 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. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy GOD doth drive them out from before thee” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

These mediums pretended (both then and now) to be able to speak to the dead or allow the dead to speak through them. The text states that at one time Saul had driven all of these people out of Israel. When did he do that? Probably in the early part of his reign, because that was when he was trying to please GOD.

The Philistines invaded the land. Their preparation for this was seen in the first two verses of this chapter and now the actual invasion begins. The places where these armies camped were approximately five miles apart. As Saul viewed the Philistine army he was filled with fear. Why was he filled with fear? Was the Philistine army that much larger than his? Was it the realization that GOD was not with him? It is not known what caused him this great fear, just that he was afraid so that his heart trembled.

TREMLED — *“To quake, be afraid, tremble; to move around; to be startled; to be anxious; to come with trepidation; to frighten, terrify. The primary meaning is shaking. Trembling and fear are derived meanings”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

The Philistines were camped at Shunem, which became famous for the woman who provided a room for Elisha (2 Kings 4:8). Why would not the Lord answer Saul when he enquired of Him? It is doubted that anyone would miss the answer here. GOD would not answer Saul because of his great sins and

continued rebellion.

“Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Is there a lesson in this for us today? What does Romans 15:4 tell us?

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

A person who formerly was obedient to and blessed by GOD may so turn from GOD that He will no longer hear that person's prayer or favor him.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:4-6).

“Now we know that GOD heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of GOD, and doeth His will, him He heareth” (John 9:31).

Notice the methods by which GOD refused to commune with Saul. (1) Dreams: Personal contact through the medium of dreams (Joseph, Genesis 37:5; Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 2:1-9). Why would GOD communicate with one who of his own accord killed His priests? (2) Urim: Through the priests (Exodus 28:30). The ephod was in the hands of Abiathar who was with David and would have been killed by Saul if he had not

escaped. (3) Prophets: Spokesmen for GOD (Nathan, 2 Samuel 7:2; Elisha, 2 Kings 5:8). Saul had no way to find out the will of GOD, because GOD had utterly deserted him. Again it is asked, “*Will GOD utterly cut off a man from Him, where that man cannot get back to GOD?*” This context shows that it is possible for one to be once favored by GOD, but later to be cut off completely because of his sins.

“He wanted an answer simply that he might know what was about to happen, not that he might receive guidance and counsel from GOD” (Pulpit Commentary, p. 522). This thought may be borne out by what happened later in this chapter when Saul met with the “witch.”

When Saul realized that he could not get an answer from GOD, he seemed to think that he could short circuit the system, so to speak, by getting a woman with a familiar spirit to give him advice. His servants informed him of where such a woman might be found — Endor. Interestingly, the Philistine camp was between Saul’s camp and Endor.

1 Sam. 28:8-14 **“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. 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? And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 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. 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. 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.”

“And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring me up whomsoever I shall name unto thee. 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? And Saul sware to her by Jehovah, saying, As Jehovah liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 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. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what seest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I see a god coming up out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a robe. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance.” (ASV)

DIVINE — “QaMaRam; to distribute; to cut, divide; to draw lots; to divine, prophesy; to evoke or conjure up the dead (1 Sam. 28:8), practice soothsaying. QaMsRam was always used of false prophets among the Hebrews (Deut. 18:10, 14; 2 Kings 17:17; Is. 3:2; Mic. 3:6, 7, 11) or of the false prophets of foreign nations (1 Sam. 6:2). Practicing divination was a pagan parallel to biblical prophesying. It was an attempt to learn the will of the gods in order to manipulate the circumstances (Josh. 13:22 [cf. 1 Cor. 10:20] conversing with

demons)” (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

Why had Saul disguised himself? There are a couple of possibilities: (1) To keep the Philistines who were close by from discovering his identity if they should happen upon him. (2) If the woman knew who he was, she would not have talked to him (although she quickly realized who he was).

Exactly how she went about this “divining” one does not know and it is of no real importance. It appears that as soon as Samuel’s name was mentioned, he appeared to the witch. The text also reveals her shock at Samuel’s appearance on this occasion. She was not used to a real appearance when she called for the dead to come forth.

In verse nine, one sees that Saul had formerly “cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards.” This was in accordance with the laws which GOD had given with regard to these kinds of activities (Deuteronomy 18:9-12). Why did GOD ban these people from the land? Because what they did was an abomination to Him. Notice that the passage above (Deuteronomy 18:9-12) shows that they were no different from the people who sacrificed their children to false gods (“**pass through the fire**”). Further, it is just these kinds of sins which had caused GOD to cast these people out of the land. If His people became contaminated with these sins, then they too would be cast out of the land. Only GOD has the power to bring one from the dead. The demonstration which followed and the reaction of the woman confirm this. To claim to be able to bring one from the dead is in fact a claim to be Divine.

GOD’s decree was “**Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live**” (Exodus 22:18). The witch’s words show that she was very cautious, as well she must have been to practice her craft. She accused her mysterious visitor of laying a trap for her. This indicates that at this time he was unknown to her; he was not one of her “regulars.”

How did Saul relieve her fear that this was

a trap? “**Saul sware to her by the Lord.**” Saul took an oath in the Lord’s name. It is seen from this that there was a tremendous power in an oath once it was given in the name of the Lord, even by such a reprobate as Saul had become. (Remember the oath given to the Gibeonites in Joshua chapter nine, even though they had deceived the Israelites into giving them safety? Once the oath was given, it could not be rescinded.)

Once the witch’s fears were satisfied, she asked who her visitor wanted brought forth. Saul told her to bring forth Samuel. Samuel came forth, so why was she afraid? The obvious answer is that she did not expect anyone to come forth. Rather than the rule for this woman’s deception, this was the exception; and it frightened her, as well it should. Notice also that Samuel’s coming forth caused her to realize that her strange visitor was the king himself — Saul. Whereupon she asked Saul why he had deceived her. Saul did not answer her question, but rather assured her of her safety. Then he asked her what the one she saw looked like. Notice that Saul could not see Samuel, and apparently the only one who could was this woman. She described the one she saw as an old man who was wearing a mantle (a prophet’s mantle, a mantle of authority). Saul immediately knew that Samuel had come to him and bowed himself to the ground. It should be noted that the text does not indicate Saul as bowing in worship, but probably only from respect given to one of superior rank.

Did Samuel actually come forth from the dead to address Saul? The context definitely points to the fact that he did, with absolutely no indication that this should be looked upon as some kind of sham. Was the witch of Endor actually able to call Samuel back from the dead? Positively not! Only GOD had the power to bring him back for this appearance and to give him any kind of message. One might also remember another appearance of

the dead occasioned by GOD for a specific purpose in Matthew 17:1-3. There Moses and Elijah appeared before the three disciples in order to talk with Jesus about His impending death (Luke 9:28-36). This was also an occasion to teach the great lesson that one is to listen to Christ today and not the Old Law. Those who question the reality of the event in this text cannot seem to get past the idea that this witch was a wicked person. They fail to recognize the power of GOD to advance His agenda regardless of sinful men and women.

1 Sam. 28:15-19 “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. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? 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 neighbour, even to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”

“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. And Samuel said, Wherefore then dost thou ask of

me, seeing Jehovah is departed from thee, and is become thine adversary? And Jehovah hath done unto thee, as he spake by me: and Jehovah hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of Jehovah, and didst not execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath Jehovah done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover Jehovah will deliver Israel also with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: Jehovah will deliver the host of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines.” (ASV)

Saul's desperation and degradation is shown are these verses. He had been unable to get a communication of guidance from GOD in any area, so he turned to a witch. Formerly, when Saul had been striving to be what GOD wanted him to be, he had tried to eliminate the evil of soothsayers such as this witch from Israel. Now he had sunk so low as to seek them in time of need.

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king” (1 Samuel 15:23).

In verse sixteen, Samuel basically told Saul that he would not receive any guidance from GOD, because GOD was now his enemy. But, though GOD would not give him guidance, He would (through Samuel) tell him what was going to happen to him, his sons, and Israel.

Verse seventeen was a reminder to Saul that what was happening to him was the result of Samuel's earlier prophecy based upon Saul's disobedience to GOD (15:28). The original prophecy was that the kingdom would be given to a neighbor. This is the first recorded instance where Saul was specifically told that the neighbor was David.

Two reasons are given in verse eighteen for the kingdom being given to another: (1) Saul's disobedience to GOD, and (2) his failure to destroy Amalek. The first has to do

with Saul's failure to wait for Samuel to make the offering. The disobedient acts of Saul after that time simply confirmed the wisdom of GOD's decision.

Verse nineteen showed Saul what was going to happen. Remember that GOD would not give him guidance but did show him the events which would follow. Two basic things were going to happen. Both Israel and Saul would fall into the hands of the Philistines. This simply signified that Israel would be defeated by the Philistines. Further, Saul was told that he and his sons would all die. The language Samuel used might be confusing to some, when he said, "to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." It is known that Samuel was righteous and Saul was not. How then could Samuel and Saul be with each other after death? The answer of course, is that they would both be in the Hadean world, the realm of the dead. Samuel was of course in paradise, Saul would be in tartarus, and his sons would each be in whichever place was warranted by his previous actions (See Lazarus and the rich man, Luke 16.). Where does the reader perceive Jonathan to be at this moment?

"To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me - i.e., in the state of the dead. The expression 'with me' does not imply that the condition of Saul and his sons would be the same as that of Samuel, but that they would be, like the prophet, in the receptacle of departed spirits, though each would have his own place" (JFB, p. 210).

One of the things which needs careful consideration in this passage is the consequence of one's actions not only upon himself, but also upon his family and others. Saul's sins not only meant that his life must be taken, but it also necessitated his son's deaths. A possible dynasty was removed from his posterity because of his sins. Further, the nation as a whole had to suffer because of his sins. Indeed, one's sins have far-reaching

consequences. Therefore, before becoming involved in sin, one should remember what his sins might do to others.

1 Sam. 28:20-25 **"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. 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. 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. 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. 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: And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night."**

"Then Saul fell straightway his full length upon 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. And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thy handmaid hath hearkened unto thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thy handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way. But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, constrained him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth,

and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fattened calf in the house; and she hastened, and killed it; and she took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: and she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.” (ASV)

Saul had not had any food for a day, and, coupled with the stress of circumstances around him and this bad news, he was overwhelmed. He fell down upon the earth (fainted). The word “**troubled**” means:

“To be terrified, frightened, perplexed; to be quick, overhasty; to flee; to frighten, confound, perplex, to accelerate, to do something hastily; to scare away; to terrify, panic, alarm” (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

Saul had lost all hope, yet after eating, he manfully arose, went back to his post, and fought the next day in defense of his nation.

Seeing the troubled condition which Saul was in, the witch took pity on him. She offered to feed him so that he might have strength. At first he refused, but after encouragement from the woman and the men he brought with him, he took the food she prepared. After accepting this food, Saul and his soldiers returned to their camp.

1st Samuel — Chapter Twenty-nine

1 Sam. 29:1-5 **“Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel. 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. 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? 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? Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?”

“Now the Philistines gathered together all their hosts to Aphek: and the Israelites encamped by the fountain which is in Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands; and David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish. 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, who hath been with me these days, or rather these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell away unto me unto this day? But the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make the man return, that he may go back to his place where thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us: for wherewith should this fellow reconcile himself unto his lord? should it not be with the heads of these men? Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?” (ASV)

In chapter twenty-eight, Achish had called David to go to war with him because he was his ally. He had even placed David in the position of being his body guard, which showed the great trust he had in David. No one of whom the slightest doubt existed would be placed in that position. Now the armies gathered for the battle.

They seem to pass by in a review of some kind, as armies are known to do. David was with Achish, and they were in the “**rearward,**” which signifies they were the rear guard of the

Philistines army, a very important position. But when the Philistine princes saw David and his men, they objected strongly, so strongly that Achish ended up sending David home. But notice that Achish defended David as one in whom he had found no fault for the years David had been with him. As seen earlier, David had throughly fooled Achish. One cannot help but wonder what would have happened had GOD's providence not prevented David from going with them. Would David have fought against Israel? Would David have turned on the Philistines in the midst of the battle? It will never positively be known for GOD's providence spared him from such a decision.

Willis states there are at least four reasons why the Philistines objected to David fighting against Israel.

“(1) The long enmity between the Philistines and the Hebrews had resulted in deep mistrust on both sides. (2) In the battle of Geba (14:21), the Hebrews who had deserted to the Philistines defected to their fellow Israelites and aided Saul in destroying the Philistines. (3) If David and his men decided to go back to Saul, they would easily do so by slaughtering the Philistines (any great number of them) and taking their heads to Saul. An opportunity like that, the lords of the Philistines were determined not to put into the hands of David. (4) David had a reputation of having slain ‘tens of thousands’ of Philistines; and the lords of the Philistines were not about to forget it” (Willis as quoted by Coffman, p. 344).

1 Sam. 29:6-11 “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 favour thee not. Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines. 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? 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. 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. 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.”

“Then Achish called David, and said unto him, As Jehovah 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. Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines. And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been before thee unto this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king? 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. Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with the servants of thy lord that are come with thee; and as soon as ye are up early in the morning, and have light, depart. So David rose up early, he and his men, to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.” (ASV)

The decision had been made, so Achish called David to tell him the decision of the

Philistine lords. Upon hearing Achish's praise of him and the decision of the lords, David reacted by appearing to be hurt by the decision. The question this writer has pondered is *"Was he really hurt by this decision?"* Was this part of his ploy to appear to remain loyal to Achish? Was he disappointed because he was not allowed to participate and turn on the Philistines? His words in verse eight are rather ambiguous: "that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" The term "my lord the king" could refer to either Achish or Saul; it is not specified who he was talking about there. Considering the way David felt about Saul as the anointed of the Lord, would he have turned on the Philistines as the real enemy? Or would it have been as Zerr suggests, that he had formerly said Saul might perish in battle (26:10), and this might be the opportunity for that to happen. This writer's opinion is that he would have turned against the Philistines, and it is based upon the knowledge gained from Second Samuel chapter one.

At any rate, it is easy to see the hand of GOD working providentially in these matters. He did not have to fight against his countrymen nor break his vow of fidelity to Achish. Further, by being sent home at this time, it allowed him to save his family and the families of his men from the Amalekites.

1st Samuel — Chapter Thirty

1 Sam. 30:1-7 **"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; 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. 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. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 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. 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."

"And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid upon the South, and upon Ziklag, and had smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women and all that were therein, both small and great: they slew not any, but carried them off, and went their way. And when David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captive. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 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 strengthened himself in Jehovah his GOD. And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David." (ASV)

When David and his men got home, they found that the Amalekites had destroyed their city and taken their women and children as captives. These were the very people whom Saul was supposed to have utterly destroyed, but he had refused to do so. None of the people at Ziklag had been killed. One can only imagine the grief they must have felt, but their grief turned to anger toward David. They

somehow blamed him for this disaster, which can probably be assigned to his simply being their leader. Perhaps their anger was directed toward him because he had not provided protection for their families while they were gone. Some of the people even talked of stoning David. It seems to be human nature that when some disaster takes place, grief is followed by an attempt to lash out and blame another.

A very admirable quality of David is seen in this text. In this time of sorrow and distress, when he was being threatened by some of his own men, instead of relying upon his own reasoning, he turned to the Lord for guidance. Notice how David got his guidance: by a “thus saith the Lord.” Today, one can also get guidance from a “thus saith the Lord” — not directly as David did, but through His infallible written word. This is why it is so important to read the Bible daily and to continuously study its passages carefully.

1 Sam. 30:8 “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.”

“And David inquired of Jehovah, saying, If I pursue after this troop, shall I overtake them? And He answered him, Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them, and shalt without fail recover all.” (ASV)

The first thing noticed in this passage is David’s inquiry of the Lord. As the previous verse shows, he did this through calling for Abithar to bring the ephod. Calling for the Ephod was the same as saying “**bring the Urim and Thummim,**” which were found in a pocket within the ephod.

David basically asked what would happen if he pursued the Amalekites. GOD gave him a decisive answer. He should pursue them, he would catch up to them, and he would reclaim everything which had been lost.

1 Sam. 30:9-10 “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. 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.”

“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. But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.” (ASV)

David and his men immediately pursued the Amalekites, but by the time they got to the brook Besor, a third of his men were too faint to go on. Why were they in this condition? Most agree that the journey they had made from the staging field of the Philistines to Ziklag in three days was a forced march. Thus, they were tired from that journey. Add to that the mental and emotional strain of finding their city destroyed and their families taken. Then add this forced march to recover their families. David left the two hundred who could not continue and then continued to pursue the enemy. GOD had promised him victory, and it would be obtained no matter how few men he might have left when he caught up with the Amalekites. There was no hesitation on David’s part when the two hundred could not proceed further.

1 Sam. 30:11-15 “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; 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. And David said unto him, To whom belondest 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. 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. 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.”

“And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they gave him water to drink. 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. And David said unto him, To whom belongeth 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. We made a raid upon the South of the Cherethites, and upon that which belongeth to Judah, and upon the South of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire. And David said to him, Wilt thou bring me down to this troop? And he said, Swear unto me by GOD, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me up into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this troop.” (ASV)

As David and his men pursued the Amalekites, they found an Egyptian who was a servant of one of the Amalekites. He had been left behind and would have died if David’s men had not found him. After nourishing him, the man was able to tell David exactly who had destroyed Ziklag, and who had their families, and where they could be found.

This man had been left by his former master because he had been sick. The cruel and uncaring nature of the Amalekites is seen in this act. Interestingly, their cruel act toward this man would lead to their own destruction. David asked him if he would lead them to

those responsible for destroying Ziklag, and the man agreed upon two conditions: (1) That David would not kill him. (2) That David would not give him back to his master. Concerning the second condition, he probably had no reason to fear such a thing, for David probably had other plans for his former master.

“**Swear unto me by GOD.**” Is it possible that this Egyptian believed in the GOD of heaven (David’s GOD)? Or was it simply the recognition generally held by men that an oath taken upon the name of one’s GOD was a solemn oath which must be kept?

1 Sam. 30:16-20 **“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. 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. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. 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. And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drave before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil.”**

“And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad over all the ground, 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. 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, who rode upon camels and fled. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken; and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons

nor daughters, neither spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them: David brought back all. And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil." (ASV)

When David and his men found the Amalekites, they found them spread out celebrating their conquests. They were hardly in a defensive position, plus the fact that they were partying. For David's battle-hardened veterans (with the anger they must have felt over their families being taken captive) this was "easy pickings." The text indicates that this was a sizeable force of Amalekites. The Amalekites obviously felt safe, or they would not have been feasting rather, they would have had a guard posted. They probably knew the Philistines were engaged with the Israelites in battle and assumed they would not spare an army to chase them at this time.

When did David attack them? At "**twilight.**" Coffman tells us that "*Twilight may mean the morning twilight or the evening twilight*" (Coffman, p. 358). Thus, they either fought all night until the next evening, or they fought from early in the morning until the evening of that day. (Remember that the evening of a day was considered by the Hebrews to be the next day.) Considering the context, they would have been more likely to be feasting in the evening than the morning. The attack was probably begun in the evening, lasting until the evening of the next day.

How successful were David and his men? They recaptured everything the Amalekites had taken from them. Further, they recovered all of the people taken captive, and none of them had been harmed. Further, they took all the spoil which the Amalekites had gathered in other raids, plus the stuff the Amalekites had owned. Of the spoil, David took all of the flocks and herds which they had gathered, minus those they had taken from Ziklag. Was this selfish on David's part? He took these to give to the people of Judah. It should be

remembered that the Amalekites had been attacking territory in Judah as well. This shows the compassion of David for his people.

1 Sam. 30:21-25 "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. Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they 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. 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. 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. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day."

"And David came to the two hundred men, who were so faint that they could not follow David, whom also they had made 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. Then answered all the wicked men and base fellows, of those that went with David, and said, Because they 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 he may lead them away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which Jehovah hath given unto us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the troop that came against us into our hand. And who will hearken unto you in this matter? for as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall

his share be that tarrieth by the baggage: they shall share alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.” (ASV)

When David and his men got back to the brook Besor, they met up with those who had been too faint to continue but had none the less protected the equipment of the fighting force. Some of the baser men of David’s command wanted to deny any of the spoil to those who stayed behind. In fact, they wanted to give these men their families back and then send them on their way. David answered them by declaring that they had been given this victory by GOD, and those who had stayed behind would not be denied a fair share of the spoils. That these seemed to be a small number of worthless fellows is seen in David’s statement of verse twenty-four: “who will hearken unto you in this matter?” There is only one motive behind those who did not want to share the spoils — greed.

Verse twenty-five says that David made a law with regard to the dividing of spoils between those who stayed behind and those who did the actual fighting. But David did not make a new law; he may have re-instituted a law. Moses had instituted the groundwork or standard upon which David instituted this ordinance. In the war with the Midianites, Moses told the people, **“Divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation”** (Numbers 31:27). Since GOD had given them the victory, it was only fitting that all should share in the bounty. This would also become the precedent for distributing the spoils of war from that time forward.

1 Sam. 30:26-31 “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; To them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in south

Ramoth, and to them which were in Jattir, And to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa, 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, And to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach, And to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.”

“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 Jehovah: To them that were in Beth-el, and to them that were in Ramoth of the South, and to them that were in Jattir, and to them that were in Aroer, and to them that were in Siphmoth, and to them that were in Eshtemoa, and to them that were in Racal, and to them that were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them that were in the cities of the Kenites, and to them that were in Hormah, and to them that were in Bor-ashan, and to them that were in Athach, and to them that were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.” (ASV)

When David got back to Ziklag, he sent (from his spoils which he had taken for himself) presents to the elders of Judah. A number of cities are listed in this text, with the final note that these were the places where he and his men had roamed while avoiding Saul. They had befriended David, and when he got the opportunity, he thanked them for their past help. By cultivating their friendship in this way, he may have also been playing a little politics for the time when he would need their help to establish him as king of Israel. It is noted that some of these places where David and his men had found refuge are not mentioned before this time.

“We find David in this narrative acting justly as a soldier, generously to those who had been kind to him in his

wanderings, and forming friendships which he retained and cherished long afterwards, when from being a fugitive he had become a king” (Pulpit Commentary, p. 550).

1st Samuel — Chapter Thirty-one

1 Sam. 31:1-7 “Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together. 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.”

“Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was greatly distressed by reason of the archers. Then said Saul to his armorbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust

me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armorbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword, and fell upon it. And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armorbearer, and all his men, that same day together. And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were beyond the 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.” (ASV)

This text is a picture of the total victory of the Philistines. It is further shown that the greatest damage was done to the army of Israel at Mount Gilboa, where there was a great slaughter.

Verse two states that the Philistines chased the Israelites, particularly Saul and his sons. This was common in war, for if the leadership was killed or captured, an army would quickly lose its will. Were all of Saul's sons (descendants) killed on this occasion? No, for Ishbosheth was later cared for by David, until he rebelled against him.

Verse three shows that it was the Philistine archers who fatally wounded Saul, i.e., the wound they inflicted would have caused his death. When Saul realized his condition, he called for his armour bearer to kill him rather than allow the Philistines to finish him off. But the armour bearer refused, probably on the basis of fear for the consequences of killing the Lord's anointed. The armour bearer was responsible for the life of the king and probably felt much like David did toward the Lord's anointed.

Because his armour bearer would not kill him, Saul took the coward's way out — self-murder. He took his own sword and fell upon it. This was probably accomplished by putting the hilt toward the ground with the point aimed at the heart. Then the person would simply fall forward, piercing the heart.

How many suicides does the Bible record for us? There are five specific incidences recorded. Two of them are in this text. Then there are those of Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23), Zimri (1 Kings 16:18), and Judas Iscariot (Matthew 27:5). This writer believes a sixth is implied in the Scriptures, i.e., the suicide committed by all who refuse to obey the commands of GOD — an eternal suicide (spiritual), if you please.

When the armour bearer saw that Saul had killed himself, he then committed suicide with his king. He may have thought that since he could not protect his king, the honorable thing to do was to die with him.

Verse six states that **“all his men”** died with him that day. This is a generalization, showing that many of the Israelites were killed this day. It probably particularly referred to those immediately around Saul. Not all of Saul’s men were (killed because Abner and Ish-bosheth were not), and one is further told that many fled. This is an example of the accommodative language of using the whole for the part, and it is sometimes found in the opposite manner of using the part for the whole.

Upon winning the battle, the Philistines immediately occupied the cities formerly controlled by the Israelites. The text indicates that the people in these cities fled before the conquerors. Better to flee than be killed or later taken as slaves.

1 Sam. 31:8-13 **“And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people. And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroath: and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan. And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead heard of that**

which the Philistines had done to Saul; 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 Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.”

“And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry the tidings unto the house of their idols, and to the people. And they put his armor in the house of the Ashtaroath; and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard concerning him that which the Philistines had done to Saul, 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 they came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under the tamarisk-tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.” (ASV)

“To the victor belong the spoils,” is an old saying. Here one sees this saying put into practice. The Philistines stripped the dead of any valuables which they might have had, including their clothing. In doing this, they found the bodies of Saul and his sons. This was the greater trophy of the victorious battle.

They cut Saul’s head off and took his armour. (His bracet and his crown were not there. Looking to Second Samuel 1:10, one finds that a young man delivered these to David as proof that Saul was dead.) Next, they sent these items all through the Philistine land to advertise the completeness of their victory and to probably set off a new wave of rejoicing among the people. It is noted that it had been years since they could claim victory against the Israelites. To **“publish it in the house of their idols”** is basically to give thanks to their gods, whom they believed had given them this victory. Most societies of that time believed that victory in battle was due to

their god's being superior to the god of the people whom they conquered.

Saul's armour was placed in the house of Ashtaroth (female deity). This was done as a trophy of war and again showed the superiority of the Philistines' gods, as they thought of it. What happened to Saul's head?

“It came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people. And they put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon” (1 Chronicles 10:8-10).

Next they fastened Saul's body (as well as those of his sons) to the wall of Bethshan. This was done to publish their conquest and at the same time to humiliate Saul and the Israelites. (How do you humiliate someone who is dead by something you do to him after death?)

The text then tells of the brave men of Jabesh-gilead. Their actions were prompted by gratitude and respect. Saul had saved them from the Ammonites early in his reign (1 Samuel 11:1-11). The Ammonites were going to make them slaves, after putting their right eyes out. In gratitude they risked their lives to take the bodies of Saul and his sons from Bethshan, burned them, and then buried them at Jabesh. They then observed the traditional mourning for a prominent person for seven days. Why did they burn the bodies of Saul and his sons? Probably to keep the Philistines from taking them again.