

GOD'S MESSAGES BIBLE COMMENTARY SERIES

VOLUME 6

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading.
(Nehemiah 8:8).

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOKS OF 1 & 2 SAMUEL

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**The Book Of
1 SAMUEL**





Introduction To 1 & 2 Samuel

This introduction to 1 Samuel will also cover most of the introductory material for 2 Samuel. Originally, in the Hebrew collections, the two books were considered to be one. These two books were labeled 1 Kings and 2 Kings. The books we now call by the latter two names were known as 3 Kings and 4 Kings. These four books discuss the transition from the period of the Judges to that of the Kings, and then go on to show the rise and fall of first the united kingdom under Saul, David and Solomon; then go on to consider the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah, until both decline and fall into captivity.

The Author:

The name “Samuel” means “Name of God.” Samuel and Eli were the last of the Judges before Saul was appointed as the first king of Israel. The title was given because Samuel was a major figure in the transition period from the Judges to the Kings. It is generally agreed that Samuel was the writer of most of the early part of the material recorded in 1 & 2 Samuel. However, events are included which took place after Samuel’s death and were obviously written by someone else.

In the first book of Chronicles we find the following statement.

1 Ch 29:29 Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the

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*seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer,*

*1 Ch 29:30 With all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.*

Therefore, we must conclude that both Nathan and Gad were contributors to the work. The book of Jasher is mentioned in 2 Samuel 1:18. Some would add Abiathar as another possibility.

### **The Time Period Covered:**

The time covered by the two books is difficult to pinpoint, and the dates given by commentators agree only generally. The birth of Samuel took place about 1115 B.C. and the death of David occurred about 970 B.C. The entire time span for 1 & 2 Samuel can then be said to have lasted for approximately one hundred and fifty years.

The time of writing was probably accumulative, with Samuel writing during his lifetime and others adding to the record after his death.

James Thompson gave the following brief chronological outline.

|                             |           |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Birth of Samuel.....        | 1115 B.C. |
| Samuel Called.....          | 1105 B.C. |
| Samuel Becomes Judge .....  | 1070 B.C. |
| Saul Anointed as King ..... | 1043 B.C. |
| Death of Samuel.....        | 1025 B.C. |
| David Becomes King.....     | 1010 B.C. |
| Death of David .....        | 970 B.C.  |





## **Purpose of 1 and 2 Samuel:**

These books fit in with the entire theme of the Bible which has to do with God's development of a family which will live with Him in eternity. Men live in a time of testing during their lives on earth. They receive lesson after lesson with respect to the necessity of hearing and obeying God's will. The books of 1 & 2 Samuel tell of men's desire to have a king like the surrounding nations, and the consequences of following that path.

God is the King of kings. When men choose to follow human wisdom rather than Divine wisdom, their society will decay and fail. The predictions of a coming King from the descendants of David are found coming into focus. There will be a Messiah whose reign will last forever. Saul fell. David fell. The Messiah will not fail.

Sometimes the period of Eli, Samuel, etc. is called the time of the "Former Prophets." These are distinguished from the "Latter Prophets" who are divided into the "five Major Prophets" and the "twelve Minor Prophets" and who lived and prophesied after the time of Moses, Eli, Samuel and others.

The purpose of these books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles is far more than a simple record of historical events. They are more than a hodgepodge of writings gathered by an editor and pasted together to make interesting reading. They reveal an important part of God's plan of salvation.

## **What About the Discrepancies?**

Conservative believers in the inspiration of the books included in our present Old and New Testaments do not deny there are difficulties in these books. They are

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not ready to admit that these difficulties are proof of imperfection in the original revelation as provided by the Divine hand. We have the possibility of miscopyings by scribes who were reproducing the records for generations in which they lived, and generations to come. We have translations from the Hebrew into the languages of the people of many places in many different times.

Also, the critics of the scriptures sometimes become far more proud of their scholastic achievements than is justified. All too often the critic fails to investigate the Biblical record closely enough to find the simple truth which lies behind the supposed contradiction which he embraces. Many of the so-called contradictions would melt away if human pride did not interfere.

A Plan for Proceeding:

Since there is a considerable amount of repetition in the six books of 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles, there is no need to make duplicate comments on text which has been discussed previously. The plan will be to discuss a section of text when it occurs for the first time. Then, when it is encountered the second or third time, the reader will be referred back to the comments which were made when that text first appeared. There may be times when the situation calls for further consideration in a different background, but for the most part the above will be the procedure.

The reader may wish to read the first chapter of 1 Chronicles before beginning the study of I Samuel. That chapter tells of the genealogy of Samuel. It will be discussed when we reach that point in I Chronicles.



Chapter 1

This chapter deals with the birth of one of the greatest men of God. He is listed in the scriptures as both a prophet and a Judge. There are many comparisons between Samuel and Moses. The chapter reveals the corruptness of the priesthood and the wonderful faith of a steadfast woman, named Hannah.

1 Sam. 1:1 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:

There are several locations known as Ramah. The word above means 'twin heights.' There are a number of hills in the region near Shiloh. It is difficult to tell which is meant here.

Elkanah was a Levite. The Levites were scattered through the different tribal territories. Elkanah and his family lived in Ephraim.

1 Sam. 1:2 And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Elkanah had married two wives. One's name was Hannah. The other was Peninnah. Much of what Elkanah did is presented as being approved by Jehovah. The taking of two wives was permitted because of the hardness of hearts, but according to the words of Jesus "It was not so from the beginning."

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*Mat 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.*

*Mat 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*

There were others who practiced polygamy, as recorded in the Holy Bible. In almost every case this led to family problems. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Solomon all suffered grief as a result of such marriages.

From the general tone of the chapter before us, Hannah was the first wife of Elkanah, and was not able to have children. Both men and women considered the birth of a male son to be of great importance. This would insure that an heir would be available and the family line might be continued. Elkanah's marriage to Peninnah was, with very little doubt, an effort to produce such an heir.

**1 Sam. 1:3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.**

Elkanah respected the commandment of the Lord, that all adult males gather at Shiloh three times each year to celebrate the three major feasts. It was not necessary to take their families, but it was permissible if they chose to take them.

The fact that this gathering was at Shiloh is strong evidence that it was still in the days of the tabernacle,



since the temple proper was not built until the time of Solomon.

God is referred to here as the 'Lord of hosts.' This is the first time in the Old Testament where this term is used. David and the prophets used it often. The hosts could be the armies of men, or the nations of men. They could be the stars of the heavens. They could be angelic spiritual hosts. God is superior to all the hosts of heaven and earth.

Eli was an old man at this time. Although he was still the High Priest, his sons, Hophni and Phinehas had assumed many of his duties. These two sons had been undisciplined and as a result they were vile and wicked.

**1 Sam. 1:4 And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:**

When it came time for Elkanah to offer his sacrifice, he did so. This sacrifice was one in which a portion of the animal sacrificed was burnt upon the altar, and the rest was consumed by those making the offering. A feast of thanksgiving was being shared with the Lord who made the feast possible.

The portion of the sacrifice which was consumed by the ones making the sacrifice was divided among each of the family members. Since Peninnah had a number of children, she received a portion for each.

**1 Sam. 1:5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.**

The meaning of this verse is questioned. Some believe the “worthy portion” was a generous portion from a choice part of the animal. He would have then given Hannah this portion because he loved her. Others believe the worthy portion was a single portion related to her lack of worthiness in failing to produce a child. This would then mean that even though Elkanah loved Hannah, he still felt the portions must be allotted according to the number of persons. Peninnah would then receive several times that which Hannah received.

**1 Sam. 1:6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.**

Hannah’s adversary was Peninnah. The word which is translated as provoked has to do with thunder. Peninnah caused Hannah to suffer inner thunder because of her inability to give Elkanah a son.

**1 Sam. 1:7 And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.**

Year after year the same mockery took place. These were supposed to be a joyous occasions where a delicious meal of thanksgiving was shared. Hannah found the taunting of Peninnah so grievous that she lost her appetite and could not eat of the feast. Instead, she wept bitter tears.

**1 Sam. 1:8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest**



**thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?**

Since Elkanah loved her deeply, he tried to console her. We are not told that he chastised Peninnah, but he did try to lighten the sadness. He knew very well why her heart was heavy. Even so, he reminded her of his love. It was not necessary to have children if she could satisfy herself with being his favorite wife.

**1 Sam. 1:9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.**

Elkanah's words of comfort had not mended the sorrow. The only place Hannah could find relief was in taking the problem to God in prayer. After the meal was completed, she went to the place where Eli was sitting and observing what was happening. He was sitting on a seat by a post of the temple. The word "temple" is used here. Thus Adam Clarke suggests the events took place after the building of that structure. These events took place at Shiloh, and not at Jerusalem. The "post" is not a sign of an elaborate building. It was simply a supporting post.

**1 Sam. 1:10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.**

Many readers will sympathize with Hannah. Although one loves the Lord and trusts him, when the heart is cut as was Hannah's, it is difficult to avoid bitterness and tears. Hannah wept much.

**1 Sam. 1:11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.**

She knew God was able. She only needed to show how deep her need was. Then he would surely hear her plea and answer it with a son. If God would hear and answer her prayer, she vowed that she would give the child to God for his entire lifetime and would do her best to see that he kept the vows of a Nazarite. Some Nazarite vows were for a given number of years. Hannah was promising her child for all of his life.

**1 Sam. 1:12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.**

**1 Sam. 1:13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.**

It would have been hard to miss the zealousness of this woman. She was not just going through motions. She was pronouncing her words silently as they poured forth from the depths of her soul.

Eli saw her lips moving and heard no voice. He assumed she was drunk. This was the same assumption which was made when the apostles were moved by the Spirit of God on the Day of Pentecost. In both cases, it was a serious mistake. Neither the apostles nor Hannah were drunk.

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This does say something about the people who had come to this worship. It would be highly unusual in modern times to find one drunk in a worship service. This must have been a fairly common occurrence in the time of Eli, for him to believe the woman was drunk.

1 Sam. 1:14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

At least Eli had the courage to tell her such behavior was wrong and should be stopped. She must straighten up her life and avoid becoming intoxicated.

1 Sam. 1:15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

Hannah replied that her actions were not the result of drinking intoxicating liquor. She had not taken either wine from the grape, or stronger drink from the still.

1 Sam. 1:16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

There were apparently “daughters of Belial” who came to the tabernacle. Some of these wicked women actually lay with Eli’s sons Hophni and Phinehas. They may well have been drunk when this happened. Hannah explained that the reason for her strange behavior was grief and sorrow.

We appreciate the words of Matthew Henry here. He points out that Eli made a false assumption of

hypocrisy on the part of one who was about as far from hypocrisy as one can get. It is unwise to accuse others of insincerity during worship without knowing all of the reasons for what we observe.

1 Sam. 1:17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

Eli believed Hannah. He ceased his scolding and offered a prayer of his own that her prayer might be heard and answered positively.

1 Sam. 1:18 And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

The prayer of a godly person can bring reassurance and comfort to a troubled soul. After Eli pronounced the blessing upon her, Hannah went on her way and regained her taste for food. She replaced her frown with a smile.

Dear reader, this present writer has pondered the relationship between those to whom he has preached and himself. In every congregation there are persons who lean very heavily upon the support of the one who presents the sermons. Are these persons giving glory to the preacher which should be reserved for God? Moses lost the right to lead Israel into the promised land because he took glory which belonged to God.

The reaction which Hannah had to the blessing Eli offered on her behalf says there are times when a man of God can bring gladness to one in sorrow. He must,



however, make it very plain to the person whom he assists that God must receive the glory and the honor. No man or woman can do anything spiritually beneficial without the finger of God.

1 Sam. 1:19 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.

God heard the plea. The family rose up early the next morning and worshipped before leaving to return to their home in Rahah. After returning home, Elkanah had sexual intercourse with this woman he loved. After all the disappointments of the past, Hannah conceived. The Lord had heard and answered!

1 Sam. 1:20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

When the normal time of pregnancy had passed, Hannah gave birth to the male child she had wanted so badly. She named the child "Samuel." The name was given because God had heard her asking. The Hebrew has given Bible students much food for thought. The name 'Samuel' can mean "heard of God." It can also mean "asked of God."

Too much has been made of the translation possibilities. The meaning of the name is absolutely clear. Hannah asked and. God heard. Hannah was given a son.

1 Sam. 1:21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

After the birth of Samuel, Elkanah and his family went to Shiloh to observe the feasts as they had before. His mind must have repeatedly turned back home. There was a reason.

1 Sam. 1:22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.

Hannah asked not to be included in the group. She wished to remain at home in Ramah with her young son until he was weaned. Then she would take him to Shiloh and he would not come back home with her. He would remain at Shiloh and serve God.

We do not know how long this time period was. Hebrew women commonly kept their children at the breast for as much as three years. Was this what was meant by the word “weaning?” Or, did this mean until he had reached an age when he could be severed from his family and friends without psychological damage? The next verse leaves the strong impression that the weaning was removal from the breast. We do know he was still a lad.

1 Sam. 1:23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

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When Elkanah heard of Hannah's determination to devote the child to service at the tabernacle, he did not object. He did have the right to reject her decision if he chose to. He gave his permission for her to remain at home until Samuel was weaned.

**1 Sam. 1:24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young.**

As she had promised, after he was weaned, she took Samuel to Shiloh along with a generous sacrifice. Some contend that the language of the verse means a three year old bull rather than three young bullocks. If there were three, one was probably a burnt offering, one a peace offering and one a sin offering. If there was but one, it was more likely a burnt offering.

An ephah of flour is thought to have been three fifths of a bushel. The bottle of wine would have been a goatskin with the head, leg and rear openings all sewed tight and filled with grape juice.

**1 Sam. 1:25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.**

If there was but one bullock, it would seem the verse would say they slew "the" bullock. After the sacrifice was made, Elkanah and Hannah presented Samuel to Eli the High Priest, that he might serve in the tabernacle.

**1 Sam. 1:26 And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.**

Hannah declared that as sure as Eli lived, she was the same woman who had prayed so hard for a son, and whom Eli had blessed.

**1 Sam. 1:27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:**

The Lord had given her the child for whom she had prayed. He had poured out a blessing to her.

**1 Sam. 1:28 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.**

Since God had been so gracious as to give her a son, she would be happy to give him back to the Lord for as long as he lived. The word “lent” is important. God is the one who gives children to parents. They are lent to them in the sense that one day there must be a time of parting. For example, David said the child he had lost could not come back to him, but he could go to the child.

The reverse of this is that none of us live forever. Samuel, as is the case with all other children would be lent for a lifetime. Hannah could visit him from time to time. Hannah was very willing to give the young child up to God in return for the joy of bringing the babe into the world.



## *Chapter 2*

In this chapter we will look at a true prayer of praise. Hannah prayed a prayer very similar to that of Mary the mother of Jesus. Both had received the blessing of a child from God. Both were grateful from the very bottom of their hearts.

We also see the serious degradation of the priesthood as the sons of Eli drop to an unbelievable spiritual low.

**1 Sam. 2:1 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.**

Hannah, the mother of Samuel, was a woman of prayer. She went to Jehovah to ask for relief from her barren condition. She went back to Jehovah to thank Him after He heard her plea and honored it.

The prayer is not centered on herself. It is centered on the glory of the Lord. It was His salvation which made the great change in her life possible. Her horn was the influence she would have as the result of the child. She would no longer be ridiculed by others who bore children while she was childless. She would no longer have to bear the embarrassment in silence. The presence of the baby spoke for her.

She did not limit the enemies to Peninnah, although this woman had been a chief spokesperson for those who reproached her. The glow in her heart would spread to a joyful face. God was to be praised.



**1 Sam. 2:2 There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.**

There is but one letter difference in the word God and the word good. God is perfectly good. None on earth or in heaven can match his sinless character.

He is a rock in that one will not go wrong in building a life upon Him. Rocks are foundation stones. Christ once told the apostle Peter that the apostle was a rock. He added that upon the confession that Jesus Christ is the son of God and the Rock of ages, Christ's church would be built. Hannah was delighted that she had found the Divine Rock and had leaned upon it.

**1 Sam. 2:3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.**

Those who talk proudly of their own greatness, as Peninnah had done, were deceiving themselves. God had heard and He found such arrogant persons to be sadly wanting.

**1 Sam. 2:4 The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.**

Bows were powerful weapons in the hands of skilled warriors. Swords were used for close fighting. Bows were used to do damage at a distance. God had shown that He was able to render the bows of those whom men consider to be fearful as useless as rubber bands.

At the same time, those who have been considered  
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powerless, and to weak to compete with others, are given strength to achieve great wonders, even as Hannah had been.

1 Sam. 2:5 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 hungry and poverty stricken who have been forced to serve others in order to survive, can be made full and healthy. The barren woman, who is hungry for children, may be caused to bring forth a houseful.

But God is also able to bring the fruitful woman to a state of infertility. The reader will take note that nothing more is said about Peninnah having more children after Samuel was born.

1 Sam. 2:6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

Man cannot give life. Man cannot make the dead to live. Yet, He had given Hannah a living child. God even has the capability of raising those who have died from the grave. He has done so, and the time will come when *all* will come forth from the graves to meet Him in judgment.

1 Sam. 2:7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

1 Sam. 2:8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the

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**earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.**

The richest of men can be brought to poverty in a remarkably short time. In contrast, the very poor can become heirs to fortunes. Those so poor they have no homes can be provided with them. Those who are forced to glean from the garbage heaps just enough to keep soul and body together can be blessed with eternal life.

The God of heaven created the earth. He sustains the earth. The “pillars” of the earth can be taken in two senses. Pillars can refer to humans who follow the Divine will and support others through their teaching and example, or the pillars may refer to the forces keeping the earth operating systematically.

**1 Sam. 2:9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.**

Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.” That light illuminates the footsteps of those who will walk in that light. It is not so with the wicked. They choose to avoid the spiritual light and thus find themselves in darkness and confusion. The end result for them will be the darkness of eternal separation from God and His saints. When that takes place they may scream in agony, but they will no longer taunt the righteous as Hannah had been taunted.

**1 Sam. 2:10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.**

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Those who fight against God and His followers will discover just how helpless they are in the face of the Divine arm. Their strength will be shattered and scattered. They will be brought to inner turmoil by the thunderous voice of the Lord.

Who is God's king? Is it every man who reigns over sin, Satan and death? Is it the Saviour and King of kings, who sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven? Could it be both? God's anointed may have to do with any man or woman who dedicates their life to Him. But, this may be a serious prophecy of the coming power of the only person ever to wear all three titles, Prophet, Priest and King. Perhaps Peninnah should be classed as one of the former prophets.

Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving and praise is ended! It's influence upon the downtrodden will never end.

1 Sam. 2:11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

Elkanah returned to his home in Ramah. Samuel was not taken with him. Samuel remained at Shiloh to assist Eli in minor chores within the tabernacle. We do not know his exact age at the time. It is likely that he was old enough to light candles and sweep floors, etc.

1 Sam. 2:12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

The word "Belial" is used seventeen times in the Bible. All but one of these references are found in the Old Testament. However, the one which is found in the New Testament is very revealing as to what is

meant by saying the sons of Eli were ‘sons of Belial.’
(See below.)

2 Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

2 Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

2 Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

2 Co 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

The text verse under consideration makes it plain that sons of Belial was strangers to Jehovah. The passage from 2 Corinthians leaves no doubt about what is meant by saying they knew not the Lord.

1. They are unbelievers.
2. They are unrighteous.
3. They commune with darkness.
4. They place other things before the Lord.
5. The Spirit of the Devil dwells in them.
6. They are unclean.

This was hardly the finest kind of environment to develop the spiritual strength of a young lad. This writer’s wife expressed astonishment that Hannah would allow her God given son to be separated from her and left under the influence of such evil men as Eli’s sons. The reason may be to show the free moral agency of

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man. Eli's sons had been raised in the company of the priesthood. They had every opportunity to know and practice that which was pleasing to the Lord. They chose evil over good.

Samuel was plunged into the company of some of the most evil of men. Yet, Samuel became one of the great men of God. He chose wisely. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

**1 Sam. 2:13 And the priest's 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;**

The priests had been given clear directions as to what portion of the sacrifices they were to receive. A thigh and a shoulder were to be their portion. The fat of the animal was first to be burned on the altar that the fumes would rise as a sweet odor in the nostrils of God. The priests then took the thigh and shoulder. The people received the rest of the animal as a fellowship meal with God and their fellow Israelites.

The priests were not honoring God's directions. They came very early in the process, while the meat was still raw. They inserted a three-pronged fleshhook into the pot and drew out whatever came out with it when it was withdrawn.

**1 Sam. 2:14 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.**

This behavior was not limited to a single occurrence. It happened every time the Israelites came to Shiloh to make their offerings. The priests did not like boiled meat. They wanted it roasted, and they wanted their portions before anyone else partook.

**1 Sam. 2:15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.**

The fat belonged to God. It was to be burned on the altar before either the people or the priests ate their portions. The priests insisted that their desires come before anything else.

**1 Sam. 2:16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.**

Someone of the congregation might object to the demand of the priest that he take his portion before God's portion of the fat was burned. When that happened, the priest would take what he wanted, and when he wanted it. If the person tending the pot refused him, he would use force to take it anyway.

Priests of God are supposed to be men who have devoted their entire lives to doing the will of the Lord and helping others to do the same thing. These men did not do that. They were priests called by the name 'Priest.'

**1 Sam. 2:17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.**

God was very well aware of the sins of these selfish men. You cannot insult God and expect Him to bless you. These priests were headed into danger far greater than they could imagine.

**1 Sam. 2:18 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.**

Look at the contrast between the wicked and selfish priests when compared with the attitude of young lad Samuel. He was doing all he was able to in the service of God. They were doing as little as possible.

**1 Sam. 2:19 Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.**

Samuel's mother had shown her love for this cherished gift from God. Every year at the time of the sacrifice at Shiloh, she made him a garment to keep him warm both inwardly and outwardly. This may have been one of the reasons for his devotion to God. His mother helped him to understand the meaning of love.

**1 Sam. 2:20 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.**

One can not outgive God. Hannah had given her son to God when she had no other children. God saw fit to place other children in her loving care. Eli was the one who transferred the information to Elkanah and Hannah. She would be blessed with brothers and sisters to Samuel.

**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.**

The blessing of Eli came true. There were five more children. Three sons and two daughters were added to the family. Hannah had given one to the Lord. She received five more in return.

We are not told the details of how Samuel grew before the Lord. That will be added a few verses farther on in this same chapter. But we can certainly trust that the growth was far more than just a few inches in physical height. Samuel was to become a great spiritual man of God.

**1 Sam. 2:22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.**

What a horrible verse to have to read in the midst of God's Holy Book! Eli, as a very old man, did not know all that was happening. His own sons were committing fornication with the women who came to the place of worship and the place where Jehovah met with His people.

There are questions regarding the reason these  
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women were assembling at the tabernacle door. There is the possibility that the pagan worship had infiltrated the worship of God. The idolatrous heathen included the use of prostitutes in their worship service. These women may have been offering themselves as objects of sexual pleasure for the priests. They could also have been evil women who had found the men at the tabernacle easy targets for professional prostitutes.

The people realized something of the horror of what was happening and reported it to Eli. He should have punished his sons severely for their indescribable wickedness. They were making a mockery of God's tabernacle.

1 Sam. 2:23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

1 Sam. 2:24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress.

Instead of dealing out harsh punishment, Eli only scolded them mildly and told them he had heard of their sins. He was ashamed of them. They were not being good boys. They were causing the people of the Lord to follow their example and disregard the Almighty

1 Sam. 2:25 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.

Eli reminded his sons that when one man sinned against another man, that man would be judged by a

superior. In this case the sin was not against another man. It was against Jehovah. There is no judge superior to Jehovah. They would find it necessary to answer to Him.

The latter part of this verse sounds as if Eli's sons were caused to sin because the Lord had decided beforehand to destroy them. The word "because" which is used here can have a very different meaning in the Hebrew. The word can be translated as "therefore." In that case the verse would mean since the sons did not harken to the voice of the father, they would therefore be slain. Some translations render it that way.

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

Now we have another similarity between Samuel and Christ.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

1 Sam. 2:27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?

Eli was from the household of Eleazar. God had chosen Eleazar and his descendants to serve in the position of High Priest. At that time he had said this would continue forever. That promise was contingent upon the faithfulness of that family. It would be forever if the family remained dedicated to the will of their Maker.



1 Sam. 2:28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

Eli is being asked a question to which he already knows the answer. Yes, God had chosen that family out of all the tribes of Israel to lead His people in their sacrificial services. He had gone so far as to allot generous portions of those sacrifices to the use of the priests. They should have been forever grateful for the chance to serve both God and His people.

1 Sam. 2:29 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?

This verse reminds the writer of what happened in the milk barn during the days of his youth. The milk cows were brought into the barn from the cold weather outside. Hay was placed in their mangers, and meal was placed where they could feast upon it as a special delight. In return, the cows were expected to submit to the milking process and allow the milk to be used by those who cared for them.

On occasion one of the cows would decided she did not intend to be milked. When the milk bucket was only part full, she would kick the bucket over and the milk would be spilled over the floor of the barn. God accused the sons of Eli of kicking at His blessings. They had tried to make themselves fat at the expense of those

whom they were expected to serve. They were placing their own satisfaction ahead of the Lord.

1 Sam. 2:30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

The promise God had made to let the house of Eleazar continue forever in the priesthood did not deserve to be kept. To allow this family to continue to provide High Priests for Israel would be utter folly. If men honored God, He would honor them. If they despised God, He would bring them down.

1 Sam. 2:31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

The arm represents power. Eli's influence would be cut off and the result would be that the house of Eleazar would no longer be permitted to furnish the High Priests. This forecast came true when the family of Zadok replaced the family of Eleazar.

1 Sam. 2:32 And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever.

The enemy Eli was to see in the habitation of God was the Philistines. They were able to defeat Israel
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and create much sorrow. Also, Eli would find that the men of his household would die young. God gives life, and God takes away life. He would execute that right against the house of Eli.

Was Eli wrong, or were his sons the sinners? Eli had not slept with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle. Yet, what he had done was to indulge his sons and allow them to live without proper discipline.

**1 Sam. 2:33 And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.**

Even those of Eli's family who did not die and were allowed during their early life to make sacrifices at the altar would cause him to wish he could not see their actions, and would bring sorrow to his heart. His descendants did not deserve to live to a ripe old age. They would be taken in the prime of life.

**1 Sam. 2:34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.**

One way Eli could know God intended to keep his word was that both of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas would die in the same day. This took place in a battle with the Philistines.

**1 Sam. 2:35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is**

**in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.**

Jehovah promised to replace the unfaithful priests of the house of Eleazar with those of the house of Zadok. But, this may also be a shadow of things to come when the greatest High Priest of all was to come and give his own body as a sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. Christ would not disappoint His Father in heaven. He would, through His bride, the church, bring forth an entire family of priests and kings who would follow His example of faithful service.

**1 Sam. 2:36 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.**

Rather than being in a position to feast upon the fat of the sacrifices, the family of Eli would find it necessary to beg for their portions and pray that they might receive the simplest blessings.

Dear reader, do not despise the sacrifice of God. Do not take Christ for granted. Do not kick at God's ways of living life. He can lift up, and He can bring down. Hannah was lifted up. The house of Eli saw the opposite reaction. It was reduced to begging for food.



## *Chapter 3*

This chapter closes out the preparation time for Samuel as he develops from the time his mother Hannah left him with Eli until he is called by the voice of the Lord. We see his development in direct contrast to the deterioration of Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas.

**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.**

Things of value become precious when they are found only rarely. Open vision would be that which was provided by a prophet who was in constant communication with Jehovah, and who could be consulted to determine the will of the Lord. Such vision was non-existent just previous to the maturing of Samuel. This situation was to change when the young man was ready to take on that responsibility.

We assume that God had become so disappointed in the behavior of both the priesthood and the people that He had refrained from selecting an individual who would serve in the prophet's role. There was no person who was recognized by the public as God's peculiar spokesman. There is no mention of such a man from the time of Moses until the time of Samuel. God did reveal His will in more private and less obvious ways.

**1 Sam. 3:2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see;**

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Eli was a very old man at this time. Age often brings dimness to the eyes and dullness to the ears. He had laid down in his usual place. He may well have spent much time lying down because of lack of vigor in his advanced years. We can conclude that he depended upon his young helper, Samuel, to see to many of his needs.

1 Sam. 3:3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

1 Sam. 3:4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

We come across the word “temple” again. Some believe this was some type of solid structure, and not the tent of meeting which served as the place of rest for the ark during the wilderness travels. If so, the ark had been moved from the “tent” to this building. The ark was in the building where Eli and Samuel had their sleeping quarters.

We do not agree with those who see Eli sleeping in the Most Holy Place. The High Priest was forbidden to enter that chamber other than one very special day of the year.

The “lamp of God” mentioned here did go out. The seven branched candlestick was to burn continuously. It was not to go out. This lamp appears to have been a lamp which was filled each day with oil enough to last well into the night when all were resting after their day’s activities. Samuel and Eli were both at rest.

Samuel heard a voice calling his name. He thought it was Eli calling for some errand to be done. He obediently answered to let Eli know he was ready to help.

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**1 Sam. 3:5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.**

He quickly arose and presented himself to the old man. Eli denied that he had called Samuel. He excused Samuel and told him to go back and lie down. Did he think Samuel had been awakened by a dream?

**1 Sam. 3:6 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.**

Samuel did as he was told. After a time he heard the same voice calling his name. Surely Eli had called him this time.! But Eli gave him the same response as before. He had not called. Samuel was to return to his bed. Both Eli and Samuel must have been beginning to wonder why Samuel had felt he heard this voice repeatedly.

**1 Sam. 3:7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.**

Verse seven does not mean Samuel was not familiar with the existence of the Lord. He had been raised in the shadow of the temple at Shiloh. He had been taught by the High Priest and was being trained for the priesthood.

The word “know”, as it is used here, means Samuel had not been in the kind of direct communication with Jehovah that he would be in the days to come. This

was the beginning of a new experience as God used him in a very special way.

**1 Sam. 3:8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.**

For the third time, Samuel heard the voice. He must have been wondering if Eli was becoming senile and did not remember even the immediate past. Still, he courteously asked what he could do for this man whom he respected as his teacher.

We must note the great difference between Eli's own sons and this young man who had been placed in his care. His two sons cared little for what he had to say, no matter how many times he might say it. Samuel was ready to obey three times in a row.

By the time Samuel had appeared before him the third time, Eli realized God had spoken to his young friend. Eli had experienced such occasions before. He knew how to advise Samuel.

**1 Sam. 3:9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.**

Samuel was to return to his bed, lie down and wait for the voice to speak again. Then he was to answer the voice. He was to invite God to speak to him. He would hear and obey. Samuel did not question Eli's advice. He did as Eli charged him.



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

The voice of Jehovah called his name twice. The verse does not imply that his name was spoken twice each of the previous times. It only means the voice spoke to him again. He did as Eli suggested and replied, "Speak; for thy servant heareth."

The voice of God speaks to men today through the pages of the Bible. Our response should be the same as that of Samuel. We should be just as willing as Samuel to hear the truth, and just as eager to put that truth into action in our own lives.

**1 Sam. 3:11 And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.**

The revelation Samuel received as not as pleasant as he might have wished. The news was so drastic it would make the ears of those who heard it to tingle, or ring with shock.

**1 Sam. 3:12 In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.**

A man of God had already informed Eli that disaster was ahead. The office of High Priest was to be taken from his household and be given to a more faithful household. He would know this was to be true in that both of his sons would be killed within one day.

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Samuel was to verify this news. God had promised, and God would cause the promise to take place just as He had spelled it out.

1 Sam. 3:13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

The consequences of the sinful ways of Eli's household had brought judgment upon it. His sons had wallowed in sin. Eli may not have committed the same sins, but he had not done all that he could have done to turn them back. He had the power to curtail their priestly duties and replace them with others who were faithful. He did not. The sentence which had been placed upon his household would not be pardoned.

1 Sam. 3:14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

If Eli and his sons had decided they could offer sacrifices and be forgiven repeatedly for these vile sins, they were mistaken. These were deliberate sins. Their hearts had been hardened and God knew they would not discontinue their rebellion.

1 Sam. 3:15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision.

This verse does not say Samuel slept until the morning. It says he lay until the morning. How would
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the reader like to pass on the sad news that Samuel was expected to relay to Eli?

One of the most difficult things about acting as a faithful Christian is informing loved ones that they are going to be eternally punished if they continue in the path they are traveling.

**1 Sam. 3:16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I.**

Eli had heard Samuel moving about as the young man opened the doors of the building. He knew Samuel had received a message from God. He must have also suspected it was not going to be a pleasant message for Eli to hear. Yet, he did not hesitate to call for Samuel to come to him.

**1 Sam. 3:17 And he said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.**

It is to be commended when men who have sinned recognize the error of their ways and are willing to hear what punishment God is going to lay upon them. Eli needed to know. He warned Samuel that if Samuel did not tell him everything God had said, Samuel would put himself in danger of being punished just as God had declared Eli and his house would be.

**1 Sam. 3:18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.**

As much as Samuel feared to tell Eli the horrible news he had heard through the voice of the Lord, he did tell him everything. The old man knew what he and his sons had been doing was wrong. Why did Samuel have to lay it out in detail? Perhaps because Eli had been deceiving himself into thinking all was not as bad as it seemed. By offering a sufficient sacrifice, maybe the sins could be overlooked.

When Samuel relayed the message of the Lord, Eli knew the punishment would be applied. He was not about to argue with Jehovah that the punishment was undeserved.

**1 Sam. 3:19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.**

As Samuel matured, God continued to speak through him. When Samuel informed the people as to those truths God had revealed to him, the pronouncements proved to be reliable. It happened just as Samuel prophesied. There was “open vision” once more.

**1 Sam. 3:20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.**

Dan was in the far north of Israel. Beersheba was in the extreme south. From one end of Israel to the other, the people recognized Samuel was a prophet of the Lord.

**1 Sam. 3:21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.**

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The Lord had appeared to Moses in the past. Due to the disrespect of the priesthood, He had ceased to reveal Himself through those sinful men. Now He had a faithful prophet through whom he could make His desires known plainly.

Chapter 4

A transition is being made from the leadership of the priesthood of Eli to that of Samuel. In this chapter we find the death of Eli and his two wicked sons. This leaves a vacuum which will be filled by Samuel.

We also see the defeat of Israel by the Philistines and the loss of the ark of the covenant to that long time enemy.

1 Sam. 4:1 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.

The first sentence of this verse fits more aptly at the end of the previous chapter. Some attempt to justify it's position at the beginning of this chapter by saying the word of Samuel was a call to arms against the Philistines. It is better seen as a capstone for the previous record of Samuel's rise to a position of influence in Israel.

We are not to understand that Israel initiated the battle with the Philistines. Israel was not interested in adding territory to that which they already controlled. They had seen a force of the Philistines gathering near Ebenezer and felt the need to prepare for defense. Aphek and Ebenezer were near each other.

1 Sam. 4:2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

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At this time battles were not fought with atomic weapons dropped from airplanes. They were fought with spears, bows and chariots. The two armies readied themselves for the coming conflict.

Details of the battle are not reported. They fought. Israel was defeated. Four thousand of the Israelites were killed. This kind of defeat for the chosen people was unexpected. How could such a disaster occur?

**1 Sam. 4:3 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.**

There was a serious need for determining the reason for the defeat. The elders of Israel wondered why God had not supported them. It appeared rather that He had either completely abandoned them or. Even worse, that He had aided the enemy.

Surely it was not their fault the battle was lost. God must have forsaken them. How could they insure He would be with them in the next battle?

The answer seemed to them to be in taking the ark of the covenant into battle with them. Jehovah was known to manifest Himself to the High Priest between the wings of the cherubim which were seated on each end of the ark. If the ark was with them, there was no possibility the next battle would be lost.

The reader should pay attention to the fact that they thought "It shall save us out of the hands of our enemies." This was the kind of thinking that the

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idolatrous pagans used. The reasoning was faulty. If God was not with them, the ark was no more than a piece of wood and metal. Even the two tables of stone with the commandments written upon them was useless if they failed to heed those commandments.

Let not the reader fall into the same line of reasoning. The taking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week is no more than a habit if it is just a ritual. It will only be advantageous for the Christian if it is taken by one who lives in harmony with the will of the one who sacrificed His body and His blood.

1 Sam. 4:4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

The next time, Israel would be prepared! They went to the tabernacle in Shiloh and removed the ark to take it into battle with them. They even took the two sons of Eli to accompany it.

Remember friends, God had said the ark was not to be moved unless He gave permission for it to move, and the directions as to how it was to be moved. The ark was to be kept in the Most Holy place. It was to be moved by staves passed through rings, carried by men. God had already forsaken Israel, as demonstrated by the first battle.

1 Sam. 4:5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

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Israel should have been kneeling in solemn prayers of repentance. Instead, they cried out with a tremendous shout of confidence. The earth trembled with the energy of the sound.

**1 Sam. 4:6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.**

The Philistines could not fail to hear the loud shouting. At first they wondered what could have caused such an outcry. It was not the sound of a foe which had just been soundly defeated and had lost four thousand of its soldiers.

It did not take long for them to realize the answer to their question. The Israelites must have lost the battle because their God had not been with them. They had no doubt gone to Shiloh and brought the ark into their midst. This could be serious!

**1 Sam. 4:7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.**

The Philistines were a people of larger stature than others of the area. They were known as powerful fighters. Yet, when they guessed the God of the Israelites might change the outcome of the next battle, they were filled with fear. They had not had to face Israel's God in the last conflict.

**1 Sam. 4:8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.**

There was good reason for their fear. They had heard how the plagues had come upon the Egyptians. They had also heard about how when the ark preceded the Israelites into the edge of the Reed Sea, the waters parted until they had passed through, and then closed in upon the Egyptian army and drowned a host of them.

The Philistines realized they were much weaker than the Egyptians. They might be facing an impossible task.

**1 Sam. 4:9 Be strong and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.**

They decided they really had no choice. They had persecuted the Israelites and made them to be servants. If they lost to Israel, they could look forward to being treated as they had treated others. They must stand up and fight, regardless of the outcome. To “quit” was to behave. They must muster courage and fight with all their might. (See Judges 13:1.)

*Jdg 13:1 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.*

**1 Sam. 4:10 And the Philistines fought, and**



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

The outcome this time was much the same as it had been before. Israel was defeated. The ones who escaped death fled to their homes. Only this time, the number of dead was thirty thousand men. When we add the four thousand who died in the first battle to the thirty thousand who perished in this second one, we have a total of thirty-four thousand casualties.

The presence of the ark had not brought the support of Jehovah. Their shouts of confidence had been turned into cries of anguish.

**1 Sam. 4:11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.**

In addition to the thousands of slain men, the ark, which they thought would bring them victory, was now in the hands of their enemies.

The two sons of Eli were among those who died in the conflict. How could God allow two such disasters to be suffered by His people? The answer was that they had stopped their ears and hardened their hearts to His commandments. They had done their best to prove they were not His people. As they had turned away from Him, He had turned from them.

**1 Sam. 4:12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.**

It was about eighteen miles from the battlefront to Shiloh. Marathon runners travel some twenty-six miles in between two and three hours. This man could have covered the distance in one day, even with rest periods.

When he arrived at Shiloh, he had torn clothing and dust upon his head. The tearing of the clothing and casting dust upon the head was a means of letting others know one was in a state of grief. Those who were able to see him knew right away that there were serious problems in the fight with the Philistines.

**1 Sam. 4:13 And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.**

Eli was much concerned over what might be taking place. He was anxiously watching for some word to be returned. He was sitting and wondering when the word would come.

He is said to have been watching. Since Eli's eyes were said to have been set at this time, we conclude that he was completely blind. Previously we had been informed that due to his age, his eyes had dimmed. Now they had failed. Eli was particularly concerned over the safety of the ark. There was plenty of reason for his worry. He knew God did not expect the ark to be used in such a way.

Though Eli could not see, he could still hear. The cries of horror which came to his ears were not good news.



**1 Sam. 4:14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.**

Eli wanted to know the cause of the outcry. Upon his question, the man who carried the news came into his presence and unfolded the details of the disaster.

How is it that Eli was sitting on a seat by the wayside, and yet the messenger had to be called to him to tell him the news? It would seem that the High Priest would be quite noticeable. It has been suggested that Eli was not sitting at the gate of the city, but was at the entrance to the tabernacle. The messenger would then have passed through the crowd and finally come to the place where the old man was seated.

**1 Sam. 4:15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.**

Eli lacked just two years of being one hundred years of age. He could not see. He awaited the words of the man from the battlefield. He must have already concluded the news was tragic. But, just how tragic?

**1 Sam. 4:16 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?**

**1 Sam. 4:17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.**

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The messenger gave Eli four horrifying facts.

1. The Philistines had defeated Israel.
2. A great slaughter had been suffered.
3. Eli's two sons had died in the battle.
4. The ark of the covenant had been taken.

Can we possibly imagine what an impact this news would have had on the system of this old blind man who had the responsibility of the position of High Priest. He was weak and indulgent toward the sinful actions of his two sons, but he did care for them. He also cared about those thirty-four thousand Israeli men who had died. He was no doubt devastated by the second loss to the Philistines in a short period of time.

But even more terrifying to him was the loss of the ark of God. The glory of God had been associated with the ark for many years of the past. It had played a part in the passing of the Israelites through the Reed Sea. It had also been present when Jericho was captured. Now it was gone!

1 Sam. 4:18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

The shock was too much for the man. Lesser news than this could have killed him. He was overweight. He was blind. He was either fat or weighed down with the forty years he had been a High Priest for the Lord. He fell off his seat and his neck was broken resulting in his death.

Just as the man of God, and also Samuel, had



predicted, the High Priesthood would be removed from the house of Eli.

1 Sam. 4:19 And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

Phinehas wife found the cumulative disasters too much for her condition. She went into the labor of childbirth. It is said that she bowed down. This is not the usual position for modern women in giving birth to a child. It is, however, not unknown in some less advanced areas of the world. The term "bowed down" could only mean she was weighed down with the information she had received.

1 Sam. 4:20 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.

The naming of the child clearly came before the death of the mother. She had reached a perilous condition during the birthing process. As the women who were aiding her gave her the news that she had produced a son, she was unable to respond.

1 Sam. 4:21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

When did she name the child? If she was unconscious at the time of the birth, how could she have known it was a son and named it “Ichabod”, a male name. This is no serious difficulty. Almost every Israeli woman wanted to have a son. She could have seen the end coming and suggested the name just in case she was unable to do so after the child was born.

1 Sam. 4:22 And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

This twenty-second verse explains the meaning of the name. The name “Ichabod” means “no more glory.” The entire nation must have wondered along with this woman, what did the future hold for this people whom God had allowed to suffer such a defeat?



Chapter 5

We will now see what took place when the Philistines flaunted their supposed victory over Jehovah by placing the ark of the covenant in the temple of their god Dagon. They should have learned that although they had inflicted terrible losses upon the Israelites, they had not defeated their God.

1 Sam. 5:1 And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod.

Taking the sacred items of vanquished enemies was commonplace in the area of the world being discussed here. Such items have been found by archeologists in several places. The ark was taken from the battle scene to the city of Ashdod. Ashdod was one of the five major cities from which the Philistines exerted power over Palestine.

1 Sam. 5:2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

The house of Dagon was the temple where this favored false god of the Philistines was worshipped. Dagon may have been a “corn god.” More of the commentators believe it to have been a “fish god” resembling artist’s pictures of the fictitious mermaids. It was supposed to have had the head and arms of a human and the lower body of a fish.

Why did the Philistines place the ark of God in the temple of Dagon, and close by Dagon’s side? It does not seem probable that they intended to worship it as

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a god of lesser power than Dagon. It is far more likely that they placed it there as a symbol of the victory their god had won over the God of the Israelites. Any time they entered the temple, they would be reminded of that victory.

**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.**

Worship services are often held in the early morning. The Philistines had arisen early to offer praises to Dagon. They were in for a shocking surprise. Dagon was lying face down before the ark as though he was in the process of worshipping it. This was doubly surprising because the idols were normally fastened very securely in their places.

Well, perhaps this could have been an accident. They would certainly have had some doubts, but these were cast aside for the moment and Dagon was fastened back in his place.

**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.**

The next day, when the worshippers of Dagon went back to the temple, as they had before, there was an even greater shock. Not only was their false god lying flat before the ark of the covenant. It's head and both

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of it's hands were broken off from it's body. Only the fish stump was left.

The head is the center of thought. The hands are the organs of performance. Dagon's supposed mind had been shown to be no more than a self deception on the part of his followers. The lifeless and impotent hands were proved to be just that; dead and powerless.

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.

Some followers of false gods leap across the threshold of the entrance of the temples. Since Dagon's hands and head had been found on the threshold of his temple, those who entered it were especially careful not to step on that place.

1 Sam. 5:6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof.

The power of Jehovah was not still not completely demonstrated. The next part of the lesson was to send a plague of emerods upon those in the entire locality of Ashdod. The word "emerods" is taken from a Hebrew word meaning elevated places. The present writer was raised in the state of Michigan. The word "risings" was not used there, but upon moving to Tennessee he found that word used for red swellings such as boils. It is easy to see the relationship between the use of the word "rising" and the word "emerod."

Such conditions as bleeding piles, hemorrhoids,
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dysentery and bubonic plague would cause symptoms such as the Ashdodites suffered. The golden mice which they offered might possibly connect bubonic plague with these emerods. Rodents carry fleas which may first bite the rodent and then later bite a human, spreading that plague. This disease can cause swellings of the lymph glands in the groin and in the armpits. At one time the bubonic plague is said to have killed about one third of the entire human population of the world.

**1 Sam. 5:7 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.**

It finally dawned upon the residents of Ashdod that they were being punished for their behavior toward the God of the Israelites. If they were going to escape the emerods and death, they would have to rid themselves of the ark. What were they to do with it?

**1 Sam. 5:8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither.**

A meeting of the lords of the five cities of the Philistines was called. This meeting resulted in a conclusion that if the ark was sent to the city of Gath, the anger of the God of Israel might be eased. This would move it away from the temple where Dagon had been housed.

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One wonders if the image of Dagon was patched up by restoring its hands and its head to the stump which had been left.

1 Sam. 5:9 And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.

Rather than causing the emerod condition to be removed, it then followed the movement of the ark and infested the city of Gath with the same types of problems. The destruction mentioned is probably death which was associated with the emerods.

Some of the old manuscripts from which the English Bibles are translated refer to the secret parts as the posteriors. This would identify it as some swelling in the anal or groin region.

The horror was not limited to any poverty stricken parts of the city. It struck persons of all classes. When a problem affects only the less influential portion of a population, it may be dismissed without action. But, when it strikes the ruling class, something will be done.

1 Sam. 5:10 Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

Neither Ashdod nor Gath would have the ark. Perhaps the next best thing was to send it to the city of Ekron. That decision was not welcome in the proposed city. The

citizens there had heard enough to know they did not want emerods and death in their city. They accused the rulers of setting out to deliberately kill them.

1 Sam. 5:11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

This decision seems not to have blocked the entrance of the ark into that city. That was another mistake. The plague got worse as the ark was moved from one city to another. The rulers, or lords of the Philistines assembled again. This time they decided there was but one way to eliminate the problem. The ark would have to be sent away from all of their cities. The ark was associated with the God of Israel and it must be sent back to the Israelites.

There is reason to believe the Israelites did not place the ark back in Shiloh where it had been in the time of Eli. It is mentioned at Nob and at Kirjath-jeraim, but not at Shiloh.

1 Sam. 5:12 And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

Many of the citizens of Ekron were slain with some other type of destruction. Others suffered from emerods. The entire city had reached a panic stage. The only remedy was to lift hands toward heaven and pray for help, and to send the ark away.



Chapter 6

The Philistines had suffered extreme anguish as a result of the presence of the ark in their land. One city after another had been hit by the plagues. Their god Dagon had fallen flat on it's face with it's head and it's hands broken off. Conditions had become unbearable for the people who had defeated Israel and captured the ark.

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

1 Sam. 6:2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

Seven months can be a very long time when you are fighting against the Lord. The Philistines had finally had all they could bear and counseled with their priests and diviners seeking a solution to the problems.

What should be done with the ark? How could it be returned to the Israelites where it belonged.

1 Sam. 6:3 And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering; then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

Though unable to truly make contact with the supernatural, the priests and diviners did have some good advice. They suggested that it would not be sufficient just to send it back without making some type of amends for having treated it as they had. A
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trespass offering was needed. Maybe the God of Israel would be appeased if such an offering was sent back along with the ark.

**1 Sam. 6:4 Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords.**

But what type of trespass offering would be best? The offering should be connected in some way with the problems they had experienced. It was finally decided that a golden mouse and a golden emerod should be sent, one for each of the lords of the five major Philistine cities.

The images of mice were connected with the plague of mice which had been sent upon the Philistines. Mice were detestable animals according to the law of Moses. Emerods are not the most beautiful portions of a human anatomy. They are the swellings which occur in the anal region which burst and emit blood from the bowels. They also were one of the curses the Philistines had endured.

**1 Sam. 6:5 Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.**

The sending of golden mice and golden emerods



was not the wisest decision that could have been made. While related to the suffering they had experienced, these offerings could be an insult to the God to whom they were attempting to apologize.

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

For too long, the Philistines had failed to learn the lesson taught by the Lord to Pharaoh and the Egyptian nation who had misused His favored people. They had tried to hold on tightly to their slaves, but found this brought many successive types of agony. When the Egyptians permitted the departure of the Israelites, the suffering ended.

**1 Sam. 6:7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:**

According to the Philistine diviners, it would not be sufficient to return the ark by just any means. They must give it dignity by transporting it on a new cart, pulled by two milk cows who had never before been worked.

**1 Sam. 6:8 And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.**

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This was not the way the Lord intended for the ark to be transported. It had rings on each side through which staves were to be inserted, and was then to be carried by the priests of God as it was moved from one place to another.

1 Sam. 6:9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us.

They were to watch and see if the milk cows went in the direction of their calves, or took a direction which would remove them farther from their offspring. If the cows moved away from their calves and went toward Israelite country, they felt this would be a sure sign that it was God who had sent the plagues. If the cows went toward their calves, which would be the natural behavior, they would conclude that the plagues were no more than natural happenings.

1 Sam. 6:10 And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home:

1 Sam. 6:11 And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.

All of the instructions of the priests and diviners were followed to the letter. The next thing was to watch and see which direction the cows would take.

1 Sam. 6:12 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.

The two cows ignored their natural instincts to return to their calves and went straight toward Bethshemesh, neither turning to the right or to the left. God had given indisputable proof that it was He who had punished the Philistines for their treatment of Israel and the land of promise.

1 Sam. 6:13 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.

As the Israelites who were working the fields during the wheat harvest looked up, they saw the ark coming toward them. This was news of the highest importance. It produced joy in their hearts to think the precious ark would possibly be returned to its rightful place.

1 Sam. 6:14 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.

The two milk cows that pulled the ark had moved deliberately and constantly forward until they reached a field controlled by the Israelites. They stopped near a large stone which could serve as an altar for making an offering to Jehovah. They took the wood which composed

the cart, and used it for fuel to offer the two cows as a burnt offering to God.

1 Sam. 6:15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD.

The joy was great among the Levites of the city of Bethshemesh. They continued in their offerings to the Lord, apparently with sacrifices from their own possessions to go along with the cattle and the wood of the ark. The golden images were placed on the large stone while the ceremonies proceeded.

1 Sam. 6:16 And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.

The five lords of the Philistines waited in the background to see what the outcome of the return of the ark would be. When they saw things were going well, they went back to one of their own cities, Ekron.

1 Sam. 6:17 And these are the golden emerods which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;

1 Sam. 6:18 And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone

of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite.

The great stone seems to have been more than a large rounded boulder. We can probably assume that it was a flat outcropping which lay bare where the sacrifices could be easily placed. It came to be known as the “stone of Abel”, and remained for an extended period of time as an evidence of the truth of the account.

1 Sam. 6:19 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.

All was not peace and joy for the Israelites. The inside of the ark was not to be viewed. Some of the men of Bethshemesh had ignored that command and had looked into it. As a result fifty-six thousand and seventy persons lost their lives.

1 Sam. 6:20 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?

The difficulties caused the citizens of the city of Bethshemesh to desire that the ark be removed from them. The problem was as to where it could be sent. The word “he” sounds as though they felt the presence of the Lord was closely associated with the ark, and they were afraid to be that near to His power.

1 Sam. 6:21 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.

They made the choice to send messengers to the city of Kirjath-jearim and see if they would be willing to come and take it from Bethshemesh to their city.



Chapter 7

The people of Bethshemesh had experienced the death of a large number of their population as a result of “looking into the ark.” Just as the Philistines had shifted the ark from one location to another in the effort to avoid further tragedy, the Bethshemites were attempting to send the ark elsewhere. They asked those of Kirjath-jearim to come and take it to their city.

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.

The trouble suffered by those of Bethshemesh did not disturb those of Kirjath-jearim, probably because they realized it was the lack of respect for the ark that brought the suffering. They had not acted in that way and there was no reason for them to fear a like fate.

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.

Samuel has not been mentioned for these twenty years the ark remained at Kirjath-jearim before this reformation. That does not indicate he was inactive. He was no longer a youth. He was a mature man and we may suppose that he had a continuously increasing spiritual influence upon Israel.

Samuel's influence caused Israel to become seriously

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concerned over their idol worship and weep over their adoration of the false gods. They were in condition to repent and reform their ways.

**1 Sam. 7:3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.**

Nothing is said about Samuel moving about through the entire territory inhabited by Israel, or gathering them together for the purposing of addressing them. His influence probably spread by word of mouth from place to place and person to person.

His message was to put away the gods which Jehovah had warned them not to worship. They were to worship the Lord, and Him only. They were to worship Him with all the heart, soul, mind and spirit. If they would commit themselves to such a degree, they could depend upon Jehovah to protect them from the Philistine menace.

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

Israel heard the message and put it into action. They made it very clear this was so by destroying the images of the idols and no longer praising and worshipping them.

The word "Baalim" is the plural for Baal. These Baalim were the male gods of the Canaanites. The word "Ashtaroth" is the plural for Ashtoreth. These were the

female gods of the Canaanites. As might be expected from the sexual emphasis, the worship of these gods was sexual in nature. They were the gods the people expected to promote fertility in both humans and in the field crops.

Israel repeatedly fell to the temptation to join in the pleasures offered by their licentious acts of worship.

**1 Sam. 7:5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.**

Mizpeh was a recognized location for gatherings. This time Samuel called for all of the people to come together and draw near to Jehovah while he prayed on their behalf. The scriptures teach us this is approved of God. (See James 5:16.)

*Jam 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

Samuel certainly qualified as a righteous man!

**1 Sam. 7:6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.**

There is some mystery concerning the meaning of drawing and pouring out water before the Lord. Several possible explanations have been offered. First, it may be that they were showing a willingness to place honor to the Lord before even their need for water. Second, they may have been pouring out their hearts in adoration

and dedication to their Lord. Third, the water may have been tears of repentance for past sins.

We can see a strong degree of unity in the last statement of the above verse. Samuel was a great leader. The people were ready and willing to follow him as he followed and taught the will of God.

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

All was not well. The Philistines had suffered defeat by the Israelites, but they still had not been completely stifled. When they heard Israel had assembled at Mizpeh, they assumed it meant a declaration of war. It is possible that they thought this was a time of weakness and presented an opportunity to invade and conquer, but the former of these two seems more logical.

Whichever was the case, the Philistines decided to go gather and go up to Mizpeh and confront them. Though Israel had reason to believe Jehovah would be with them, they were still fearful of the possible conflict.

**1 Sam. 7:8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.**

Past events had proved the need to have the Lord on their side rather than fighting against them. They pleaded with Samuel to pray for them. Since they had gathered there at Mizpeh to honor God, and since



Samuel was known to be a man of great faith, they felt his prayer would bring salvation from the Philistine army.

**1 Sam. 7:9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.**

A sacrificial lamb was to be between the age of eight days and one year. Samuel had one selected that was still nursing it's mother. He had it offered whole. This meant no part of the lamb was to be consumed by the people. It was to be entirely burnt as an offering to God.

After making the offering, Samuel cried unto the Lord and he was heard. This was no prayer of habit. It was an effectual fervent prayer which came from the depths of his heart.

**1 Sam. 7:10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.**

Even while Samuel was making the offering, the Philistines approached for their attack. It never took place. God caused a fearsome thunderstorm to strike fear into their hearts and they were defeated soundly by the men of Israel.

Courage is a major part of success during any conflict, whether it be an athletic contest or a war between armies on a battlefield. The Philistines found it advisable to retreat. They had lost their courage.

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1 Sam. 7:11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar.

The Israelites had not gone to Mizpeh unarmed. They were able to smite the enemy. The location of Bethcar is not accurately known. It was certainly far enough from Mizpeh that the defeat was complete.

1 Sam. 7:12 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.

Great men and women of God not only pray for His help. They thank Him for that help after He provides it, and they let others know of their gratitude. Samuel set up a memorial in honor of the help which Jehovah had given the people of Israel. The memorial was a stone which he called 'Ebenezer.' Ebenezer means "stone of help."

By saying *hitherto* the Lord helped us. He was not saying God had always been with them. He had not! But, God had been with them in the point of time just reached. Samuel was most grateful.

1 Sam. 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

The Philistines seem to have learned their lesson quite well. When God is on the other side, you are going to lose. They realized God had been on the side of the Israelites, and they wanted no more "thunderstorms."

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Samuel served as a judge for many years. During those years which he judged, the Philistines did not invade the borders of Israel. It is not that they did not try. They were not able.

**1 Sam. 7:14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.**

The trend went in the opposite direction. Instead of taking cities in Israel's borders, they gave back a number of cities which they had formerly taken from God's people.

The Amorites soon followed suit. If the Philistines were not able to successfully invade Israel, they knew better than to try. The word "Amorites" includes many of the people who lived in Palestine at the time Israel entered the land.

**1 Sam. 7:15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.**

Samuel lived to be an old man. It is estimated that he judged Israel for over fifty years. He was the last of the judges. These were men who applied the law of the Lord to the people. They first received the law from the Lord. They then taught the people that law. Finally, they sat in judgment and applied the law to cases between the people which were to be settled by it. Samuel was a priest. He was a prophet. He was a judge.

**1 Sam. 7:16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.**

Samuel was a circuit judge. He judged in Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpeh and Ramah, moving from one location to another. These cities were not a great distance from one another. They were all located in the central portion of the land.

**1 Sam. 7:17 And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.**

Samuel had his home in Ramah. He built an altar there to God. This is another evidence that Shiloh had been destroyed. If Shiloh had been in existence at the time, the ark would have been returned there and Samuel would have judged from that location.





## *Chapter 8*

In the last chapter we read of Samuel moving from one city to another of four different cities, and judging in each of those cities. Many were coming from over much of the land to consult him. His influence was far reaching.

In this chapter we find him aging and leaning on his sons to help him. His sons were undependable and the people complained, desiring the appoint of a king like those of the nations around them. Samuel was not pleased. God was not pleased, but God advised Samuel to do as the people asked. He was, however, to let them know the coming consequences of such an appointment.

**1 Sam. 8:1 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.**

There is general agreement that Samuel was about sixty years of age at this time. He was finding the tasks more difficult than he was able to bear, and so he enlisted two sons to help him. The verse says he made them judges. This was not an official appointment. They judged in a different sense than did their father. Samuel was the last of the official judges of Israel.

**1 Sam. 8:2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba.**

Samuel's dedication to the Lord is manifested in the names he gave to his sons. Joel means 'The Lord

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is God.” Abiah means “God is Father.” If only the two sons had lived up to their names, things might have been different in Israel. They failed miserably.

Beersheba was some distance from the circuit over which Samuel moved. He may have thought his sons could take some of the pressure that his own age was making difficult.

1 Sam. 8:3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

How sad! Samuel had been raised in the presence of Eli. Eli’s sons had proven to be quite unlike their father in dedication to God. Samuel had the opportunity of seeing the results of a lack of proper discipline.

This may not be the entire story. The children of good parents often fail to follow their parents example of righteous living. After all, humans have the power of choice. “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” Both Eli’s sons and Samuel’s sons chose the wrong path.

What was so bad about Samuel’s sons behavior? They placed their affections on things below rather than on things of spiritual value. Money and property became more important to them than the service of Jehovah. They took bribes and bent justice to serve their pocketbooks. The rich, who could offer the bribes were given advantages over the poor who could not afford to enrich them.

1 Sam. 8:4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

The elders of Israel came to Samuel at Ramah with
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the complaint that Israel was suffering because of a lack of leadership. They were ready to present a case for a change.

**1 Sam. 8:5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.**

The elders gave three reasons for the change. First, Samuel was already too old to tend to his judging. Second, his sons were not offering the leadership which he had shown. Third, the nations around them had a king who judged them.

What they were really concerned about was a lack of security from their neighbors. The Ammonites were a serious threat on the east side of the Jordan. The Philistines had been a force on the west side. They could be attacked at any time and the present leadership was not sufficient.

They should have realized that the Lord would settle matters at the proper time and in the proper way. He could indicate His new leadership when He was ready. He could use His supernatural power to give victory over any enemy. They were showing a lack of trust in the wisdom and power of God.

**1 Sam. 8:6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.**

What should God's leaders do when the masses lose confidence in the Divine plan? Should they fight? Should they quit? Should they take it to the Lord in prayer?

Samuel did the only thing he could do. He was doing all he could do. The elders were right that his sons

were not living righteously. Still, God could provide an answer. He prayed for God's wisdom.

**1 Sam. 8:7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.**

The Lord knew very well what was going on. The people were using Samuel as a scapegoat. There was more going on than was apparent on the surface. There was a loss of confidence in God's ability and willingness to reign. They were ready to place more confidence in a human monarch than in Him.

If God knew what the people were doing, why did He not use His power to defeat the elders and either keep the leadership as it was, or change it in accord with His own will?

We can think of one good reason. Men sometimes learn through giving them the opportunity to reap the consequences of their folly. These impatient leaders and the people whom they represented were in need of that kind of lesson. God would allow it.

This was not the first time, or the last time God used this procedure. Another instance of the same plan was in permitting men to have multiple wives because of the hardness of their hearts. It has been a long hard lesson for men to learn, that more than one wife at a time is asking for trouble.

**1 Sam. 8:8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith**



**they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.**

If one looks back over the record of the Israelites, the truth of this statement can be easily seen. Over and over they had been warned not to forsake Jehovah and turn to such idols as were worshiped by the nations around them. Even while Moses was on Sinai receiving the law from Jehovah, the people persuaded Aaron to make a golden calf. Over and over they had failed to heed the warning. The results had been tragic. Israel should have learned by now. They had not!

**1 Sam. 8:9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.**

**1 Sam. 8:10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.**

God told Samuel to do as they had asked. At the same time, he told Samuel to explain to them just what sort of things would happen under the rule of a human king like those of the nations around them.

If the king had realized he was but a prince, and God was the real King, the government could have been efficient. But, God knew the kings would become proud and independent. They would feel no need to consult with Him before making decisions. This must be spelled out in detail for the people.

**1 Sam. 8:11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his**

**chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.**

In order to defend Israel from the armies of the nations around, these kings would decide they needed a military force of their own. This would require that their young men be drafted to be chariot drivers and riders of war horses. In order to insure the king's own safety, some of these young men would be assigned to go before him and clear the way for his own chariot.

**1 Sam. 8:12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.**

The king would go so far as to organize work forces who cultivated his own fields and reap the harvest which would then become his own property. This would require not only laborers, it would necessitate supervisors at many different levels of authority.

The king would need workers to make swords and spears to arm his chariots. God could defend His people without horses and chariots. Thus, an entire governmental organization would be set up. There would be both a Divine government and a civil government. The problem of church and state would arise. How much would God do, and how much would man do?

**1 Sam. 8:13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.**

It was not just the men who would be forced into governmental service. The women would find themselves



servants who would work away from home to perform duties which would be unnecessary if the king were not appointed.

**1 Sam. 8:14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.**

**1 Sam. 8:15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.**

Once in power, the king would have the ability to take possession of the best land. He could ignore the welfare of the people and feed his governmental organization at their expense.

**1 Sam. 8:16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.**

Those more wealthy Israelites would find their own servants, both male and female would be removed from them and taken over by the government.

**1 Sam. 8:17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.**

The Levites had been receiving a tenth from the people in the past. Now the king would take a tenth. If both of these were taken, the people would have only eighty percent of their earnings for themselves. If the reader will take a good close look at the present tax load, he will find that God had the picture pretty straight. If one gives God a tenth of his income as a church contribution today, he will find he is giving the

civil government more than another tenth. He has less than eighty percent left.

**1 Sam. 8:18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.**

The time would come when they would cry out in despair over the oppression of the king. When that cry was raised, God would turn a deaf ear, just as they were doing as they pleaded for a monarch.

**1 Sam. 8:19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;**

To no avail, Samuel relayed the message from the Lord to the people. They did not believe the predictions God had presented through His prophet. They were determined to pattern the government of Israel after that of the monarchies around them. WE WILL HAVE A KING!

**1 Sam. 8:20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.**

Ah, yes! They could not see their real King. They did not remember how He had placed His laws over them and provided a means by which those laws could be applied. Nor did they remember how useless the attacks of their enemies were when God drowned them in the Reed Sea or smote them with emerods.





**1 Sam. 8:21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD.**

Samuel had no difficulty understanding what the people demanded. All he could do was to tell the Lord he needed help and advice. He prayed for such.

**1 Sam. 8:22 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.**

The people had had a second chance. They could have changed their mind as a result of the reasoning which had been presented to them. God commanded Samuel to give them their choice. He was to appoint the human king they called for.

Samuel quieted the elders and the people by telling them to disband and go home. The implication was that what they had demanded would be done.

Israel had passed through the patriarchal period in which families were the basic unit of society. Then they passed through the time of the prophets when the tribes replaced the families. Now they were on the verge of moving to a national civil government. A monarch is the best form of government, if the monarch is perfect in power, in wisdom and in goodness. Human kings do not fit those qualifications.

All of the history of God's relationships with man steadily move toward the rise of a Divine King. He is a world King. He has the qualifications to serve in that capacity. One day all nations will bow down before him. Israel needed to learn that lesson. We still have that lesson to learn as I write these comments.

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Chapter 9

Israel had demanded a king like those of the nations around them. God told Samuel to grant their wish, but to tell them there would be tragic consequences. And that when they cried out for aid, He would not hear their cry.

The upcoming chapter will tell of Samuel's meeting with the man whom he is to appoint. God's providence can be seen in the events of the chapter.

1 Sam. 9:1 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.

Benjamin was a small tribe, The most natural tribe would have been that of Judah. Yet a king taken from the tribe of Judah might have stirred more jealousy than one taken from the smaller tribe of Benjamin.

A genealogy of Kish is given to establish that his son Saul was not a descendant of mixed parentage. He was a true Israelite. Kish was not without influence. He is said to be a mighty man of power. He owned asses, land and servants.

1 Sam. 9:2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

The Israelites had been looking for a man who could lead them against the Philistines and the Ammonites,

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or any other military force which might threaten them. Samuel was old and feeble. His sons were undependable. Saul, the son of Kish was just the opposite. He was in his prime years and there was not man in Israel who could match him in physical appearance. He was a head taller than any other in the land. When he is said to be a goodly man, it does not mean he was a righteous man. It means he was very impressive to the eye. In fact, he “looked like a king.”

To say he was “young” does not imply that he was in his mid teens. He had a grown son named Jonathan. But, he was not old and feeble as was Samuel.

There were other men mentioned in the Bible who were named Saul, including Saul of Tarsus.

**1 Sam. 9:3 And the asses of Kish Saul’s father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.**

Saul had not been trained up in the religious or political climates of God’s people. He enters our picture as a man seeking out lost livestock.

**1 Sam. 9:4 And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not.**

There were no fences as would be present today. Boundaries were marked by piles of stones. It was easy for animals to stray far enough away from home that they became lost to the owner. This had happened to

the asses of Kish.

It has been suggested that Saul went as far as twenty miles from his home in seeking the animals. It had been hours since having left his father.

**1 Sam. 9:5 And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.**

The land of Zuph was also that of Ramah, the city where Samuel had his home base during his circuits of several cities. Saul told his servant they must give up the search for the present. His father would become more concerned about the safety of the two of them than about the loss of the asses.

We find Saul's attitude here commendable. He had obeyed his father in going to find the asses. Now he was worried about his father's possible fear that danger could have come to his son and his servant.

**1 Sam. 9:6 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 shew us our way that we should go.**

The servant replied that it might be wise to consult a man of God who lived in the city. This, of course, was Samuel. The servant described Samuel as an honorable man of God. He would be able to give them advice as to which direction they should go. We assume the servant thought Samuel could help find the asses. Then they could return home. This man of God was noted for being

able to see that which other men could not see.

There is a question here. How is it that Saul's servant knew about this man of God, and Saul did not know of his existence. The problem may lie in the reader's assumption that Saul and the servant remained together during their search. If the servant had met others who knew of Samuel, he could have known when Saul did not.

**1 Sam. 9:7 Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we?**

Saul was a bit apprehensive about going to Samuel. Usually one carried a gift to such a man to show respect for his abilities. The two had eaten all of the food and there was nothing to offer Samuel.

There are both good and wicked reasons for men of God to receive goods and money from those to whom they present the Word of God. There are some who are hypocritical and preach for selfish reasons. There are others who preach for the love of truth and their fellowmen. Samuel was one of the latter class. God commands that those who are genuine should be supported by those whom they serve. (See I Cor. 9:14.)

*1Co 9:14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*

**1 Sam. 9:8 And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the**

**fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way.**

The servant was very helpful. He had a fourth part of a shekel of silver which they could give to Samuel. This would show their respect and they might receive information which would steer them in the right path.

The fourth part of a shekel of silver was not a large amount of money. It would have amounted to no more than fifty cents in present terms.

**1 Sam. 9:9 (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire 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.)**

The idea of a seer was in those early days confused with fortune telling. The seer was supposed to be capable of seeing things other men could not see. Sometimes the seeing had to do with the future. Sometimes it was related to seeing something at a distance, such as would have been the case with the asses.

Later on the word "prophet" was far more common. The prophet was one who presented the will of God to the people. He was far more than just a seer. The word prophet is used of both Abraham and Moses, but takes on a greater importance with the period of the kings of Israel.

**1 Sam. 9:10 Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was.**

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Saul agreed with the servant. They went into the city where Samuel was to be found.

1 Sam. 9:11 And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?

Young girls were taught to avoid the company of strange men. They normally worked close to the home and did not speak with men whom they did not know. In this present case, they had come to the city well to draw water. This was one task which allowed them to come into contact with strangers. It was at such a well that John the apostle conversed with the woman about living water.

The two men asked the girls if the seer (meaning Samuel) was in the city.

1 Sam. 9:12 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:

They did receive an answer from the girls. Samuel was in the city. It was time for a sacrifice to be made at the high place. He had arrived to lead in the sacrifice. Sacrifices were usually offered on some elevated area which would serve two purposes. They were closer to heaven, and they were more easily seen by a gathering of persons.

1 Sam. 9:13 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.

If Saul and the servant would enter the city soon they might find Samuel before he went up to the place of the sacrifice. The people would wait until he came and blessed the sacrifice before they would eat of it. After he had pronounced God's blessing upon it and expressed the thanks of the people for God's blessings, they would feel free to eat. It was nearly time for this to happen and the two men needed to make contact with Samuel before he became involved in the sacrificial duties.

1 Sam. 9:14 And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.

They followed the directions given them by the maidens and when they came into the city, Samuel was coming out toward them. He was on his way to the high place.

1 Sam. 9:15 Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

There is no need for much speculation as to how the Lord spoke to Samuel. To speak in his ear only means that He spoke to him privately. Others did not know. The original language means to "uncover the ear." To uncover the ear would have been to push the hair away in order to whisper quietly.



1 Sam. 9:16 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.

It was not to be a surprise to Samuel that Saul would come to him from the land of Benjamin. The Lord had privately informed him of what was to take place. It would not be by accident. Although Saul would not know it, God would be the one who sent Saul. Saul was the one whom God had chosen to fill the role as prince over His people. Note that God did not say Saul would be king. He used a word which made it clear that Saul would be subject unto Him. The people had asked for a military leader and Saul was the person who had been chosen.

1 Sam. 9:17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

The two men had apparently never met, even though Samuel made regular circuits around the land while fulfilling his duties as a judge. God made certain Samuel knew this was the one he had chosen.

1 Sam. 9:18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

Saul did not recognize Samuel. He had no idea that Samuel knew his identity and his reason for appearing.

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Saul inquired as to the location of the “seer’s” house. He used the word “seer” since his purpose for consulting him was to find the location of his father’s asses. Perhaps the man of God could see where the asses had gone.

**1 Sam. 9:19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.**

Samuel must have surprised Saul when he answered that he was the seer. He then instructed Saul to precede him up to the High Place. Saul was to share the sacrificial meal with Samuel that day. The next day Samuel would allow Saul to go, and would tell him that which he wished to know.

**1 Sam. 9:20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father’s house?**

Saul was not to worry himself about the asses for which he had been searching. They had been found. There was something of much more importance which needed to be discussed. The people of Israel desired a leader and God had chosen Saul to satisfy them.

**1 Sam. 9:21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?**



Saul then presented some reasons why he felt this was not a good choice. What he said sounds very much like the words of Moses when God called him from the sheep pasture to lead Israel, and also like the words of Gideon when he was assigned to lead God's people.

Were Saul's words genuine when he spoke of his tribe as being the least and his house being the least in the families of that tribe? Or was Saul putting on a face of false modesty and humility? I believe at this time the man was being honest. He was shocked that one with no more training or influence than he had should even be considered for the suggested responsibility.

**1 Sam. 9:22 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.**

Knowing Saul would be coming that day, Samuel had prepared to eat the sacrificial meal with Saul. He had also invited thirty others to join them. He told Samuel to sit in the most important seat in the room. Normally Samuel would have taken that seat. This act appears to be a preliminary to shifting the leadership role from himself to Saul.

**1 Sam. 9:23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee.**

The cook was told to bring a portion of the animal which had been reserved for Saul and offer it to him. As judge, Samuel would have had a choice portion.

**1 Sam. 9:24 And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left! set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.**

Nothing had been carved off the shoulder of the animal before it was presented to Saul. This would have been a bountiful serving. Samuel assured Saul that this portion had been saved especially for him, even before he invited the other guests. Saul was an honored guest.

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

After leaving the high place where the meal had been eaten, Samuel invited Saul to come to his house and converse with him. They went up on the flat roof of the house and talked. This would have been a very interesting conversation to listen in on. We can only guess at the details of the discussion.

**1 Sam. 9:26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.**

Samuel had promised Saul that he could leave the next day, and was true to his promise. Before that there was business to attend to. He called to Saul that it was time to get up and the two left the house together.

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1 Sam. 9:27 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on), but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

As they reached the outer limits of the city, Samuel told Saul to send his servant on ahead because he wished to speak to him further about the word of the Lord. In spite of Saul's surprise at being chosen, and his reply that he was not the best choice, he seems to have begun to accept the will of Jehovah. He was ready to listen.

Anyone who fails to see the providence of God in this chapter must have closed his eyes to a number of things. How did the asses of Kish get lost just at the right time? How did Saul and his servant arrive at Ramah at the time Samuel arrived? How did the servant happen to have just enough silver to offer to Samuel? How did it happen that the maidens were drawing water and were willing to speak to strangers? We could go on. Those who are true servants of God will have recognized these sorts of things happening in their own lives. God does not force men to serve Him. He does, direct the lives of men by providential means.

Chapter 10

This chapter will tell of the official ceremonies installing Saul as king of Israel. There will first be a private ceremony, with only Samuel and Saul present. Then a public ceremony will follow in which Saul will be presented to the entire nation as their new monarch.

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?

Samuel and Saul are apparently outside the city in a more secluded location. Samuel produced a vial of oil and poured it upon the head of Saul. It is of interest that later, when David is anointed a horn of oil is used. It is almost certain the oil was olive oil mixed with pleasant smelling ingredients. This oil was abundant in Palestine and was used for anointing of both kings and High Priests.

Samuel made certain that Saul understood the significance of what was taking place. It was a pronouncement of Saul's installation as a captain over the inheritance of the Lord. It is specified that Saul is a leader of the people. God is still King. He will convey His will through the prophet. The prophet will then relay the information to the captain. We will find Saul being hailed as king, but he is to remember, he is still Jehovah's subject.

God's people are often called His inheritance. The modern use of this word has to do with something of value which has passed as a gift from a person to his or her heirs of an estate. In the Bible it can refer to

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a “possession.” God’s people are His possession. He certainly did not receive them as an heir. He purchased them with the blood of His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Only in the sense that every true Christian has offered, or given himself, as a servant of the Lord can he be viewed as a gift. The meaning in the text clearly means Saul was to be the leader of the people who belong to God.

**1 Sam. 10:2 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?**

Samuel’s position as a prophet is strengthened in the present statements. He predicts events which are to take place soon in the life of Saul. The entire series of events are fulfilled. This is not coincidence; nor is it the result of human insight. God revealed these events to Samuel. Then Samuel passed the information on to Saul.

Samuel was to go through an ascending number of contacts. The first was his one to one contact with Samuel. The second was a meeting with two men at the sepulchre of Rachel. These men would tell Saul the asses which he searched for had been found. They would also tell him his father was grieving over his absence and wondering what he was to do about it.

**1 Sam. 10:3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going**

**up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:**

Within a short time, he would meet three men who were on their way to Bethel to worship God. One of these three men would be carrying three young goats. The second would have three loaves of bread. The third would have a container of wine.

**1 Sam. 10:4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands.**

These three men would greet Saul in a friendly manner and would offer him two loaves of bread. Saul was to receive the bread. His supply had run short some time before this. Men do not ordinarily meet a stranger and offer him food. God's finger was in this.

**1 Sam. 10:5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines; and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:**

The chapter is still discussing Bethel where men ascended a high to arrive at a high place to pay honor to the Lord. The Philistines were still powerful in the land, but had drawn back from some of their aggressiveness due to setbacks. They did have a group quartered at Bethel. It is puzzling as to why this garrison is mentioned. It does not play any important part in the  
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present activities.

As Saul was approaching Bethel, he would meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place. They would have several different kinds of musical instruments and would be playing and prophesying.

We must be careful about how we see the word “prophet” in this passage. Sometimes the word prophet means one who has directly heard a message from the Lord. He then passes the message on to others. It can, however, mean the one who is prophesying has been taught the word of God by other men, and then teaches others that which he has been taught. The passage before us is most easily understood as men who have been studying in a “school of the prophets.” They may have been engaging in a graduation procession in which music is being played and the truths they have learned are being discussed.

1 Sam. 10:6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

Saul had spent his life in agricultural activities. He had not attended a school of the prophets. But suddenly, when he met this company of prophets, he would join in with them and speak of spiritual truths right along with them. This could only be true if the Spirit of God had inspired him. He would be so different from his past as to be considered a “new man.” God can take “old men” and turn them into “new men.” In the present age, this happens when men give themselves to Him and turn from their sinful past. Further development must come from constant study of the scriptures. In the case of Saul, the knowledge came by direct Divine inspiration.

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**1 Sam. 10:7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.**

Saul was to follow up these experiences by using his best judgment as to how his new powers could be used. Jehovah had proven He was with Saul. It was up to Saul to prove he was God's man.

**1 Sam. 10:8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.**

Saul is still expected to follow the directions given to him by Samuel. Saul is to go to Gilgal and wait there for Samuel, who will meet him after seven days and give him further directions. The purpose of the meeting will be to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. Samuel then prepared to part from Saul.

**1 Sam. 10:9 And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.**

Saul had already been turned into "another man." Is there a difference between becoming another man and having a new heart? I think not. This is but a restatement of the change that had begun earlier.

The important point of this verse is that every event which Samuel had predicted came to pass. Not all are mentioned here, but the meeting with the band of  
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prophets was very significant. It is singled out because of it's importance.

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

1 Sam. 10:11 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?

Those who knew Saul before this time were amazed when they found him doing what only those who had been trained carefully were able to do. He was using knowledge God had imparted to him without extended study. He was just as able as those in the group which he met.

They wondered just what had happened to Saul. How had he received such abilities. He was the son of Kish. Yet he was conversant with those who had been schooled.

1 Sam. 10:12 And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?

Saul had not been absent for a long time. Just who was the "father" of these prophets? Was there a master prophet who could train Saul in a matter of days to make such progress? How shocking it was that Saul could prophesy!

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**1 Sam. 10:13 And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.**

**1 Sam. 10:14 And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were nowhere, we came to Samuel.**

Saul had continued toward the high place as Samuel had instructed him. When he arrived there an uncle questioned him. Where had he been? His answer was that they had been looking for his father's asses, but they had not found them. They had finally made contact with Samuel the prophet.

**1 Sam. 10:15 And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you.**

**1 Sam. 10:16 And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.**

Saul's uncle was curious. What had Samuel told him. He replied that Samuel had informed them the asses had been found. He stopped at that point. Nothing was mentioned about Saul having been anointed as the king of Israel.

**1 Sam. 10:17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh;**

**1 Sam. 10:18 And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you:**

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After the seven days were completed, Samuel arrived at Mizpeh and called for the people to gather. He had a word from the Lord. This would not be a congratulatory message.

God was going to remind Israel that the appointment of a king like the nations around them was their idea, not His. There was really no reason for them to mistrust Him. He had shown His complete ability and willingness to guide and protect them as long as they were ready to walk in His ways. He had delivered them from bondage in the land of Egypt. He had given them victory over those who attacked them. No human king could have offered them what he had given.

1 Sam. 10:19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.

Nevertheless, since they had rejected His leadership and demanded a human king, He would choose one for them. The reader should realize that the coming instructions did not give them permission to select their own king. God would indicate which man was to be chosen.

They were to come before the Lord, first tribe by tribe. Then when one tribe was chosen, they were to come before Him by thousands within that tribe.

1 Sam. 10:20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

1 Sam. 10:21 When he had caused the tribe
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**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.**

The tribe selected was Benjamin. Out of the tribe of Benjamin, the choice came down finally to Saul, the son of Kish. When they looked for Saul, he was nowhere to be found. This was not to be expected for two reasons.

Saul had already been told by Samuel that he was to be the new king. He had received an overabundance of evidence that his choice was God's choice. He should have known God's will was to be followed. Also it was not the type of response the vast majority of men would make. Most men would have taken pride in being selected for such an important undertaking. They would have been very easy to find.

**1 Sam. 10:22 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.**

When the people were unable to find Saul, they inquired of God as to Saul's whereabouts. This was no doubt done through Samuel. They were told Saul was hidden among the stuff (or baggage.) This was not a very dignified place for a king.

Why had Saul hidden? It was probably through fear as to leading the nation. He had not been in the political forefront. His experiences were in caring for the livestock of his father Kish. We do need to point out the glaring contrast between his apparent humility here and his insolence and pride which were seen later

in his life. Power has a way of destroying the character of men. Let those who are presented with leadership roles take heed. Saul has had much company over the centuries.

Some say Saul's behavior was just what one might expect from the oriental mind. They see it as a matter of etiquette. It was not true humility. It was like signing a letter, "Your servant." This writer does not agree. Saul was wishing someone else had been chosen.

**1 Sam. 10:23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.**

When they found the man, he came out from his hiding place and joined them. We are now told for the second time that he was head and shoulders taller than any of the rest of the people.

Israel had become much discouraged because the real King was invisible to them. They wanted a king who could be seen and followed into battle. They wanted him to be impressive enough to throw fear into the hearts of the enemy.

**1 Sam. 10:24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.**

Samuel reminded them they had just the kind of king they had wished for. He was so visible there was no one else like him. If he could not cause the hearts of the enemies to skip a beat, no other man could.

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Samuel's message from Jehovah had little effect upon the consciences of the people. They responded by shouting, "God save the king!" The British would say, "Long live the king!" The Hebrew could have been translated as, "Let the king live!" The people had what they had wished for.

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.

Samuel then followed up on the proceedings. He described the type of kingdom which was to be set up, and what its purposes and laws were to be. This is very similar to what Moses did on Mount Sinai when he wrote the law as God presented it for the governing of the people in the times of the judges. Samuel then sent the people to their homes. It was not Saul who closed the ceremonies. It was Samuel.

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.

As is true in most cases, the new king had those who were quick to follow him. As he went from Mizpeh to his home in Gibeah, a number of those who supported him made their satisfaction clear.

1 Sam. 10:27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought no presents. But he held his peace.



Just as surely as a new leader of the people is presented to the masses, there will be those who reject him. Even though Saul was chosen under the watchful eye of the Lord, he had opposition. We do not know whether these presents were gifts such as others were giving, or whether they may have been tax to operate the new government. Either way, they let it be known they were unhappy.

Sons of Belial is about the same as saying they were “hellions.” They were worthless and wicked persons. They would cause trouble if they could.

Chapter 11

Saul had been anointed by Samuel as king of Israel. He had also been recognized by many of the people as the king which God had appointed. But not all had received him. Saul had been appointed by the Lord to rule over a people who wanted a king like the nations around them whose king led them into battle. Since there were no immediate battles facing the people, Saul had gone back to his agricultural pursuits with his father Kish.

This will all change in the present chapter. A hostile force does threaten the security of the people. Saul will face his responsibilities as he and the people see them.

1 Sam. 11:1 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.

The Ammonites were descendants of Lot. Along with the Edomites and the Moabites, they had made entrance by Israel into the land of Canaan difficult. They had not ceased to trouble them over the years since. Now Nahash the Ammonite gathered a force to threaten the Israelites who dwelt in Jabesh-gilead. They were strong enough to cause grave concern among those of Jabesh.

The Lord had told His people not to make covenants with the nations around them. Because they feared the Ammonites more than they did the Lord, the men of Jabesh offered to make a covenant with Nahash. They would be willing to serve under his rule. Under the conditions which existed, Nahash had the upper hand.

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He could draw up the covenant to his own liking.

**1 Sam. 11:2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.**

Nahash was ready to make the covenant. However, he would only do so if he could blind the men of Israel in their right eye. This would insure that they would be greatly hindered in any military action against him. Most men, being right handed would carry their sword in the right hand and hold their shield with the left hand. The vision of the left eye would be blocked by the shield and the right eye would have been blinded.

The reproach which would come upon Israel would be that they and their God could not stand up against other military forces and must become slaves.

**1 Sam. 11:3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee.**

The elders of the Israelites at Jabesh asked for a seven day period of time in order that they could see if others would come to their aid from other parts of the nation of Israel. They promised that if they could not find enough help, they would come out to Nahash. The implication was that they would come out in surrender and would allow themselves to be enslaved. The words had a double meaning. To “come out” could have meant to come out fighting.

Nahash granted the seven days. There was good  
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reason for him to do that. If the men of Jabesh could not find help during those days, that made his position even more dominant. In the eyes of both his friends and his enemies he would become more powerful.

1 Sam. 11:4 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.

When messengers were sent out to call for assistance, some came to the area of Gibeah where Saul was working in the fields. Saul saw and heard the weeping of the people and wondered what was the cause of the tears.

1 Sam. 11:5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

Several of God's leaders had shepherding or herding backgrounds. Among these were Moses, David and Saul

Saul asked why the people were weeping. He was told that it was a result of the threat from the army of Nahash. They had been given seven days to see if they could find others who would help them in their defense. If not, they would be made servants.

1 Sam. 11:6 And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

The Spirit of God came upon Saul. There is much misunderstanding concerning the operation of the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit came upon Saul for a
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different reason than it comes upon those who are baptized into Christ in the Christian age. It came upon Saul to empower him against the Ammonites is a time of crisis. It is given to the Christian to dwell constantly within him and aid him in meeting the needs of day by day Christian living.

The Spirit of God caused Saul to gain strength from his anger. He was enabled to do things which otherwise, he could not have done. A battle faced Israel and he would be expected to serve as king by leading them into that battle.

**1 Sam. 11:7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.**

King Saul needed an army. There were not enough men in Jabesh to defend it. Thus he sent messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel to call men to the battle. To make certain they came, he added a powerful reason. He cut a yoke of oxen into twelve pieces and sent these pieces to every part of Israel. Then he promised that any man who failed to volunteer for the draft would have his own oxen cut up just as those had been. It worked! They came from every direction.

**1 Sam. 11:8 And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.**

Israel had not yet divided into the northern and  
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southern kingdoms. Yet, the numbers are given from both areas. This speaks of some beginnings of division, even at this early point of time.

Three hundred and thirty thousand was a sizable force. This would make the battle against the Ammonites much more balanced.

1 Sam. 11:9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, 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.

The large number who had volunteered to fight with the men of Jabesh made a promise that by the time the sun had become hot the next day, they would be there to assist them. Some believe the time the sun got hot might be at sunrise. Others contend that it meant the heat of the day, perhaps noontime. Either way, the help would be there when it was needed. This brought relief to the minds of the men of Jabesh.

1 Sam. 11:10 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.

The men of Jabesh then became much more courageous. They challenged the Ammonites by telling them they would meet them and they could do what they wished with them. This writer has a question about that statement. God was with Saul. There was no way the Ammonites could win the battle. It would have seemed more honest and less deceptive to tell the Ammonites they had a much larger army than Nahash expected.

Jehovah their God was with them, and they were ready to face Nahash and his forces. There is no need to be dishonest to accomplish the will of the Lord.

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.

There had been seven days time to prepare for the battle. Apparently the army of Israel had assembled about ten miles from the place of battle and were ready to march that last ten miles during the evening and night of the next to last day.

They divided into three groups so they could surround the Ammonites on three sides, leaving them only a way of retreat. Then, in the morning watch, which would have been sometime between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. they arrived in place. The battle was fought until mid day and large numbers of the Ammonites were slain. The rest were left in such a state of panic that they were unable to support one another.

1 Sam. 11:12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

The outcome of the battle was so decisive that Samuel was asked to identify those who had questioned whether Saul should reign over them, so they could kill them. By this time, the doubters had probably melted into the background.

1 Sam. 11:13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel.

Saul then spoke up, even before Samuel did. Saul was becoming a bit more aggressive in his speech and actions. He was very definite in his decision. Those men who had doubted his ability to lead now had ample proof of his leadership skill. They were apt to become followers. Not a one was to be killed.

If Saul had maintained this kind of spirit throughout his reign, Israel would have profited much. He did not maintain it, and Israel suffered as a result.

1 Sam. 11:14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

Samuel seized the moment of victory to cement Saul's position as captain of Jehovah's army. He called for the people to go to Gilgal where Saul could be accepted as God's chosen military leader.

1 Sam. 11:15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

Now that all the people were behind Saul, sacrifices to God were made as thanksgiving, and there was much rejoicing among the entire nation. If there were murmurers still present, they had chosen to remain out of sight and ear. The people had their desired king. It was Saul, the son of Kish.

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## Chapter 12

This is sometimes called the farewell speech of Samuel to Israel. That is not quite accurate. Samuel still would fill the role of prophet, but would stand more in the background as Saul assumed his place as king of Israel.

This chapter presents Samuel's willingness to be put on trial for the way in which he had conducted himself while acting as judge. It will also remind the people that if they are to prosper, both they and their king must be subject to the Lord Himself.

**1 Sam. 12:1 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.**

Samuel had known beforehand that the appointment of a king was a mistake. He had told the people in no uncertain terms that God would not be pleased with such a move. However, since Jehovah had told him to obey the voice of the people, he had done that. They now had the king they thought they needed to lead them into battle against the nations around them.

**1 Sam. 12:2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.**

Yes, the new king was young and strong. He had the appearance of a great warrior and must certainly impress both friends and foes. In contrast, Samuel was old and grayheaded. He had spent most of his life in

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the service of God and his people. There were both pleasant and unpleasant memories.

1 Sam. 12:3 Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

At this point Samuel was willing to place himself on trial before God and the new king, as well as before the people. Was there anyone who could bring a valid claim that he had abused the office of judge? He even listed a few major areas in which he could have acted unfairly.

1. Had he forced anyone to give him their livestock?
2. Had he been dishonest in any of his dealings with others in order to gain an advantage?
3. Had he taken bribes to overlook the guilt of persons brought before him? If any such charges could be upheld against him, he was prepared to repay the damage.

1 Sam. 12:4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.

No one could list any misdealings or abuse of his authority. He had mistreated no person. There was really no reason for them to have demanded a new form of government.

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**1 Sam. 12:5 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.**

Samuel reminded them that God was observing their answer to his questions. The king which had just been anointed was also listening to their statements that he had acted with honor.

The people agreed that they knew God was aware of Samuel's innocence of all possible charges which could have been leveled against him.

**1 Sam. 12:6 And Samuel said unto the people, It is the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.**

Since he had now established his claim that he had acted responsibly, he was ready to defend the history of God's past dealings with His people when they walked in obedience. He began with the release of Israel from bondage in Egypt, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. This had been the beginning of the nation. Israel had existed only as families previous to the coming out of Egypt.

**1 Sam. 12:7 Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.**

**1 Sam. 12:8 When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth**

**your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.**

Jacob and his group of seventy souls had entered the land of Egypt at the time of the famine in Canaan. After they had grown to approximately two million souls, they had begged the Lord to deliver them. He answered the cry and sent Moses as a prophet and Aaron as a priest. After wandering for a number of years they were led back to the promised land, and managed to make a place for themselves there.

**1 Sam. 12:9 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.**

**1 Sam. 12:10 And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.**

It did not take long before the people began to intermarry with the people of the land and became infatuated with the idols that these people worshipped. Because of this, God allowed their enemies to come upon them. The Moabites and the Philistines were causing much grief.

When they admitted their sins in mixing with the people of the land, God heard their cry for deliverance, and their promise to serve Him faithfully.

**1 Sam. 12:11 And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered**  
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you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

Jerubbaal is another name for Gideon. The name “Bedan” is uncertain. He was probably some military leader who delivered the people, rather than a recognized judge. Jephthah and Samuel were both judges. God’s plan of government was working. When Israel walked with God, God walked with them. When Israel separated themselves from God, He allowed them to experience life without His blessings.

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

Samuel had not listed all of the cases in which He had blessed His people, and then seen them turn from Him, followed by their cry for help and His hearing of their cry. What Samuel had done was to present enough of the history to prove his point. God knew what He was doing!

Even so, when Nahash the Ammonite king led his forces against Israel, they decided they also needed a king of the nature of Nahash, to lead them into battles. There was not need for this move. God was their King. He was both capable and willing to bless them and protect them.

1 Sam. 12:13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.

In spite of all their folly, God allowed Israel to have a king. Note that the verse does not say Israel set a king over themselves. It says, God set a king over them. There he was. Now what would they do with him? Would they prosper, or would they decay?

1 Sam. 12:14 If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:

God was not unwilling that they should have a king at all. What God objected to was their desire to have a king like the nations around them. This would mean a king who was not subject to God's own divine authority.

If the king obeyed the Lord, and the people obeyed the Lord, then all would go well. God had actually predicted the coming of a king, as recorded in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. This passage is lengthy, but it is so important in connection with what Samuel is declaring that this writer feels justified in presenting it here.

Deu 17:14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;

Deu 17:15 Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

Deu 17:16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the
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*end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.*

*Deu 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.*

*Deu 17:18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:*

*Deu 17:19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:*

*Deu 17:20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.*

God knew the weaknesses of human kings. Between the warning of Deuteronomy and the same type of warning in this present chapter, we can see why God did not wish to see the appointment of such kings. They would not be able to cope with the desires for sexual pleasure and riches. They would place dependance upon military might as opposed to the power of the Almighty God of the universe.

**1 Sam. 12:15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers.**

~~~~~ It is impossible to prosper if one chooses to depart ~~~~~

from the True and Living God. They should have been able to see from the examples Samuel had given them that horrible things happened when Israel became self dependent or turned to idolatry.

1 Sam. 12:16 Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

1 Sam. 12:17 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.

Samuel was ready to prove the correctness of what he had been saying. He would call for the Lord to do something which only He could do. They would be able to witness a miracle before their very eyes.

The time of wheat harvest in Palestine is in a very dry season of the year. It is admitted that for as much as three months no rain will fall. Samuel promised both thunder and a rainstorm in order that they might see proof of God's presence, even if they could not see their true Spiritual King.

1 Sam. 12:18 So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

Samuel then prayed to God for the evidence to be shown to them. God answered the prayer. Everyone recognized that this would not have taken place through the power of Samuel. Nor would it have taken place through the laws of nature. Nature did not cause rains
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and thunderstorms at that time of the year.

Since they feared the combination of God's judge and God Himself, the people should have heeded the warnings which had been given to them. But, men are not as wise as they should be. They have proven over and over that they desire to direct their own ways. This is not possible.

*"It is not in man that walketh to direct his own ways." (Jer. 10:23)*

*"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Pro 14:12)*

**1 Sam. 12:19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.**

The people recognized and admitted they had sinned in failing to depend upon Jehovah as their King. One wonders if they could have reversed their decision at this point and dismissed Saul as king. It seems from the general context that what had been done was fixed. They had made their bed and now they must lie in it.

They knew they would need all the help they could get if they were to be successful in living under the rule of this new king. Samuel was asked to pray for that help.

**1 Sam. 12:20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;**

Samuel comforted them and told them all was not doomed. It was true that they had sinned wickedly. Now they needed to do everything possible to make the new government work. The first step was to serve God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.

**1 Sam. 12:21 And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.**

Lust, wealth and power are vanity. They are “nothings”, which is the meaning of the word vanity. In other places idols are called vanity. Solomon, one of the most prestigious kings of Israel tried out everything God had warned against. Solomon’s conclusion was “*Vanity, Vanity, all is vanity.*”

**1 Sam. 12:22 For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.**

God has a plan. If this were not the case, He would have destroyed the human race from the face of the earth. The wages of sin is death. The man who says he has not sinned makes God a liar. All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All men have earned death. The reason God continues to forgive and lead is that He desires those who will glorify his name and live according to His will. When time comes to an end, God will claim those who have glorified Him as his heirs of heaven. He wants a family in heaven. He will not destroy mankind until that family is ready.

**1 Sam. 12:23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to**  
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pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

Samuel sounds a bit like Joshua who told the people to choose whom they would serve, and then said, *“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

1 Sam. 12:24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

As long as Samuel was able, he would teach the people right from wrong. He would show them what God had done for them in the past, and what He would do for them in the future if they were faithful.

1 Sam. 12:25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

Then he reminded them that God is both a God of love and blessings, and a God of wrath and cursings. If they were faithful they would receive blessings, even under their king. If they proved unfaithful, they would be eaten up by men, beasts, thistles, thorns and plagues.

Chapter 13

Saul had been accepted as king by the people. He had led the Israelites in a successful battle against the Ammonites. Samuel was still acting as judge, but had stepped into the background with respect to military activities. He might be compared with a field general in today's armed forces.

The Philistines were the greatest threat to Israel from the outside. They had gained enough power to control some of the Israelites activities, as will become evident in this thirteenth chapter.

In this chapter we will find Israel sinking to a serious level of self confidence and of influence among the surrounding nations. They were being shown the seriousness of their error in calling for a king like those of the nations.

1 Sam. 13:1 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

There is tremendous controversy over just what this verse said when it was written. The oldest manuscripts we have today vary in wording. The translators of the King James Version supplied some words to clarify the meaning, as they saw it.

Some believe the verse was intended to say that Saul was as innocent as a one year old child when he began to reign, but that this innocence melted away after he had reigned for a number of years.

The present writer is willing to accept the meaning of the verse as presented in the King James. In that case, the verse is explaining that Saul reigned for two years before the events of the remainder of this chapter took place

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**1 Sam. 13:2 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.**

As the military leader of Israel, Saul established a force of three thousand soldiers. He divided the soldiers into two camps. Two thousand of them stayed with him in Michmash. The other one thousand were placed under the command of Jonathan and sent to Gibeah, or (Geba). The text does not explain whether these soldiers were stationed as they were as outposts for offensive purposes against the Philistines, or were intended to be for defense only.

Saul saw no need to retain the rest of the men, but sent them home to go about their daily activities.

**1 Sam. 13:3 And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.**

Jonathan decided to attack a force of Philistines in the area where he was sent. Did he do this on his own, or did the idea originate with Saul. We do not know? The following events will show it was not a good choice.

For the moment it looked like a great victory. Saul had a trumpet blown so the word would get around among the Israelites. The text uses the word "Hebrew." It has been questioned whether Samuel wrote this verse since Israel did not at this time like the name Hebrew, but preferred to be known as "Israelites." Saul seems to

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have taken the credit for the victory though Jonathan was the actual leader.

1 Sam. 13:4 And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

Storm clouds for a major battle with the Philistines were gathering. Both Israel and the Philistines knew of Jonathan's success. The Israelites may have gained confidence and decided they could win further battles, or they may have realized the Philistines would try to take revenge. The Philistines had dominated the Israelites for some time. They were angered by their defeat. They looked upon Israel as an abomination, (actually the original words speak of a bad odor).

1 Sam. 13:5 And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven.

The Philistines gathered a massive army to teach Israel a lesson. Historians tells us thirty thousand chariots were never possessed by any army. That is not the most important point. The Philistines had enormous power. We are not even told the number of foot soldiers. It was like counting grains of sand on the seashore. Speaking from the human standpoint, Israel was hopelessly overpowered.



1 Sam. 13:6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

The soldiers of the Israelite army failed to recall the victories God had given His people when they placed their trust in Him. They looked at the immense forces of the Philistines, and they scattered in every direction. We find them hiding in almost every place one could imagine. One is reminded of Adam and Eve, as they hid themselves in the Garden of Eden after eating the forbidden fruit.

1 Sam. 13:7 And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

Some of Saul's forces even made their way across the Jordan to the east side of that river. Even those who did not hide or flee followed after Saul trembling with fear as the battle loomed just ahead.

1 Sam. 13:8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

Samuel had instructed Saul not to go into battle without waiting for him to arrive. He would appear in seven days. The reader should not assume that this seven days is the same as the one mentioned in the tenth chapter. This was a different case.

Saul was becoming very much concerned. It was the seventh day, and Samuel had not arrived. His soldiers were abandoning him. The enemy was extremely powerful. He felt something had to be done. God had enough power to defeat any army. Samuel clearly expected to offer a sacrifice when he came and call upon the Lord for help. Since Samuel was not there, Saul concluded that he must offer a sacrifice himself.

1 Sam. 13:9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

Saul called for a burnt offering and a peace offering to be brought to him in order that he might plead for divine help. When it was brought, he proceeded to offer it.

1 Sam. 13:10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

From the continuation later we assume that Samuel did come before the seventh day was finished. The entire scene proved to be a test of Saul's faith and trust in Jehovah. Saul failed the test.

Apparently while the smoke was still rising off the sacrifice Samuel appeared. Saul probably realized immediately that he should have waited until Samuel came, as had been agreed. He was perhaps trying to cover a guilty conscience when he went out to meet Samuel and saluted him.



1 Sam. 13:11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

1 Sam. 13:12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

Samuel asked Saul what he had done. He did not really have to ask. He was well aware of what Saul had done. This is what is called a rhetorical question. The question holds the answer within itself.

Saul defended what he had done. He did not attempt to deny it. He tried to justify it and give excuses.

1. Samuel had not come.
2. His soldiers had abandoned him.
3. The Philistines had gathered for battle.
4. He knew God could help and so he sacrificed.
5. He had not wanted to do it.
He had to force himself to do it.

1 Sam. 13:13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

It does not take a mentally retarded person to be a fool. Numerous persons of all levels have acted as fools according to the Holy Book. Solomon was known as the "wise man." Yet, he disobeyed the Lord and sinned grievously. Paul the apostle was highly educated. Yet

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he acted as a fool in persecuting the saints of God.

Saul had failed to trust and obey the instructions of Samuel, God's representative. He had therefore done foolishly. He would suffer for his neglect. His kingdom would have outlasted him and have been passed on to his sons. Now that privilege would be taken away.

Was Saul's sin the offering of a sacrifice which should have been offered by Samuel, or was it in not waiting the complete seven days for Samuel to come? It has been pointed out that David and Solomon both offered sacrifices without calling upon a priest to do it. The commandment of the Lord to which Samuel referred was no doubt the order to wait seven days until Samuel came. That is where we must place the emphasis.

**1 Sam. 13:14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.**

The Lord would place the kingdom under the rule of a man who was more obedient than Saul. That man would become "captain" or "prince" over Israel. Remember that Saul was never the real king in the sight of the Lord. He was said to be only a captain. Another captain would be chosen.

Many believe the words "a man after His own heart" refer to David who was later described by those same words. When that position is taken the question arises as to how a man who committed adultery and then caused the woman's husband to be killed, could qualify as a man after God's own heart. The only answer which seems to make any sense is that in his duties as captain

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of Israel, David obeyed God, and his personal life was not being considered.

1 Sam. 13:15 And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men.

After scolding Saul, Samuel left to go back to Gibeah. Saul counted to see just how many soldiers he had left. There were only six hundred out of the two or three thousand he had before they began to flee from fear. It really did not matter whether there were three thousand or six hundred if God was on his side. If God was not on his side, six hundred men were doomed in the face of the Philistine army.

1 Sam. 13:16 And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

At first Gibeah was the site of a Philistine garrison. Jonathan had taken it. At first Michmash was a point of gathering for the Israelites. Now the conditions were reversed. Both armies had assembled whatever strength was available and were ready for conflict.

1 Sam. 13:17 And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual:

1 Sam. 13:18 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.

The Philistines sent out three companies of men to raid and destroy Israel. They were coming from three different directions. This was a favorite tactic of the armies of that time. This pulled a weaker enemy into pieces. Then they could be attacked and thrown into a panic.

1 Sam. 13:19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears:

The smiths were those who worked with metal. They shaped the swords and spears used in battle. The Philistines had gained enough power that they were able to force all of the metal smiths out of the Israelite locations. This was done to prevent them from arming for battle.

This was another major problem for the six hundred men of Saul. The only weapons they could use were bows and arrows, or perhaps slings and stones. This was hardly an even match.

1 Sam. 13:20 But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his ax, and his mattock.

The Philistines had even made it necessary for the Israelites to go to Philistine territory to get their plowpoints, axes and goads to prod their oxen sharpened. All of these tools were agricultural instruments. They were not battle weapons.

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**1 Sam. 13:21 Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads.**

The word for “file”, which is used here, means literally to “rub against.” This could be true of a grindstone and very likely that is the meaning of the verse.

**1 Sam. 13:22 So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.**

The only metal objects made for the purpose of fighting battles were in the hands of Saul and his son Jonathan. The rest had none.

**1 Sam. 13:23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.**

What a horrible situation for the chosen people of the Lord. They have but six hundred men to fight against an army as numerous as the sand of the seashore. They have almost no weapons. They have offended God through the actions of Saul, their captain. This was one of the darkest days in the history of Israel.

## Chapter 14

The Philistines continued to be an enemy of the Israelites for many years. After the serious condition in which Israel found itself as the last chapter closed, One wonders why they did not attempt to completely annihilate God's people before they had an opportunity to regroup. Apparently, however, they did not make such an immediate attempt.

The chapter before us tells of a most amazing conquest of the Philistines by the Israelites, after Jonathan initiated the battle.

**1 Sam. 14:1 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.**

At present we would probably say 'one day' rather than 'upon a day.' We are not told how many days passed before this day arrived. Jonathan had made up his mind that if God supported Israel, they would be able to defeat that powerful enemy. Without consulting his father Saul, or anyone else except a personal armor bearer, he took action.

**1 Sam. 14:2 And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men;**

**1 Sam. 14:3 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.**

Saul had not even considered the possibility of attacking the garrison of Philistines which he knew were waiting and watching Israel. He was no doubt anxiously wondering when the next attack would be made by the enemy. He had a priest of the Lord named Ahiud with him. Ahiud was wearing the ephod which was associated with the Urim and Thummim. It may be concluded that Saul was considering getting advice from the priest as to what he should do. Since he had been quite independent in the recent past, he really could not expect much cooperation from Jehovah.

Most of Saul's men had either abandoned him to join the enemy, or they were hiding in the caves to prevent losing their lives at the hands of the Philistines. With six hundred persons present no one had noticed the absence of Jonathan and his armor bearer.

**1 Sam. 14:4 And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.**

We are not talking about pebbles here. These sharp rocks were small cliffs. Between the two cliffs there was a passageway. Jonathan intended to move up to the rocks and then allow the Philistine outposts to catch a glimpse of the two of them without knowing how many more Israelites were hidden in the background.

**1 Sam. 14:5 The forefront of the one was situate**  
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northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah.

1 Sam. 14:6 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.

Jonathan may have remembered past conflicts during which God provided victory for His people over far larger and stronger forces, for example, Gideon and his three hundred against the fortified city of Jericho. He called for his armor bearer to join him in moving into the sight of the Philistine guards. His reasoning was that no task was too big for Jehovah. After all, the Philistines were uncircumcised. They were not the chosen people of God. If he and his armor bearer respected the Almighty, they could expect His help.

1 Sam. 14:7 And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart.

The armor bearer was willing. He promised to be with Jonathan in whatever he decided was the right course of action.

1 Sam. 14:8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them.

1 Sam. 14:9 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.



Jonathan's plan was to allow God to indicate His will in the matter by a providential test. They would allow the Philistines to catch a glimpse of them. If, after the Philistines saw them, they threatened to come down and attack them, they would conclude that God did not want them to initiate their own attack. They would then turn back and return to their own camp.

1 Sam. 14:10 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.

If the Philistine guards challenged them to come up where they were, Jonathan and his armor bearer would know God approved of them making an attack upon the Philistines.

The reader might notice the difference between such providential signs and true miracles. Miracles are very obvious and can in no way be denied as from the Divine hand. Such signs as mentioned here are more harmonious with the common laws of nature.

1 Sam. 14:11 And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.

The Philistines saw them and concluded that the Israelites who had hidden themselves and deserted Saul's forces were changing their minds and coming back out of their hiding places. This did not make a great impression upon them. They knew they had vast

superiority in numbers. If the Israelites had hidden before, they would hide again.

1 Sam. 14:12 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.

When the Philistine outpost saw Jonathan and his armor bearer, they mockingly called for them to come up to where they were and they would be shown a thing or two. There was no doubt in their mind that they could defend themselves against any action the Hebrews might take.

This was the sign Jonathan was looking for. He knew God was with them and would give them success in whatever might happen.

1 Sam. 14:13 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.

Jonathan scaled the rocks on his hands and knees, with his armor bearer close behind him. The results were just as Jonathan suspected they would be. He was able to wound the Philistines. Then his armor bearer finished them off. This was one of the main duties of an armor bearer.

1 Sam. 14:14 And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about

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**twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.**

Jonathan and his aide killed about twenty of the Philistines without being killed themselves. This was accomplished within one half an acre of ground. Some versions translate this as a furrow half way across an acre. There is only one way this could have been done. God was helping. But what help had God given?

**1 Sam. 14:15 And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.**

Those first successes of Jonathan threw fear into the hearts of the Philistine, even in those of the men who had been making raids on the Hebrew camp. In addition, the ground quaked and added fear upon top of fear. Jonathan would have known the cause of the earthquake. The Philistines had no knowledge of the reason for the quake. They were thrown in a panic.

**1 Sam. 14:16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another.**

Saul had observers watching the area for signs of Philistine attacks. His watchmen saw the turmoil in the Philistine ranks and the fact that they were killing one another. This gave Saul and his men renewed hope.

**1 Sam. 14:17 Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armourbearer were not there.**

Saul wondered who among his men might be fighting against the Philistines. He found that the only men missing were Jonathan and his armor bearer. What action should he take? He decided to consult the Lord through the priest Ahiah.

**1 Sam. 14:18 And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel.**

Saul was concerned over just what was happening. What was the connection between Jonathan's absence and the events which were taking place among the Philistines.

**1 Sam. 14:19 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.**

Even while Saul was preparing to find out further information through Ahiah the priest, the noise in the camp of the Philistines increased in volume to the point that Saul bypassed the priest.

**1 Sam. 14:20 And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword**  
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was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture.

Saul and those soldiers who had remained faithful to him prepared to further investigate the fray. They found that the Philistines were in a complete state of confusion. They were fighting among themselves. An army divided against itself cannot stand.

1 Sam. 14:21 Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.

The Hebrews who had left Saul and joined forces with the Philistines realized it was far safer to be on the side of Israel rather than serving with the Philistine forces. They returned to fight under Saul.

1 Sam. 14:22 Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle.

The Israeli soldiers who had hidden in the caves for fear of the Philistines realized the enemy was being routed and they also rejoined Saul's forces. The Philistines were in complete retreat.

1 Sam. 14:23 So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Bethaven.

It was not the wisdom or the strength of Saul or the Israelites that turned the tide of the battle. It was

due to the help of the Divine arm.

1 Sam. 14:24 And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food.

Saul became infatuated with the retreat of the Philistines and decided no one in the army of Israel would be allowed to eat until the evening. He pronounced a curse upon anyone who ate before being given permission. This was very unwise. Men cannot continue to exert themselves physically without food. Yet they obeyed the king and refrained from eating. This could lead to disaster.

1 Sam. 14:25 And all they of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground.

1 Sam. 14:26 And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.

In spite of the hunger, the men obeyed the voice of their king and resisted the temptation to eat. Even though delicious honey was present, they held back. The honey which was on the ground was a result of a particular species of bee which did not store the honey in tree hollows, etc.

1 Sam. 14:27 But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that

was in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.

Jonathan was at a distance from his father Saul and did not hear the command not to eat until evening. He came to some honey and dipped his rod into it and ate from it. As a result, the nourishment refreshed him and he could see much better.

1 Sam. 14:28 Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day. And the people were faint.

Soldiers who had heard Saul's oath before God, informed Jonathan of what had been promised to the Lord. Even though the people were suffering a severe loss of strength, they were not to eat.

1 Sam. 14:29 Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey.

Jonathan pointed out that his father's oath had placed his men in serious danger. Saul had acted very carelessly.

1 Sam. 14:30 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?

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Jonathan also stated that if the men had been allowed to eat, they would have had an even greater victory over the Philistines that had actually been the case.

**1 Sam. 14:31 And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint.**

Even though the people had not eaten, they were still able to put the Philistines into retreat. God's help had brought the victory.

**1 Sam. 14:32 And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood.**

When the Philistines retreated, the Israelites were so famished they rushed in upon the livestock which had been left behind and did not even take the time to properly bleed the dead animals. They ate the meat with the blood still present, against the revealed will of God.

**1 Sam. 14:33 Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day.**

When Saul was told of what his men had done, he was dismayed. He commanded that a great stone be brought to him. This stone was to act as an altar upon which the blood of slain animals could be poured out. If Saul had been as careful to obey the instructions

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of Jehovah at certain other times, Both he and his countrymen would have been far better off.

1 Sam. 14:34 And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew them there.

The soldiers were told to spread the word through the camp that all animals which were to be eaten were to be brought to the great stone and killed there where the animal could be properly bled. The people did as Saul commanded.

1 Sam. 14:35 And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

Saul was taking matters into his own hands which placed him in serious danger. The building of altars and the sacrificing of animals on those altars was the work of the priests.

1 Sam. 14:36 And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God.

Saul was ready to continue the seemingly complete victory over the foe. He commanded the men to slaughter

the Philistines throughout the night, until no single man was still alive. The priest suggested that they needed to consult God's wishes before proceeding farther.

1 Sam. 14:37 And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day.

Saul expected a yes, or a no. He did not expect to find absolute silence from the presence of the Lord. That was precisely what happened. What was wrong?

1 Sam. 14:38 And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day.

Saul invited the entire army to witness the upcoming decision. He would cast lots and discover who had eaten, contrary to the oath which he had sworn before God. Someone had eaten and brought trouble into the camp.

1 Sam. 14:39 For, as the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him.

Saul then made an even greater mistake. He promised that even if it was his own son who had eaten and broken the oath, the guilty person was to die. No man would reveal to Saul that it was his son Jonathan who had eaten.



1 Sam. 14:40 Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee.

1 Sam. 14:41 Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped.

All of the people were to be placed in one group. Saul and Jonathan were isolated from the rest, and the lot was cast. It fell upon Saul and Jonathan. One of the two was guilty.

1 Sam. 14:42 And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.

The lost was cast again to determine whether the guilty part was Saul, or his son Jonathan. It was Jonathan.

1 Sam. 14:43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die.

1 Sam. 14:44 And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.

1 Sam. 14:45 And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.

1 Sam. 14:46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

1 Sam. 14:47 So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them.

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

1 Sam. 14:49 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:

1 Sam. 14:50 And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

1 Sam. 14:51 And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

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.



Chapter 15

This chapter reveals the displeasure of the Lord toward King Saul for not completely obeying His command to destroy both the people of Amalek and their livestock. We should learn a serious lesson from the events recorded here. God is not satisfied with partial compliance. He holds men responsible for full obedience. Anything less can result in very serious consequences. When God has placed privileges in the hands of His servants, He also expects them to accept the responsibilities he places upon them.

1 Sam. 15:1 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.

Samuel came to Saul, the newly appointed king of Israel, and passed on a “Thus saith the Lord.” He reminded Saul that it was he who had anointed Saul as king. Now he had a message from that same Lord as to a situation which needed to be tended to.

1 Sam. 15:2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

The Amalekites had made life miserable for Israel at the time they were moving from Egypt to Canaan. They had attacked Israel at the end of their caravan and killed undefended people. That behavior had not been forgotten. As one sows, so shall he reap. The sowing

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and the reaping may not be companions in time, but one may be expected to follow the other, even if time turns into eternity.

**1 Sam. 15:3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.**

The Amalekites were to be completely extinguished. This included every man, woman and child. Even the livestock were to be slain. Nothing was to be left.

Does the reader feel that this was unrighteous and partial judgment on the part of an All Righteous God? Not necessarily! Even the tiny babes were almost certainly facing moral corruption and eternal torture if they were to be raised in such an atmosphere. The babies had not sinned. They may have been far better off dead than to have lived to take part in such a society.

**1 Sam. 15:4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.**

Saul began to satisfy the Lord's command. He gathered and counted the soldiers of Israel. At a previous time he had counted only six hundred who were available. This time there were two hundred thousand.

There were only ten thousand from the tribe of Judah. If all twelve tribes had contributed the same number as Judah, there would have been only one hundred twenty thousand. Interestingly, we can see the coming split between the northern and the southern kings coming into dim view.

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1 Sam. 15:5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

1 Sam. 15:6 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.

Thus far things are going as God had commanded. Saul and his army moved into a valley where they could ambush the Amalekites when they passed through. In the meantime He sent a message to the Kenites to separate themselves from the Amalekites in order that they escape the slaughter which was about to begin.

The Kenites had been sympathetic to the Israelites at the time that the Amalekites had taken advantage of their weaknesses. As a result of Saul's warning, the Kenites left the company of the Amalekites and did not share in the punishment.

1 Sam. 15:7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.

Everything was going well. Saul was doing as God had commanded. God was with him and his forces. When God is with us, who can be against us?

1 Sam. 15:8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

1 Sam. 15:9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that

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**was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.**

Now we find a departure from the word of the Lord. Saul had been told to *utterly* destroy both man and beast. He placed his own interests above the command of Jehovah. King Agag was not slain. Almost beyond doubt, Saul anticipated that he would profit in some way by saving Agag alive. Perhaps he could get a ransom for his release. If not he could parade Agag around in the sight of the people to emphasize his own power.

The best of the livestock also escaped slaughter. If the animals were not worth saving, they were destroyed. If they had worth, they were saved. This was far from what God had commanded.

**1 Sam. 15:10 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,**

**1 Sam. 15:11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.**

Samuel received another message from the King of Kings. God explained that He had repented having set up Saul as king. Saul had not acted in accord with His will. He had not kept the divine commandments.

Samuel might well have objected that he could perhaps reform Saul and cause him to become more obedient. Samuel did not give up on Saul easily. He wept through the night and pleaded with the Lord. He could only recognize that God was extremely dissatisfied with Saul. The situation was most serious.

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1 Sam. 15:12 And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

The next morning Samuel went early to meet Saul. On the way, Samuel had been told that Saul was parading around where people could give him honor for having defeated the Amalekites and capturing their king. This was not pleasing to Samuel after having pleaded with Jehovah many hours.

1 Sam. 15:13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

As soon as Saul saw Samuel, he was told by the king that God had blessed them. He had done as God said and had obeyed His command. God had given him a victory.

1 Sam. 15:14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

It is highly unwise to place your own pride and welfare above the word of God. Saul was told his statement about keeping the commands was out of order. Samuel could hear the bleating of the sheep and the bellowing of the cattle. How could this be if Saul had kept the command of God to kill these animals.

1 Sam. 15:15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared

the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

Saul had a ready answer. We can well imagine that it was what passed through his own mind when he decided to save the animals alive. The reason they had been saved was that they might be used as sacrifices to the God who had just given them the victory. In addition, it was the people who had spared the livestock. It was not his idea.

They had also destroyed all the weak and despicable among the livestock so they would not insult God by sacrificing less than the best.

1 Sam. 15:16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

We are now about to discover some of the details of what took place during Samuel's pleading with the Lord through the night. Samuel invited Saul to listen to what God had revealed to him. Saul, was not bashful in the least. He invited Samuel to say what was on his mind. He apparently saw no problem with what he had and had not done.

1 Sam. 15:17 And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

Samuel reminded Saul there was a time when he did not have the glory he now possessed. It was not he who had been responsible for his present prestige. It
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was God who had given him the opportunity to serve Jehovah and his people.

It would be well for all Christians to be aware that without the Creator of the universe we could neither live, move or have any being whatsoever. If the One who made these things possible gives us the privilege of assisting Him in accomplishing His will, we should be delighted to do so.

**1 Sam. 15:18 And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.**

The iniquity of the Amalekites was full. It was time for their complete destruction. God had commanded Saul to take the lead in that destruction. Saul should have hurried to do *all* that he had been commanded.

**1 Sam. 15:19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?**

Why then had Saul ignored the command to utterly destroy both the Amalekites and their property. Why had he decided to destroy only that which was not desirable and keep the best of the spoils? This was wicked in the sight of God.

**1 Sam. 15:20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.**

Saul contended that he had done just what he

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had been commanded. He had utterly destroyed the Amalekites, except for their king.

1 Sam. 15:21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

It was not Saul who had taken the livestock. It was the people of Israel who had taken these things. Even then, God should not be unhappy in view of the fact that these spoils had been taken in order that they might be used in sacrifices. It is highly doubtful that this was the only reason the spoils had been saved. They would be profitable in a number of ways for Saul and the people. Neither Saul nor the people had any right to protect that which God had said to utterly destroy.

1 Sam. 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Samuel had an immediate answer. God is much more interested in obedience and the avoidance of sin, than He is in making sacrifices for those sins. Even the sacrifice of the Son of God was necessarily only because of the sins of men. Obedience had been commanded from the beginning. Sacrifice only entered the picture when sin made such necessary.

1 Sam. 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of
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**the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.**

Samuel made it clear to Saul that stubbornness and rebellion against God's commands are every bit as damaging as worshipping false gods and practicing witchcraft. Since Saul had rejected the commandments of his Lord, the Lord had rejected him as king of Israel.

**1 Sam. 15:24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.**

Saul finally admitted reluctantly that he had not done all the Lord had commanded. But, he still felt he was guilty only because he did what the people of Israel desired; not because he wished to deliberately ignore God's will.

This, of course, is standard procedure for those who have been caught in disobedience. It was not their fault. The devil made me do it. As king, Saul had the authority to insist that the people do as God had commanded. He had done that. He listened to the people instead of Jehovah.

**1 Sam. 15:25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.**

Saul knew he was in trouble. He even made the mistake of requesting that Samuel pardon him that he might once again be right with his Lord. It was not Samuel against whom he had sinned. It was Jehovah. Samuel could not pardon him.

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1 Sam. 15:26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

It was too late! Samuel would not continue the same relationship he had previously had with Saul. Saul had rejected the will of God. God had rejected Saul as his authorized king of the people of Israel.

1 Sam. 15:27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

Saul recognized the seriousness of his position. Samuel was a prophet of God. Samuel was speaking for Jehovah when he declared Saul to have been rejected as king. As Samuel turned from him and started to leave, Saul reached out and seized Samuel's outer garment, causing it to tear away from the rest of his clothing.

1 Sam. 15:28 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.

Samuel explained to Saul that this was a good example of what had just happened to him. Just as the garment had been torn away, the kingdom of Israel had been torn from Saul. It was to be given to someone else who was better qualified to serve than he was. That person was David.

1 Sam. 15:29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.



Saul was not to expect a change in direction on the part of God. Referring Jehovah to be the “Strength of Israel”, Samuel made it clear that He would not reverse his decision. God repents, but not as man does. God’s repentance only means a turning from the path in which He had been going. It was in no wise a sorrow for sin.

1 Sam. 15:30 Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God.

Saul admitted he had committed the sins of which Samuel had accused him. He pled with Samuel to not forsake him, but to repair the breach which had been made and make it possible for Saul to once again have communion with his Lord.

It is of note that Saul did not call Jehovah his God. He called Him Samuel’s God. Did he even yet understand his own relationship with the Almighty?

1 Sam. 15:31 So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

With Saul’s apparently wholehearted admission that he had sinned against God, Samuel took a different approach. He observed Saul worshipping the God he should have been obeying previously.

1 Sam. 15:32 Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.

Samuel directed Saul to bring Agag, the Amalekite king, to him. When it is said that Agag came to Samuel delicately it means Agag was being extremely careful about what needed to be said or done. He knew he was at the mercy of the same authority he had abused in persecuting Israel in days gone by. He could expect very little compassion.

1 Sam. 15:33 And Samuel said, As the sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

As previously mentioned, God promises that as men sow, so shall they reap. Agag had slain the sons of Israelite women. It was now time for his own mother to lose her son. He killed Agag and cut him into pieces. This was done with God as witness to the execution. Agag would make no more mothers childless.

1 Sam. 15:34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeath of Saul.

1 Sam. 15:35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Samuel did not come to see Saul again. However, Saul did go to see Samuel, as reported in I Samuel 19:18-24. Obviously, the statement means God's approval of Saul as king had come to an end. Another would be made king and he would be replaced.



Chapter 16

After Saul failed to comply with God's commandments, and left King Agag alive, God rejected Saul from being King. Samuel was much disturbed over this development. He went into a period of serious mourning. Jehovah was not happy with Samuel. He was to realize God was still in control and His end purpose would be served by replacing a king who would not hear and keep His commands.

This chapter will tell of the choice of David as a coming replacement for the disobedient Saul.

1 Sam. 16:1 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.

That which God had done in rejecting Saul was best for His purposes, His people, and even Samuel himself. Samuel was not to continue in a depressed state. There was another servant of God who would replace Saul. Samuel was to go to the home of Jesse in the village of Bethlehem. There he would find the one whom God had chosen to take Saul's place.

Horns of cattle served at least two purposes in Israel at the time. One was as a drinking vessel. The other was as a container for anointing oil. This time the horn of Samuel was to be used to carry anointing oil for the announcement of one of Jesse's sons as the coming King of Israel.



1 Sam. 16:2 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.

Samuel was much concerned. Saul had proven to be a proud man. He was not likely to put up with Samuel anointing his own replacement. He would not hesitate to kill the prophet.

The Lord provided a way of avoiding the danger. Samuel was to take a heifer along with him and tell others he had come to make a sacrifice to the Lord. Was God suggesting that Samuel tell a lie? Let us say God was suggesting that he present only a part of the truth. He was coming to present a sacrifice, but he was also coming to anoint a replacement for Saul as King of Israel. This writer is willing to accept the righteousness of God in what He suggested here. The Lord was protecting Samuel. He was working for the advance of His people. He was not telling Samuel to lie. Sometimes the truth can bring difficulty. Consider what would happen if one walked up to a heavyweight boxing champion and informed him that he smelled like a barnyard. It might well be the truth, but it would probably be better to leave it unsaid.

Samuel *was* going to offer the heifer as a sacrifice.

1 Sam. 16:3 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.

Samuel was to call Jesse to the sacrifice. This would be no strange thing. It could have been the type of



sacrifice in which the people who attended the sacrifice ate of the meat. Calling Jesse to the sacrifice would not provoke undue suspicion.

1 Sam. 16:4 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?

When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, the elders of the village were fearful that he had come to pronounce some punishment from the Lord upon the community. They wished to know if he came with good, or bad, tidings. Sometimes a prophet of God came with a curse, sometimes with a blessing.

1 Sam. 16:5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

Samuel assured them that his message was a pleasant one. He had come to officiate at a sacrifice. They needed to sanctify their townsman Jesse and his sons. To sanctify a person was to cleanse them and set them apart before the Lord. Jesse and his sons came at Samuel's call.

1 Sam. 16:6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him.

It is likely that the first of those was a very

impressive man. When Samuel saw Eliab, he was quite certain this was the man who was to replace Saul as the anointed of the Lord.

1 Sam. 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Jehovah warned Samuel not to place his confidence in size of the person, or in outer appearance. God sees past the outer appearance and deep into the heart of those who come into His service. God had seen Eliab and this was not the one he wanted. The size was impressive, but the heart was not suitable for the challenges ahead.

1 Sam. 16:8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

1 Sam. 16:9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

1 Sam. 16:10 Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

It appears that Jesse called the sons he felt were the most impressive in his own eyes and presented them to Samuel. After seven of them had passed by Samuel informed Jesse that none of the seven was the one chosen by Jehovah.

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**1 Sam. 16:11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.**

Jesse had apparently started with the oldest of his children and passed through all of them in order of their age. He had not yet had David presented since he was busy caring for the sheep. Samuel instructed Jesse to send for David. They would wait until the young man arrived.

**1 Sam. 16:12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.**

When David was brought in from his duties as sheep herder, he was seen to be a handsome young man with a very impressive appearance. The Lord told Samuel that David was the one whom he had chosen to take the place of Saul. God does not always look on the outward appearance. He is more interested in the hearts of men than in their outward characteristics. This time the man God had chosen was attractive both in outer and inner characteristics.

**1 Sam. 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.**

When Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David with it, the Spirit of Jehovah came upon David and God was with him in a very special way. David was to replace Saul as the human leader of the people.

**1 Sam. 16:14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.**

Saul had proven himself to be unworthy of the throne of Israel. The Spirit of the Lord separated from him and joined Himself to David. At the same time, a spirit of the very opposite character settled upon Saul. Saul had chosen to disregard the will of Jehovah. Jehovah had now turned to another leader.

**1 Sam. 16:15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.**

**1 Sam. 16:16 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.**

Saul's servants decided that God had caused an evil spirit to come upon the undeserving man. Since music has the power to soothe the savage beast, they needed to find a man who was very well skilled in playing the harp and let him come and play before the King. This might cause Saul to be brought from under the influence of the evil spirit.

There is a question here as to whether the evil



spirit which came upon Saul was commanded to come into the man, or whether it only found room when the spirit of the Lord departed from him.

**1 Sam. 16:17 And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me.**

Things were not developing by coincidence. Saul called for a man to be sent who could play a musical instrument well that the man might soothe him through the music.

**1 Sam. 16:18 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.**

It just so happened that one of the King's servants knew about a young man from Bethlehem who was wise, who was courageous and who had a fine appearance. God seemed to be with this young man. He might be just the proper one to come and play music for Saul. I ask the reader whether this was happenstance or providence.

**1 Sam. 16:19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep.**

Saul knew he had a grave need for help. If this young man David could bring calm into the ruler's soul,

he wanted to make use of that ability. Things were not going well. David might be just the one who could improve the situation. Saul had the authority to send for David. He took the advice of his servant who had suggested sending for David and ordered that David be sent to him.

**1 Sam. 16:20 And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul.**

Jesse was not angered that his son David had been called from the herding of the sheep to play music before Saul. He even went so far as to send presents along with David as his son came into the presence of Saul.

**1 Sam. 16:21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer.**

David and Saul were quite comfortable in the presence of one another. Both were pleased with the arrangement. David became armourbearer to Saul and in that capacity David was at least partially responsible for the safety and welfare of the man.

**1 Sam. 16:22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.**

Undoubtedly David played for Saul and the playing pleased Saul, even as the appearance of the younger man impressed him.





**1 Sam. 16:23 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.**

Apparently the evil spirit which came upon Saul when the Spirit of the Lord departed from him plagued him intermittently. When he was out of sorts as a result of the evil spirit, David would be called to play the harp and soothe the nerves of the older man. This caused the unpleasantness of the invading evil spirit to depart for the moment.

Things were beginning to work out for the removal of Saul from his position of authority, and the advance of David as the recognized leader of the nation of Israel.

## Chapter 17

This chapter contains one of the most well known records of the entire Bible. It is the story of the battle between David and the Philistine giant Goliath. Small children read it and marvel at how “little boy” David could use a sling and a stone to defeat a giant who was the champion of the Philistines.

Adult Christians take courage in their battle against the forces of evil in the world. With the help of God, Satan and his followers will ultimately be conquered. Those powers that seem to be so intimidating will be defeated by the righteous servants of Jehovah.

**1 Sam. 17:1 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.**

The Philistines were as potent an enemy as God’s people faced when they came into the land of Canaan. The name Philistine is related to the present day term ‘Palestinian.’ These people resented the coming of Israel into the land which they had dominated. It is probably safe to say that if the Philistines and other tribes in Canaan had been less idolatrous and immoral, they would not have faced the wrath of the Lord, and would have had an opportunity to live side by side with Israel and take part in God’s blessings.

They were not about to allow Israel to enter Canaan without fighting to prevent their entry. The battle between Israel and the Palestinians is nearly as vicious today as it was in that distant past.



The Philistines gathered their armies with great confidence that they could resist the efforts of the Israelites to settle in the land. Along with the Amalekites, they had been soundly trounced by Israel under the leadership of Saul. That defeat did not prevent them from lining up for battle again.

**1 Sam. 17:2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.**

**1 Sam. 17:3 And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.**

The two armies assembled on opposite sides of a valley. The geography of the region was such that the valley acted as a sort of stage, from which those on either side could see that which took place below. Each army realized that the battle would be fought in the valley.

**1 Sam. 17:4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.**

We have a slight surprise! It was not unknown in that day for each army to select a powerful soldier to fight for them against a soldier from the other army. Many lives were saved because the only one who died was the losing champion. The battle was considered won by the side from which the victorious man had come.

In line with that pattern of thought, the Philistines chose a champion from among their forces and sent him

out to challenge whomsoever the Israelites might choose from their men. The Philistine's name was Goliath. He was an intimidating figure of a man. A cubit was the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. The usual distance in English terms is considered to be approximately eighteen inches. A span was the distance across an average man's outstretched hand. This is usually thought to be about nine inches. If we use these as standards for the cubit and the span, Goliath was nine feet and nine inches in height.

Some have presented other possibilities here, but the general picture is clear enough. Goliath was a formidable foe. His physical stature was terrifying.

**1 Sam. 17:5 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.**

**1 Sam. 17:6 And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.**

In addition to his size, he was extremely well furnished with both offensive and defensive weapons and armor. He had a helmet of brass to protect his head. He had a coat made of brass which weighed around one hundred eighty pounds. He had brass coverings for his legs and another piece of brass to cover his shoulder and neck area. He appeared to be invincible.

**1 Sam. 17:7 And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.**

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Goliath had a spear which was of such size it resembled a weaver's beam. We are not certain just what size a weaver's beam was, but we do not have any difficulty getting the point. By the way, the point or head of the spear is thought to have weighed around twenty pounds.

A soldier went ahead of Goliath holding a shield to ward off any objects which endangered him.

1 Sam. 17:8 And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

1 Sam. 17:9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

Goliath offered to make the battle very simple. He was a Philistine. The men of Israel were servants of Saul. Goliath would represent the Philistines. Israel was invited to choose a man to represent their forces. The two would fight. If Goliath won, Israel would become servants to the Philistines. If the Israelite defeated Goliath, the Philistines would become servants to Israel. This way, only one man would die.

1 Sam. 17:10 And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

1 Sam. 17:11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

If Goliath was trying to scare the men of Israel, he succeeded. Even Saul, who stood head and shoulders above the rest of the Israelites, was afraid. Would they have to become servants of the Philistines as a result of lack of a champion?

1 Sam. 17:12 Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul.

No, surrender without a battle was not to be the case. There was a young man named David, a son of Jesse. David was the youngest of eight brothers. The fact that Jesse is called an 'old man' lends some support to the idea that David was not 'Just a little boy David', as the youngsters sing.

1 Sam. 17:13 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.

1 Sam. 17:14 And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.

The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to meet the Philistines. It was David's responsibility to see that the family's flock of sheep were pastured in the right places.

1 Sam. 17:15 But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

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David also had the responsibility of taking provisions to his brother's in Saul's army.

**1 Sam. 17:16 And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.**

The Philistines must have been rejoicing among themselves in that no champion from Israel had come forward to enter into combat with Goliath. If this did not happen, the Philistines could claim a victory and take the Israelites as servants.

For forty days, over more than one month, the giant Goliath taunted Saul and his army. It had begun to look very dismal.

**1 Sam. 17:17 And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp of thy brethren;**

**1 Sam. 17:18 And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.**

Jesse realized his sons would be in need of food. He instructed David to take nourishment to his brothers. David was to take the food to the captain in charge of their group. While there, he was to see how they were faring, and was to bring back some token or pledge that they were still well.

**1 Sam. 17:19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.**

**1 Sam. 17:20 And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.**

Verse nineteen says they were fighting with the Philistines. They were actually ready to fight, but were still in battle array awaiting the outcome of the giant's challenge.

David found someone to care for the sheep and set out to take the food to his brethren. David must have begun the trip early. He arrived as the two armies were facing one another as daylight came.

**1 Sam. 17:21 For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.**

**1 Sam. 17:22 And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.**

The carriage which David left with the keeper of the carriage was the food and supplies he had carried to his brothers. After giving the supplies to the person responsible for distributing them, David went to his brothers to see how they were managing.

One does not have to be a spiritual genius to see God's hand in all of these events. It was not just coincidence that David arrived at the time he did. God's ways and thoughts are as far above our own as the mountains are higher than the depths of the sea.

**1 Sam. 17:23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of**  
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the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.

1 Sam. 17:24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

Goliath issued the same challenge he had presented for forty days. Was there a champion in Israel who would come out and face him in battle? If so, let it be known. The men of Israel, including Saul, were afraid. They were not just afraid. They were 'sore' afraid.

1 Sam. 17:25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

The men of Israel asked David if he had seen the giant Goliath. King Saul had offered any of his men that would kill Goliath great riches. His entire family would become free. To add a final touch, Saul would give the man his own daughter to be his wife. He would thus become a member of the royal family.

1 Sam. 17:26 And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

It would seem logical that the verses before us have somehow become rearranged. In verse twenty-six David

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asked what would be done. Verse twenty-five had just given the answer to that very question.

**1 Sam. 17:27 And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.**

Verse twenty-seven appears to lead into verse twenty-five. The original arrangement would logically be that David's brothers asked David if he had seen this Philistine and heard his challenge. David would then have asked what would be done for the man who met Goliath's challenge. He would have been told of Saul's offer of riches, freedom and marriage to his own daughter.

**1 Sam. 17:28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.**

David's oldest brother, Eliab, did not take well to David's conversation with the soldiers of Israel. He was obviously humiliated by David's questions about what was to be done for the one who met the challenge of Goliath. Surely David had come to be thrilled by the coming battle. What he should be doing was to be back home tending to that little flock of sheep. In modern terms we might say he was telling David to 'get lost.'

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1 Sam. 17:29 And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?

David wanted to know what he had done that offended his brother. Was there not a reason for his question? He was quite honest in his request.

1 Sam. 17:30 And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

David was not to be scared off. He asked another the same question. All of the soldiers gave him the same answer. David was finding it difficult to believe that no man among the Israelites could be found to fight Goliath.

1 Sam. 17:31 And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him.

David's attitude and his words finally reached the ears of the king. Saul decided to send for him. This is again support for the position that David was not just a ten year old boy. Saul would not have taken his words seriously if he had been informed that David was a pre-teen.

1 Sam. 17:32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

David made it very clear to Saul that he had difficulty in believing there was no man willing to fight

the giant. If no other could be found, he would answer the challenge.

1 Sam. 17:33 And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

Saul ridiculed the idea that David was actually willing to risk his life at the hand of the Philistine's sword. After all, David was still immature. The giant was an experienced soldier. Saul believed David had no chance at all.

If we place ourselves in the position of Saul, we can see why he might have felt the situation to be both unreasonable and dangerous. If David were to be killed, the Israelites would become servants to the Philistines. The chance that David would prevail was almost nil. Saul would be placing his people in an impossible situation.

1 Sam. 17:34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

1 Sam. 17:35 And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

David had an answer. He had defended one of the lambs of his flock from the clutches of both a bear and a lion. It might look as if he had no chance against the Philistine giant, but it would also have looked as

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if he had no chance against either of the wild beasts. He had slain both the bear and the lion.

**1 Sam. 17:36 Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.**

**1 Sam. 17:37 David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.**

The problem David saw with the fearful soldiers of Israel was that they did not understand the relative power of the two sides. The giant was coming as a strong and experienced fighter, but David had a far stronger power on his side. No one would have expected David to kill either a lion or a bear in one on one combat. He had done so with the help of the Lord. That same Lord would be with him in a battle against Goliath. The battle would be uneven in the opposite direction than what everyone was thinking. Goliath was the one who would be greatly disadvantaged.

**1 Sam. 17:38 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.**

Saul was convinced. He was not willing to meet the giant himself, but he would certainly lend David his own armor, helmet and a coat of mail. He saw doom ahead if no one met Goliath. There might be the slightest of chances that David was right and the Lord would bring about the defeat of the Philistine.

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1 Sam. 17:39 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.

David put on the armor and took the sword Saul had provided him. He wished to try it out. He found that he could not use it. He was used to a sling and stones, not armor and a sword of iron. He took the armor back off!

1 Sam. 17:40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

David decided upon that with which he was familiar. His shepherd's staff, a sling, five smooth stones from a brook. He placed the stones in a shepherd's bag and made an approach to Goliath.

1 Sam. 17:41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

What a contrast we have! The Philistine giant, standing over nine feet tall, clad in armor from head to toe, carrying a spear and a sword. Opposing him is a youth of perhaps twenty years of age, with a shepherd's staff, a sling and five stones from a brook. The picture must have looked quite ridiculous from the point of view of every onlooker.



Not all things are as they look!! God was on the side of David!

1 Sam. 17:42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

Goliath found the situation to be beneath his dignity. His foe was still untested in war. He was just a nice looking red headed shepherd who should be at home tending sheep rather than challenging him in battle. Little did Goliath know of the real picture.

1 Sam. 17:43 And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

1 Sam. 17:44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

This present writer is reminded of a scene in a schoolyard in the state of Michigan. A newcomer had entered the class. He was a bully. He was intent on letting everyone else know that he was not to be challenged. He and his classmates were playing fox and geese in the snow. He was cutting corners which everyone knew was against the rules. One of the average sized boys, who had taken all he was about to take from the bully, told him to quite cheating. The two of them squared off and made a few remarks to each other. Suddenly the smaller boy braced himself and planted a right cross right on the chin of the bully. The boy ended up sitting on the seat of his pants in the snow. He found things are not always just as they appear. He

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was much easier to get along with after that.

Goliath ridiculed David. Did David think he was no more than a wild dog who could be driven off the sheep with a shepherd's staff? He promised that David would be killed and the beasts and birds would eat his flesh. Goliath truly believed what he had said.

**1 Sam. 17:45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.**

**1 Sam. 17:46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.**

David proceeded to put the picture in better focus. Swords, spears and shields might win the battle against men. That would not be the case against God. Goliath represented his useless idols. David was backed by the God who created the heavens and the earth. It would be the bodies of the Philistines which would feed the birds and the beasts.

**1 Sam. 17:47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.**

When the battle was finished, all who witnessed it would learn the hopelessness of those who fight against Jehovah, the God of Israel.

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1 Sam. 17:48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

The two foes approached one another. If David had the least particle of fear in his heart, Goliath and the others did not see it. He actually ran toward the Philistine army and their champion, Goliath.

1 Sam. 17:49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

The Philistine might know from long experience how to handle a sword and a spear. David was not without experience. The sword and the spear are best used at short distances, even at arm's length. The sling and the stones are more efficient at a distance. David took one stone from his shepherd's bag, placed it in his sling and struck Goliath in the forehead with it. The giant fell to the earth, still alive but rendered helpless.

The stone is said to have 'sunk' into his forehead. Do not underestimate the power of David's weapon. If the giant had no visor on his helmet, or had left his visor open, there is nothing out of reason in the statement that the stone sank into his forehead. He fell forward with his face toward the earth. The result was accomplished by David, with the help of Jehovah. David had practised much in the use of the sling. God knew how to direct the path of the stone.

1 Sam. 17:50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

1 Sam. 17:51 Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

Goliath had not been killed by the blow from the stone. He had only been rendered helpless. David ran to him, killed him and cut off his head with his own sword.

With no sword and no armor, David defeated the giant who had sword, spear and metal armor. David was but a shadow of the Saviour who was to come. Jesus and his forces will one day defeat even the last enemy of mankind.

When the Philistines saw what had happened to Goliath, they turned and ran. This was not the agreement. They had agreed to become the servants of Israel if their champion lost.

1 Sam. 17:52 And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

If their representative had been defeated so soundly, the Philistines wanted no more of the Israelites at that time. They might well find that they had invited the same type of defeat on a larger basis. They fled in panic.

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**1 Sam. 17:53 And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.**

After driving the Philistines out of the area, the Israelites went through the vacated tents of the Philistines and took possession of the spoils of the victory. We are not told whether or not this was pleasing to the Lord. After having noted the hatred the Philistines manifested toward Israel as she moved into the land, we are suspicious that much which was taken had been the result of persecution and robbery of others by the Philistines in the past.

**1 Sam. 17:54 And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.**

We do not find this portion of the Bible to be pleasant to the imagination of the reader. The cutting off of men's heads and carrying them from one place to another is a gruesome thought. Men's heads are not the most beautiful specimens for one's trophy case. We do believe these are the facts of the present case. We might add that in museums we have seen mummified heads which were very likely taken by victors in battle and preserved in memory of the conquest.

David saw fit to take the armor of Goliath and place it in his own tent. It would be a reminder to both friend and foe that it is wise not to do combat with God's friends.

**1 Sam. 17:55 And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this**

**youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.**

Saul did not recognize David as the person who came and played the harp to soothe the king's frazzled emotions and drive the evil spirit from him in the past. It may be that David had increased in stature, and even grown a beard which was not present when they were in close relationship before this. Neither did Abner, the captain of Saul's army, know the identity of the young hero. We do not know the amount of time which passed between the end of chapter sixteen and the beginning of chapter seventeen.

**1 Sam. 17:56 And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.**

The fact that Saul referred to David as a stripling does not mean David was a gangly teenager. He was, however, surprisingly successful in that which he had accomplished to be no older or mature than he was. Saul had made a solemn promise that whoever could defeat Goliath would be presented with his daughter as a wife. Most men would be curious to know to whom their daughter was to be given in marriage.

**1 Sam. 17:57 And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.**

Abner, the captain of Saul's army, found David and brought him before Saul. The head of Goliath was still in his hand. We do not find this any more palatable a

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sight than it was when the head of the giant was cut off. War is not pretty!

1 Sam. 17:58 And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

Saul wished to know which family David belonged to. The answer was that David was the son of Jesse and from the village of Bethlehem. The reader will recall that another very famous person was born in Bethlehem. He was also a Saviour of men.

Chapter 18

Jehovah had been much disappointed in Saul. His Spirit had departed from Saul, and David was now being favored by the Lord. This was very evident to Saul and the King was plotting to remove David from the scene by causing him to be killed by The Philistines.

David had slain Goliath and was being praised by the people. Saul called for David to come before him. As Saul and David talked together, Jonathan, Saul's son developed a strong affection for David. The two of them were to become fast friends for years to come.

1 Sam. 18:1 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.

We sometimes speak of soul mates. A husband and wife should fit this picture, but at times two men or two women will build a friendship which is very dear to both. We are not talking here about homosexual relationships. We are talking about love which is rich, pure and right in the sight of God. David and Jonathan were bound together by such a bond.

1 Sam. 18:2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

All was well between Saul and David up to this point. Saul even went so far as to bring David to his own living quarters.



1 Sam. 18:3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

1 Sam. 18:4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

Jonathan was natural heir to the throne of Saul. By stripping himself of his robe, his sword, etc. he was in effect making a statement that David deserved that honor more than himself. This would require a great deal of self sacrifice. Jonathan recognized David as a future leader. He would not stand in the way.

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.

Saul began to lean upon David's leadership abilities. He placed David over the army of Israel. The younger man did not allow such advancement to go to his head. He used good judgment. He had been praised by the people for his victory over Goliath. His wisdom in this new responsibility resulted in even more adoration from the people. Even the servants of King Saul admired the young man.

1 Sam. 18:6 And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments

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of musick.

**1 Sam. 18:7 And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.**

The comments of the public, particularly of the women, began to irritate the King. The people were making comparisons which glorified David to a greater degree than himself. A spirit of jealousy started to grow in the heart of Saul.

**1 Sam. 18:8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?**

Rulers have a tendency to watch any of their subjects that gain high favor with a sizable portion of their citizens. The people were crediting David with ten times the honor they were giving Saul. To say Saul was displeased is just the beginning of the picture. The word “wrath” is very appropriate. Saul was worrying about the possible loss of his crown!

**1 Sam. 18:9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.**

**1 Sam. 18:10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul’s hand.**

We sometimes talk about keeping our eye on someone we think might cause us harm. Saul began to keep an  
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eye on David.

When Saul had failed to obey God in destroying Agag, God caused His own Spirit to depart from Saul, and an evil spirit replaced Him. David was charged with playing the harp to soothe Saul's frayed nerves. Here we find that the evil spirit had come upon the King and David was playing the harp. Saul was now acting very irrationally.

1 Sam. 18:11 And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

Saul threw his javelin at David, intending to kill him by pinning him to the wall. Twice David evaded the murderous efforts. We are not told the state of David's emotions after escaping the javelin twice. He was without doubt very much concerned as to his very life. This would be a fearful experience. He was expected to come before the King when summoned. Then, when he arrived, he found his life threatened.

1 Sam. 18:12 And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

Instead of being told of fear upon the part of David, we find that it was Saul who was fearful. He knew Jehovah had left himself and was now guiding and strengthening David. He began to plot a method for removing his supposed rival.

1 Sam. 18:13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

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Apparently Saul felt that if he placed David in the battlefield in command of a company of soldiers, he would be too busy to become a further problem. Or, he may have felt that David would fall by the sword or the arrow of the Philistines. Either way, Saul would not have to look at him constantly and hear the praises of the people which were being poured out upon him.

**1 Sam. 18:14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him.**

**1 Sam. 18:15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.**

The plan did not seem to be working. David handled his assignment efficiently. God was pleased with him. Saul had even more problems than before.

**1 Sam. 18:16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.**

Some friction had already begun to develop between the northern and southern parts of the kingdom. The affection of the people for David had overcome even this divisive attitude. Both Israel and Judah admired the capable young leader. Saul felt he must increase his efforts to undermine him.

**1 Sam. 18:17 And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD'S battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.**

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The King developed a plan for eliminating David. He would make an agreement with him that David could have his oldest daughter Merab for a wife if David would stand in the forefront of the battles with Israel's enemies, particularly the Philistines. Saul felt confident that David would lose his life trying to shoulder such danger.

1 Sam. 18:18 And David said unto Saul, Who am I? and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king?

David surprised Saul. He had not come from a family of reputation. What had he done personally that would earn such an honor as to marry the King's own daughter?

1 Sam. 18:19 But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

Saul probably thought David would lose his life before a marriage to his daughter Merab could come to pass. When that did not happen, the King conveniently forgot his promise to David and gave the daughter to another man. This arrangement did not seem to disturb David in the least. Perhaps his reason for not eagerly accepting Saul's daughter as a wife had something to do with his own lack of love for her as well as his statement to Saul that he was not from a prominent family.

1 Sam. 18:20 And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

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Saul had a younger daughter named Michal, who loved David. Does this mean Merab did not love him? A man who marries a woman he does not love, or a woman who does not love him, has made a serious mistake.

Saul was pleased when he heard of Michal's love for David. The marriage with Merob did not work out. This time the possibilities might be better. Saul was ready to promote a marriage between Michal and David.

**1 Sam. 18:21 And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in the one of the twain.**

Saul felt confident that he could use his daughter, Michal to destroy the younger man. By sending David into the battle lines against the Philistines he would be killed and Saul's concerns would be melted away. He now offered David a second daughter. Since the first daughter had not made his plan possible, he would follow it through the second.

**1 Sam. 18:22 And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law.**

Saul began to work indirectly on David. He encouraged his servants to whisper in David's ear that Saul was delighted with him. And since all the king's servants admired him also, David would be well advised to marry Saul's daughter Michal.

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1 Sam. 18:23 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?

David gave the same answer to the king's servants as he had given before to Saul. He was neither politically powerful, nor did he have great wealth. He felt that it was out of place for a man of his lowly position to even consider marriage with the daughter of the King. It is interesting that nothing is reported about his feelings for Michal. If he loved her as she loved him, some of these other objections would have far less weight.

1 Sam. 18:24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David.

1 Sam. 18:25 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.

When the King heard the reply David had given to his servants, it did not take him long to come up with an answer to David's objections. If David would go into battle with the Philistines and bring back one hundred foreskins of that hated enemy, he would certainly have no excuse for saying he was lightly esteemed.

Saul no doubt felt that before the feat which he had placed before David had been concluded, David would have lost his own life. He would then be a threat no longer.

1 Sam. 18:26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired.

This time Saul's argument prevailed. David saw that bringing back one hundred foreskins of the Philistines would mean he had either slain these men, or had been the leader in seeing that they were slain. They would not have allowed the circumcision if they had been alive. The time that had been given for the accomplishment of the bloody trophies had still not ended, so David took his men and entered battle with the foe.

1 Sam. 18:27 Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

Saul's plan failed. David and his men brought back, not one hundred, but two hundred foreskins. They were carefully counted to see that the king was not shorted, and Michal became the wife of David.

1 Sam. 18:28 And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him.

1 Sam. 18:29 And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

There could be no doubt whatsoever in the mind of Saul that God was protecting and blessing David. It would have been less difficult for Saul if Michal had
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been disappointed in her new husband. That was not the case. She loved 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.**

The princes of the Philistines realized they were facing insurmountable hurdles in doing battle with David and his men. They retreated and left David and his forces with a victory. David was becoming more and more influential in Israel. Saul was fading out of the spotlight.

## Chapter 19

Saul was becoming more and more suspicious and envious of David's popularity with the people. Up to this time, he had plotted and planned in a more private manner to rid himself of what he clearly considered a threat to his throne. That changes. We find him making a public command that he wants David killed. Even the affection of both Saul's son Jonathan and his daughter Michal, David's wife, do not prevent him from venting his wrath upon his son-in-law.

**1 Sam. 19:1 And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.**

Saul should have recognized that Jonathan would resent any such command. The souls of David and Jonathan were knit together as one. Saul might have thought Jonathan would have the same fear which he had that David would one day be seated on the throne. Jonathan did not let this possibility concern him in the least.

We can also conclude that Saul's servants would have been less than energetic about obeying the order of Saul. They would have shared the opinion of others that David was a hero.

**1 Sam. 19:2 But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself:**

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Jonathan worked in opposition to his father's command. He informed David of the danger that was facing him. He urged David to hide from Saul throughout the night and he would see just how serious the situation was the following day.

1 Sam. 19:3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee.

Jonathan would take his father out into a field where he knew David was hidden. He would then talk with his father about David and perhaps he could persuade him to spare his life.

1 Sam. 19:4 And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good:

Jonathan did as he had promised. He defended David as a public servant who had risked his own life to the welfare of the nation of Israel. He told Saul it would be a tragedy to mistreat one who had acted benevolently toward the King.

1 Sam. 19:5 For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

David had been very brave in going into combat with Goliath. After the giant was slain, Israel had won a major victory over the Philistines. David had not committed a crime. He had done nothing but good toward either the King or the people.

1 Sam. 19:6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.

Jonathan's words had the desired effect. Saul swore that he would not kill David. That ,however, did not mean a great deal. Saul could turn around on a dime. But, at least for the time being, David would be safe from bodily harm.

1 Sam. 19:7 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.

David had not been far off while the conversation between Saul and Jonathan was proceeding. After Saul had made his promise of safety for David, he brought him back into his presence just as had been the case before this.

1 Sam. 19:8 And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him.

We do not know just how long David found it secure to be in the presence of Saul. After a time, war broke out again between Israel and the Philistines. David once
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again entered into the fighting and was responsible for the retreat of his enemy. The Philistines were routed.

**1 Sam. 19:9 And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand.**

This verse has a familiar ring. It sounds very much like the passage in Exodus where we are told the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. When God does something which results in a man or woman resisting Him, it is said that God caused the resistance. This time, while David was playing the harp in Saul's presence, Saul became irrational and a spirit of malice took control of him. God did not directly send the spirit upon Saul. He brought about the set of conditions which resulted in the spirit's influence.

**1 Sam. 19:10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin: but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.**

It was certainly not Saul's fault that David remained alive that night. He aimed the javelin in his hand straight at the young man. If David had not been agile and evaded it, the javelin would have run him through and pinned him to the wall.

**1 Sam. 19:11 Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him,**

**saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain.**

Saul assumed David would go to his own house after evading the intended murder. He sent assassins to wait for him until he came forth in the morning. Then, when he exited from the house, they were to murder him. We can anticipate that these messengers did not have their whole heart in obeying Saul's command. David was loved by the people.

Michal warned her husband that he had better find a way to escape from the clutches of her father. If he did not do so during the night, he would be killed the next day.

**1 Sam. 19:12 So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.**

It is fairly obvious that the house of David was a part of the wall of the city. If that were not the case, the servants of Saul would have observed his exit through the window. As it was, David was able to leave unobserved and depart from the hand of Saul.

**1 Sam. 19:13 And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth.**

**1 Sam. 19:14 And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick.**

Michal placed an image in the bed where David had been resting. The image was near enough the size of a man that it could be made to look as if David was still lying under the covers. One wonders if the image was a false god. Perhaps the word only means  
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the object resembled the image of a person. When the messengers came the next day, Michal lied to them by saying David was sick.

1 Sam. 19:15 And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him.

Saul did not accept this as a reason for failing to obey his orders. The messengers were to go back and bring David in the bed if he was too sick to walk. Saul left no guesswork about why he wanted to see David. He was going to kill him.

1 Sam. 19:16 And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster.

Upon returning, the messengers found they had been fooled. It was not the body of David in the bed. It was an image caused to look as if it was a man. A pillow made of goat's hair had been placed in such position that it appeared to be David's hair. The messengers reported back to Saul.

1 Sam. 19:17 And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

Saul was incensed at his daughter Michal. He accused her of deceiving him and allowing David to escape. This was exactly what happened. Michal loved her husband and did not wish to see him slain.

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Now she added to the deception. She spoke an outright lie. She claimed that David had threatened to kill her if she did not help him escape. Was this justified? The writer is not convinced the lie was necessary.. Can God not protect His own? Would Saul have actually killed his own daughter for protecting her husband, whom she knew to be a good man?

**1 Sam. 19:18 So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.**

David took flight and proceeded to Ramah where Samuel and a group of the prophets were located. He reported to Samuel the events which had taken place. He and Samuel then left Ramah and went to dwell in Naioth. For the moment both David and Samuel were safe from the King.

**1 Sam. 19:19 And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.**

Saul soon discovered the location of the two. He would take quick action.

**1 Sam. 19:20 And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.**

Saul continued his relentless pursuit of David. He sent messengers to capture him and bring him back.

The effort failed.

When the messengers arrived at the place where devotions were being held in honor of Jehovah, the messengers actually came under the influence of the Holy Spirit and began to join in with the devotions. Since the scripture does not tell us exactly what form the prophesyings took, we are best advised not to enter into idle guessing. We are safe in saying Saul's effort to capture and kill David were completely thwarted.

**1 Sam. 19:21 And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.**

All in all, three groups of messengers were sent to take David. Each time the same surprising results were experienced. The messengers found themselves prophesying along with the prophets who were associated with Samuel.

**1 Sam. 19:22 Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah.**

Saul decided to take matters into his own hands. He went to Ramah where Samuel would ordinarily have been. When he asked for Samuel and David, he was told they had gone to Naioth. Naioth was apparently near enough to Ramah that the two places were considered almost identical.

**1 Sam. 19:23 And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also,**

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and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

Saul set out for Naioth. We cannot help but wonder what he expected to do when he arrived there. David had been able to defeat Goliath. He had been able to put the Philistines into retreat more than once. Samuel was a prophet of God. Saul was pitting himself against very uneven odds, even if he did sit on the throne.

Lo and behold, the Holy Spirit came upon Saul and he also began to prophesy. Jehovah's plans were not about to be derailed. David was to become King of Israel. Saul was waging a hopeless contest.

1 Sam. 19:24 And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?

This is a difficult verse. It seems that Saul became completely irrational. He took off his clothing and prophesied naked before Samuel. He remained in that condition all day and all night.

Some believe what Saul did was to strip off only his royal robes and continued to be clothed with his inner garments. Is this a logical explanation, or is this but a way to evade what the Bible actually intends to say? We seem to have contradictory behavior. The onlookers felt that Saul was acting like the prophets in prophesying, which would suggest uttering truth. At the same time, lying naked while uttering such prophecies gives us just the opposite view of the scene.

May we suggest that this picture is very much the same as the overall condition of Saul. He was king

of Israel, the people of God. Simultaneously, he was controlled by an evil spirit which caused him to seek the death of a man who was admired by his son and married to his daughter.

Chapter 20

The envy and hatred of Saul toward David continues and strengthens in the chapter before us. The people love David and Saul fears the loss of the throne of Israel to the younger hero. Jonathan and David must work together to save David from being slain by the King.

1 Sam. 20:1 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?

The relationship between Naioth and Ramah is not clarified. This verse speaks of Naioth as being in Ramah. David decided to speak with his dear friend concerning the problem which existed between himself and Jonathan's father, Saul.

It was difficult for David to understand why Saul was intent on taking his life. What had he done that precipitated such hatred? David was willing to do what was necessary to receive forgiveness if the cause of the strife could be identified.

1 Sam. 20:2 And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so.

Jonathan had not seen the efforts of his father to pin David to the wall with a javelin. He felt that surely his father would reveal any intentions to murder David. He saw no reason to hide such a plan from Jonathan.

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Did David not agree that Saul would discuss it with Jonathan before doing this deed?

**1 Sam. 20:3 And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.**

David revealed what he thought was the reason why Saul had not confided in Jonathan. He knew that David and Jonathan had developed a strong friendship. If he were to discuss his plan with Jonathan, it would grieve his son.

David contended that he was only one step away from being killed. Saul was but a step behind him and carrying a javelin in his heart.

The various commentators are correct in pointing out that all of us are but a step from death. Diseases, traffic accidents and disasters of many kinds are a common part of our lives each day we live. We must be prepared to meet our Maker every moment of every day.

**1 Sam. 20:4 Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.**

Jonathan saw no reason for refusing to help David protect his life. David could ask anything he felt necessary and Jonathan would cooperate. This indicates a very strong confidence in the character of David. One must be careful in making such unlimited statements as Jonathan made.

**1 Sam. 20:5 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.**

David proposed a way to demonstrate to Jonathan just how much danger he faced. The following day there was to be a feast celebrating the coming of a new moon and thus the beginning of a new month. David would be invited to attend that feast and sit at the table with Saul and with Jonathan. David would deliberately miss the feast and would go to hide himself in a field until the third day from the one in which they were living.

**1 Sam. 20:6 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.**

David instructed Jonathan to tell his father a lie. He was to tell his father that David had gone to Bethlehem to be with his own family for a yearly sacrifice. He would not have gone to Bethlehem. He intended to hide in a field where Jonathan could come and report the results of his absence from Saul's table.

Did Jehovah condone this lie? We can only guess. He did not indicate whether he approved or disapproved of it. He did not prevent it.

**1 Sam. 20:7 If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him.**

If Saul was not irritated when he was informed that  
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David had gone to Bethlehem, Jonathan would know there was no serious problem concerning David's safety. If Saul became angry, Jonathan would know his father planned damage to David.

1 Sam. 20:8 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?

David called himself the servant of Jonathan. As prince, Jonathan did hold a high rank. But it is more likely that David was speaking as friend to friend. He would serve Jonathan if Jonathan needed help. He wanted Jonathan to do the same for him.

If Jonathan did actually find that David had become a threat to Saul, he was expected to kill David himself. There was no need to even take David to Saul. David and Jonathan had entered into a sacred covenant. This covenant was mentioned in 18:3. The two men had agreed to treat one another as they would wish to be treated. God was their witness.

1 Sam. 20:9 And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

Jonathan reassured David that he would reveal to him any intent Saul had to kill David. He would not hold back such information. We have a statement that "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

1 Sam. 20:10 Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly?

David wished to know how Jonathan would relay the information to him if Saul did become angry at his absence from the feast of the new moon.

1 Sam. 20:11 And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

1 Sam. 20:12 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;

Jonathan took David out into the field. It is assumed that this was the same field where David had hidden himself previously.

Jonathan explained that when he found out Saul's attitude he would come back to the field three days from their present conversation. If David was in grave danger he would let David know. If there was no danger, he would not come to the field.

1 Sam. 20:13 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.

Jonathan promised David that he was willing to call upon the Lord to do to him the same damage which Saul did unto David, if he deceived David.

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It is of note that Jonathan asked a blessing upon David even as his father Saul had been blessed. This may indicate that Jonathan believed David would later sit upon the throne which Saul then occupied.

**1 Sam. 20:14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not:**

**1 Sam. 20:15 But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.**

Jonathan expected David to come into such power that he could be a friend or a foe to Jonathan's family. He was confident that the enemies of David would be removed from the face of the earth.

**1 Sam. 20:16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies.**

**1 Sam. 20:17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.**

This time the covenant was wider than the one recorded in 18:3. The covenant was now with the household of Jonathan, and was not limited to the man himself. If the reader has never had a friend who was much closer to him or her than any other person on earth, it will be hard to understand the friendship between David and Jonathan. Such friendships can be deep and long lasting.

**1 Sam. 20:18** Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

**1 Sam. 20:19** And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

David had proposed the test itself. He was to be absent from the feast and Jonathan was to observe Saul's reaction to his absence. This latter part of the agreement was suggested by Jonathan. Three days after their conversation, David was to go to the same field. He was to hide himself amidst the rocks of the field.

**1 Sam. 20:20** And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

**1 Sam. 20:21** And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt; as the LORD liveth.

Jonathan would bring a bow and some arrows. He planned to have a young lad with him whose duty it was to retrieve the arrows after Jonathan had done some target practice. After the arrows were shot, Jonathan would tell the lad to go and get the arrows. While the lad was searching for the arrows, Jonathan would say one of two things to him. He would say either that the arrows were this side of the lad, or he would say the arrows were beyond the lad.

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1 Sam. 20:22 But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away.

If Jonathan said the arrows were this side of the lad, David would know all was well. If Jonathan said the arrows were beyond the lad, David would know the Lord intended for him to flee from Saul.

1 Sam. 20:23 And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between thee and me for ever.

Regardless of the outcome of the matter, Jonathan wanted David to know he would honor the covenant the two had made. He desired that God would hold the two of them together even after they were gone and were replaced by their descendants.

1 Sam. 20:24 So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

1 Sam. 20:25 And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

David was ready in the field. As the time for the feast arrived, the king took his seat just as he was accustomed to doing. He was sitting next to the wall. Jonathon surveyed the situation. Abner sat on one side of Saul. There were three where there should have been four. David's seat was empty.

1 Sam. 20:26 Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.

Saul was not too suspicious at this point in time. There were a number of ways a man might become unclean. It was forbidden to take part in the feast if this was the case. Perhaps David had touched a dead animal or even a corpse. He would then be excused from the feast for one day.

1 Sam. 20:27 And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?

It was a bit different the following day. David's seat was still empty. Saul began to ask questions. Knowing Jonathan and David were close friends, Saul asked Jonathan why David had not come to the feast either the first or the second day.

1 Sam. 20:28 And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem:

1 Sam. 20:29 And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

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Jonathan did as he and David had agreed. He lied and told Saul that David had asked him for permission to go to Bethlehem where his family had gathered. According to Jonathan, David's brother had commanded that he be present at the family feast. That was David's reason for being absent.

**1 Sam. 20:30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?**

If David and Jonathan wished to find out whether Saul would become angry at David's absence, they soon found out. As the reader examines this verse, remember Saul is talking to his own son. He aims some extremely foul language directly at his son. There is not much reason to doubt what Saul was calling his son. A perverse woman is one who has perverted her relationship with her husband. Saul is accusing his wife of having given birth to Jonathan by another man. She has rebelled against him and in the language of our own time, we would say he called Jonathan a "*son of a bitch*." His mother had turned her nakedness into confusion. According to Saul, Jonathan's mother had brought confusion into the family through this son who had chosen to support David.

Saul had become completely irrational. His temper had exploded.

**1 Sam. 20:31 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.**

Saul asked Jonathan if he did not know that as long as David remained alive, Jonathan would not be able to succeed him on the throne of Israel? Even if Jonathan would not attempt to prevent such a disaster, Saul would. He demanded that Jonathan bring David to him that he might kill him.

**1 Sam. 20:32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?**

Jonathan was still determined to defend his close friend. He wanted to know just what it was that David had done to deserve such treatment. He knew of no reason.

**1 Sam. 20:33 And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.**

Saul's javelin had been pretty busy. Three times he had aimed it at David. Now he turned against his own son. Jonathan had a very definite answer to his question as to whether Saul was prepared to kill David. Yes, he was!!

**1 Sam. 20:34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.**

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As most of us would have done after having had a javelin thrown at us across the table, Jonathan lost his appetite. He ate nothing that day. He was disgusted and ashamed of his father's conduct.

1 Sam. 20:35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

As it had been agreed between David and Jonathan, the latter were out into the field where David was to be hiding. He took a lad with him to retrieve arrows after he shot them. David must have known exactly what the outcome of the events at the feast of the new moon would be.

1 Sam. 20:36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

Saul instructed the lad to go and search for the arrows which he was about to shoot. The lad ran out a distance from him. Then Jonathan shot an arrow beyond where the young man was.

1 Sam. 20:37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee?

As the lad was searching for the arrow, Saul called out for him to go beyond the point where he was. The arrow was farther away.

1 Sam. 20:38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

Not only did Jonathan tell the lad to go farther away, he told him to hurry and not stay where he was. David could easily interpret the message Jonathan had sent. David was in danger. He must hurry and get away. Saul had every intention of killing him.

1 Sam. 20:39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

1 Sam. 20:40 And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city.

The lad had no idea of the warning which had been given. Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to the lad and told him to leave them and go into the city. This left the two friends alone.

1 Sam. 20:41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

David came out of his hiding place and saluted Jonathan. This was to be a sad farewell. David would be pursued by Saul for some time. He would be hunted like a wild animal. Saul would pursue him unmercifully.

1 Sam. 20:42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us
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**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.**

The type of kiss and embrace which David and Jonathan shared had nothing to do with sexuality. It was the kind of parting which loyal friends would give one another if they had no assurance of ever seeing one another alive again. They reassured each other of their covenant of friendship which had been witnessed by the Lord that they would harm neither one another or the other's descendants.

David had occasion to prove his sincerity when he befriended Jonathan's crippled son named Mephibosheth. (See 2 Samuel 9:1-7.)

## Chapter 21

This is a sad chapter. David is called a man after God's own heart. Yet King Saul begins hunting him as if he was a wild animal. Saul has become envious, jealous and contentious toward the younger man. The events recorded in this part of the Bible are not pleasant to contemplate. Still, they are a part of the revealed message and have a reason for being present.

**1 Sam. 21:1 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?**

David had found it advisable to leave the presence of Saul as a means of protecting his own life. Saul had tried several times to take David's life. David went to the city of Nob where a center of worship to Jehovah had been established after the Philistines destroyed that at Shiloh.

Upon his arrival at Nob, David went to Ahimelech who was the priest in charge. Ahimelech was surprised at seeing David alone, with no dignitaries of the government along with him. He was fearful because he suspected there might have been friction between Saul and David. In that case he could be placing himself in a delicate position by welcoming David enthusiastically.

**1 Sam. 21:2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.**

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David attempted to satisfy the concern of Ahimelech by presenting another untruth. He had not been sent on business of King Saul. He was evading Saul. It has been suggested that David might not have meant King Saul. He might have meant Jehovah who is King of the universe. In that case he would have been closer to the truth. That explanation for his statement does not leave us comfortable. He was obviously trying to imply that Saul had sent him and had commanded that the business upon which he had been sent was a private matter and not to be divulged.

He told Ahimelech he expected to meet with his servants at some designated location after the business was completed.

1 Sam. 21:3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

David proceeded to ask Ahimelech for food to sustain himself and his associates. He needed five loaves, or whatever Ahimelech was lay his hands on. Whatever was available would be appreciated.

1 Sam. 21:4 And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.

Ahimelech responded that the only bread which was on hand was that which had been dedicated to the worship of the Lord. It would normally have been eaten by the priests rather than by the common people. He did agree to allow David to take the bread if the young men David was to meet had avoided uncleanness. One

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particularly important thing was that they had not had recent sexual intercourse with women.

One can not be wonder why sexual intercourse is classed as an activity which would cause the participants to be unclean in the sight of God. After all, the Lord told Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth. Parenthood is exalted in the scriptures. The only logical answer must lie in the physical contamination which takes place during the sex act, and the need for washing afterward.

There is the possibility that the statement in this verse has to do with illicit sexual contacts, but does not seem to be the main point here.

**1 Sam. 21:5 And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.**

David assured Ahimelech he and his men had not had such contact for a period of about three days since he had departed from Saul's presence. The men were clean. Some believe the vessels which are referred to were containers which they carried with them. Others contend that these vessels were the seminal vesicles of David's men.

David also suggested that the bread had satisfied it's purpose on the table of sacrifice and for that reason could be considered useful for common purposes, even if it had been sanctified for use at the table earlier.

**1 Sam. 21:6 So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the**  
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shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

Ahimelech consented to give David the bread from the table. The bread remained on the table for a week and was then replaced by hot bread. This bread had already been replaced. David could use it.

The careful reader may remember that Jesus used this event to justify his disciples plucking corn on the Sabbath day. This is recorded in Matthew 12, Mark 3 and Luke 6. The lives of men are precious in God's sight. It is right that a medical doctor leave a worship assembly to perform an operation at a hospital that will save a patient's life.

1 Sam. 21:7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.

Among those who witnessed the conversation between Ahimelech and David, was Doeg. Doeg was an Edomite who was in charge of the herdsmen of King Saul. No more is said of him here, but he will be spoken of again. This man was responsible for a massacre of a number of priests at Nob.

1 Sam. 21:8 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.

In addition to the food, David needed some type of
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military weapon. Did Ahimelech have either a sword or a spear which he could give to him. He had found it necessary to leave in haste before he could take the time to get his own weapons.

**1 Sam. 21:9 And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.**

Ahimelech answered that there was a sword available. It was the same sword which David had used to kill Goliath. It had been carefully wrapped in a cloth and was behind the ephod. The ephod was a garment in which the Urim and Thummim were deposited.

David did not hesitate. That sword was a very fine one. He would gladly take it in order to arm himself.

**1 Sam. 21:10 And David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.**

David felt it would be unwise to remain at Nob. After all, Doeg knew of his presence and would very likely inform Saul as to where he could be found. He decided to go to King Achish of Gath. Gath was the region where Goliath had been met. This does not seem like the best possible choice for a refuge.

**1 Sam. 21:11 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,**

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saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

It did not take long for the servants of King Achish to recognize David. They remembered him as the man who had slain the Goliath, the Philistine, and of whom the people had sung praises because of his victory over the giant. They recalled that David and Saul had been compared, with David coming out ahead of Saul.

1 Sam. 21:12 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

David was well aware of what the people were thinking. He realized Achish could take the same approach that Saul did. He might fear David's ability and try to eliminate him. Now David had two kings to worry over, Saul and Achish. What was he to do to lessen the danger?

1 Sam. 21:13 And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

The answer which David arrived at was to pretend he was insane. He put on a very convincing act. He went to the doors of the city gate and wrote meaningless scribbling upon them. It was his intention that when it was decided that he was out of his head, or possessed by a demon, he would present less danger to the city.

He also allowed his saliva to flow down into his beard, leaving him looking like an escapee from an insane asylum. The insane were treated somewhat

different at that time than would be true in our own time. We today think of insanity as a medical problem. At the time of David it was considered to be a spiritual abnormality.

1 Sam. 21:14 Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me?

Achich reacted as David had intended. He dismissed any danger of military attacks upon his domain. He only wished that David had not been brought before him. He had other more important matters to attend to.

1 Sam. 21:15 Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

Achish was quite certain that he did not have any need for a collection of mad persons in his throne room. The word “play” is used here as if perhaps Achish saw through David’s act. He was using the word in the sense of “behave” rather than “act.” There were other places where the insane could be taken rather than bringing them into Achish’s house and creating a disturbance.

Chapter 22

At this point David is forced to hide from the wrath of Saul. This is quite a contrast with his later condition as King of Israel. Many of God's faithful servants have seen somewhat similar changes in their lives. Wicked men become more wicked when faced with troubles and trials. Righteous men become stronger in spirit and look forward to better days under the providential care of Jehovah.

1 Sam. 22:1 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.

Saul was furious with David. Even though David was his son-in-law and was a dedicated friend to his son Jonathan, Saul was intent on taking David's life. It had become necessary for David to flee from Saul's presence to protect himself. He found some degree of safety by hiding in the cave Adullam. This cave is thought to have been located some twelve miles southwest of Bethlehem. This was an area where many caves of various sizes were found.

There was good reason for David's brethren and his father's house to join him there when they were informed of his hiding place. Saul was quite capable of destroying all of David's relatives as a way of harming David himself. Such mass attacks on the entire family of an enemy were common in that time and area. Saul's actions a bit later are proof of the wisdom of David's kin.

1 Sam. 22:2 And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

Many individuals saw in David's plight a similarity to their own. Some were in debt. Some were distressed. Others were discontented for a variety of reasons. David was recognized as a leader. They were ready to align themselves with him as a means of hope for the future.

Some four hundred are mentioned here. Later we know the number arose to six hundred. David demonstrated his leadership ability by uniting them and serving as their captain. The type of persons described here do not normally make the finest of teams. However; the reasons for much of their distress were well founded. Saul was not the kind of King who was noted for his generosity or impartiality.

1 Sam. 22:3 And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me.

Moab had not been a great friend of the Israelites. They had made it difficult for Israel to enter the promised land when they finished their wandering in the wilderness. Why then did David feel he could find aid from the Moabites? There are two possibilities. Ruth, the Moabitess, was an ancestor of David. Second, Saul and the Moabites were enemies. This caused David to feel he could appeal to the King of Moab for protection

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of his aged mother and father.

Even though David was in severe difficulty at the time, he still held out hope that God was working in his life and would arrange for him to be useful in His service.

**1 Sam. 22:4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.**

David turned his parents over to the King of Moab and they were cared for while he was being pursued by Saul. The word “hold” probably means more than just the stronghold of the cave of Adullam.

**1 Sam. 22:5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.**

This is the first mention of the prophet Gad in the Bible. He will be mentioned several times after this. Gad became the seer for David later on. He also reprimanded David for numbering Israel.

Apparently under the authority of God, Gad commanded David to leave the cave of Adullam and enter into the land of Judah. David followed his command and went to the forest of Hareth in Judah.

**1 Sam. 22:6 When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him;)**

It did not take long for the information that David had revealed his presence to reach the ears of Saul. Saul was situated under a tree on the top of an elevation, with his spear in his hand and his servants ready for orders. Things were about to come to a head.

**1 Sam. 22:7 Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;**

This verse is evidence that the twelve tribes were not fully united. Saul's servants were addressed as Benjamites. He had evidently been cautious about enlisting the aid of those from other tribes.

Saul reminded his servants that he was in power. He had given them fields and vineyards. He had appointed them as superior officers in the armed service. David was running from him and it should be obvious to his men that David was a fugitive and had no possibility of doing similar favors for them.

**1 Sam. 22:8 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?**

Saul had become paranoid. He felt that he could trust no one. After all he had done for his servants, they should have been more loyal to him. Instead, they had failed to tell him about the agreement Jonathan,

his own son, had made with David. He even accused Jonathan of plotting against him and enlisting David to lie in wait that Saul might be done harm.

This is the way in which the minds of tyrants operate. It was not David who was lying in wait to harm Saul. It was Saul who was doing everything within his power to destroy David.

**1 Sam. 22:9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.**

Doeg was ready to take advantage of the situation. Saul felt that the other servants had failed to stand up and be counted. Doeg had a piece of information which might put him in high favor with the King. He decided this was the time to reveal that information. He reported that he had seen David coming into the village of Nob to speak with Ahimelech.

**1 Sam. 22:10 And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.**

He added that Ahimelech had asked for the Lord to be with David. He had also given David food and armed him with the sword of Goliath.

We can imagine the effect this had on the jealous heart of Saul. The report seemed to confirm what he had contended. David was readying himself and his men for battle. He had persuaded Ahimelech the priest to pray to God on his behalf.

**1 Sam. 22:11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.**

Saul did not lower himself to go to Nob. He demanded that Ahimelech and those who were associated with him to come to him.

Ahimelech had no reason to fear damage at the hand of the King. He had done nothing he felt was injurious to him. He came with those whom Saul had commanded and presented the entire group to him.

**1 Sam. 22:12 And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord.**

Saul's words here do not reflect respect for Ahimelech. He refers to him as the son of Ahitub rather than by his own name. Ahimelech has not the slightest idea of the trouble he is facing. There are a number of reasons why Saul might have called upon a priest.

**1 Sam. 22:13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?**

It did not take Saul long to let Ahimelech know of his displeasure with him. He asked an explanation for what he saw as treachery. Ahimelech had entered into a conspiracy with David and Jonathan, as well as

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others to rise up in rebellion. He had given David and his men food. He had given David a sword. He had even requested the Lord's help for his son-in-law. According to Saul, the result was that David was waiting to kill the King as soon as he had opportunity.

1 Sam. 22:14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?

Ahimelech's response to the accusation almost sounds as if he was chastising Saul. Why would Saul have the attitude he had displayed. David had proven to be a faithful servant. He was the King's son-in-law. He did what he was asked to do, and brought honor to Saul's household. Saul was unwise to downgrade David!

1 Sam. 22:15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

Ahimelech claimed that he was completely innocent of betraying Saul. He did not know there was any animosity between the two of them. David had said he was on an errand for the King. Ahimelech had no reason to believe different.

1 Sam. 22:16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.

Saul's warped mind would have none of Ahimelech's justification of his actions. He promised the priest that he would die, along with all of his kinsmen. As we stated before, it was not uncommon for one to take revenge upon an entire household for the actions of a single individual in that household.

1 Sam. 22:17 And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD: because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD.

Saul turned to his bodyguard and commanded them to kill Ahimelech and those of the priesthood who had come along with him. The whole company had proved disloyal to him and dedicated to David. They knew David was fleeing from Saul and they failed to report his presence at Nob.

Saul's command was not obeyed. Even if Saul was not fearful of attacking the priests of God, his bodyguard was. They had a choice of respecting Saul or respecting the priests of God. They chose to ignore Saul.

1 Sam. 22:18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.

There was one whom Saul felt he could depend. That was Doeg, the one who had informed him of seeing David receiving help from Ahimelech and his fellow priests.

Since his footmen would not kill the priests, he called upon Doeg to kill them. The result was that eighty-five priests were murdered.

1 Sam. 22:19 And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

But Saul went farther than that. He went to the city of Nob and killed men, women, children and babies. He killed their oxen, asses and sheep. He had no mercy whatsoever. He put them under the ban.

The reader will recall that when Saul was told to destroy all of the Amalekites, he decided to spare King Agag. Now he behaves in reverse manner. When he defies righteousness, he kills everything. When he fights wickedness, he leaves a little untouched. And this is not Satan. This is the King of God's people!? He may not be Satan, but he is most certainly moved by the spirit of Satan.

1 Sam. 22:20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

We do not know the details of Abiathar's escape. He may have been left behind when the rest came with Ahimelech to obey the call from Saul. We do know where he went after his escape. He joined forces with David.

1 Sam. 22:21 And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD'S priests.

1 Sam. 22:22 And David said unto Abiathar,
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**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.**

When David received word of what Saul had done in the murder of the eighty-five priests and the citizens of the city of Nob, he reflected upon the fact that he had suspected just such actions from Doeg. David blamed himself for the horror. If he had not told Ahimelech that he was on a mission for Saul and then requested food, arms and prayer, these priests might still be alive.

**1 Sam. 22:23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.**

The least he could do was to allow Abiathar to join his ranks. The two of them were in the same condition. Saul would take both of their lives if it became possible. As long as Abiathar was with David, David would do all he could to protect him.

Abiathar had a long relationship with David, and acted as a spiritual advisor. He did turn his support to Adonijah when David became an old man.





## Chapter 23

In the present chapter we continue to see the flight of David and his band of men from the anger of King Saul. The Philistines play a major part in the events of this confrontation. Both David and Saul find themselves concerned with defensive actions against these marauders.

**1 Sam. 23:1 Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors.**

The places such as Keilah which are mentioned in the chapter are primarily important because of the things which took place at each of them. The geographical locations and the alternative names which they are given are less important than the chain of events.

David is informed that the Philistines have attacked Keilah, a fortified city in the region of Judah. The Philistines are interested in robbing the citizens of their hard earned grain which has been sown cultivated and harvested, and is now ready for grinding flour and feeding livestock.

**1 Sam. 23:2 Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.**

David felt a sense of responsibility toward the victims of the robbery. He had a band of men who were capable of driving off the thieves. There are at least two reasons why he might hesitate. First, he is tending to business

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which Saul might well feel was his own domain rather than that of David. Second, if David attempts to thwart the Philistines will the Lord be with him that he may be successful in the venture.

The Lord's reply was in the affirmative. David was to go and save the city of Keilah from the invaders.

1 Sam. 23:3 And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?

David's men did not have the same confidence in the success of the effort that David did. They pointed out that they were already fearful where they were. They would have even more reason to fear if they interfered and further antagonized the Philistines.

1 Sam. 23:4 Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

David felt the need for further confirmation of the position of Jehovah. He returned and asked the second time if he should send his small force against the Philistine armies. God reassured him that he was to go to Keilah. God would be with him and enable him to overcome the Philistine hordes.

1 Sam. 23:5 So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

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Seeing their leader's confidence, the men followed David to Keilah and entered into battle with the Philistines. They met with success, Many of the Philistines were killed and their livestock were confiscated for use by the citizens of Keilah.

**1 Sam. 23:6 And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand.**

Word of success such as this has a way of getting around. Abiathar came to join David's group. Abiathar came with an ephod. The ephod represented a way to commune with God. The Urim and the Thummim were used in connection with the ephod to determine God's will in cases of indecision. We do not know how David received his replies from Jehovah before Abiathar came. We do know this was a means of communicating with God. David thus had a priest to help him in his prayers.

**1 Sam. 23:7 And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.**

Both Saul and David had lookouts who were responsible for discovering movements of one another. Saul received reports that David had gone to Keilah to fight the Philistines. Saul rejoiced in that he felt God had made it possible for him and his army to trap David and his men within the walls of Keilah, which had gates barred with massive beams of wood or metal.

**1 Sam. 23:8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.**

The King lost no time in gathering his army. Note that he called “all” the people. He did not take a small representative group. He intended to throw everything he had into the fray. He led his men down to the city of Keilah intending to humiliate David.

**1 Sam. 23:9 And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.**

Just as Saul received reports about David’s movements, David now received similar information about Saul. He heard of Saul’s intended attack and therefore, asked Abiathar to help in consulting God. Abiathar was to bring the ephod.

**1 Sam. 23:10 Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.**

**1 Sam. 23:11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down.**

David needed the answer to two questions. First, would Saul truly come down to fight with him as the report had it? Second, if Saul did come, would the citizens of the city turn David over to Saul? The answer to the first question was that David should expect the  
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appearance of Saul, just as the report had indicated. This answer might have been predicted.

1 Sam. 23:12 Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up.

The answer to the other question must have disturbed David greatly. God revealed that the men of Keilah would turn him over into the hands of the Philistines. They would support Saul.

What a picture of ingratitude! David and his men had saved those of Keilah from the loss of their grain and all of the consequences of that loss. Now they repay David by supporting the thieving Philistines.

1 Sam. 23:13 Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth.

We have read previously that the number of David's men were about four hundred. Two hundred others had joined him by this time. He and his men decided to leave the city before Saul arrived. Why was David so concerned about defending himself against King Saul. It seems from other passages that David did not feel that he should harm the King that God had anointed as head of Israel. He would rather flee than destroy or harm Saul.

1 Sam. 23:14 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.

David felt it wise to evade Saul rather than to confront him. He sought out caves and other natural places of concealment. Saul would not give up in trying to eliminate David. He was aware of the fact that God intended to make David the king of Israel at some time in the future. He did not know just how long this would wait.

1 Sam. 23:15 And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

Ziph was a more desolated area where it was easier for David to slip away from the jealousy and anger of his monarch.

1 Sam. 23:16 And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.

David and Jonathan, Saul's son, had been the closest of friends for a lengthy time. Jonathan felt that his father was wrong in pursuing David. He managed to find David's place of hiding and make a visit. He could certainly give David's spirits a boost by assuring him God would be with him.

1 Sam. 23:17 And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.

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**1 Sam. 23:18 And they two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.**

David and Jonathan had made a covenant before this. What we have here is a simple confirmation of that to which they had agreed in the past. They would forever do all within their power to aid one another and prevent harm. Jonathan made it clear to David that he did not foresee himself as a future King of the land. David would be king and Jonathan would be quite satisfied to take a subordinate role.

David then retired into the wooded area where he would be less apt to be found by Saul. Jonathan and David did not meet again as far as the Bible reports. Though we do come across further actions on the part of both of them.

**1 Sam. 23:19 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?**

Due to the fact that the King was powerful and he was seeking out David, the Ziphites felt compelled to reveal what they knew about David's hiding places. After all, the village of Nob had experience terrible suffering because of their support for David. The Ziphites did not relish a similar fate. They were not about to bring the wrath of Saul down upon them. They told Saul what they knew.

**1 Sam. 23:20 Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come**

**down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand.**

The Ziphites wanted the King to know assuredly that they would not hinder his search for David and his men. Quite to the contrary, they promised to do all they could to see that Saul captured his quarry.

**1 Sam. 23:21 And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me.**

**1 Sam. 23:22 Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there: for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly.**

Saul's evil mind viewed his own actions as being right and those who were opposing him as being wrong. He called for the blessings of the Lord upon all those who supported him. He seems to have completely forgotten that he had no compassion upon anyone he even fancied was in his way. The word compassion was not really a part of Saul's vocabulary, unless the compassion was shown to him.

The Ziphites were to cooperate with Saul just as they had volunteered to do. They must find out where he was hiding. They must find out who visited him and went out from him. David had proven to be very clever in escaping Saul's clutches up to this time. He wished to leave no escape route this time.

**1 Sam. 23:23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass,**





**if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.**

The Ziphites were to carefully search out every hiding place used by David. Then they were to report to Saul. When they did so, Saul would go with them. Between them, they would find David and his men no matter where they hid; in the cities, or in the desolate regions.

**1 Sam. 23:24 And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.**

When the men of Ziph tried to lead Saul to David, they found he and his men had left Ziph and gone to Maon, another wilderness and desolate area.

Was David fleeing from Saul because he was fearful of him? When we compare this situation with others of similar nature where God aided David, it seems that David was doing his utmost to avoid doing harm to the very one who was intent on harming him. How close this thought pattern is to that which Christ commanded. We are to do good to them that despitefully use us.

**1 Sam. 23:25 Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David; wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.**

Maon appears to have been a mountainous wilderness. When David heard Saul was on his trail

he found a hiding place within a rocky cave. Saul soon arrived nearby.

**1 Sam. 23:26 And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.**

The two bands of soldiers were so close to one another that only a single mountain separated them. Saul realized that David was almost within his clutches. He commanded his men to surround David and his men and take them captive.

**1 Sam. 23:27 But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.**

Just as the men of Saul had David's men surrounded and ready to take captive, a messenger hurried up to Saul and informed him that the Philistines had invaded the land. Why did the messenger have reason to think Saul would leave his attempt to take David and his men captive and go to fight the Philistines? He had not worried about the Philistines who had attacked Keilah. David had tended to that. But now he is expected to heed the warning of a Philistine attack. It seems reasonable to assume that this latter Philistine attack was made on an area where Saul's own interests were focused.

**1 Sam. 23:28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth.**

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God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform. Just at the proper moment to protect David, the word arrived that Saul was needed elsewhere. He left and David was unharmed.

The name given to the place has been given various meanings. One is “the place of division.” Another is “a slippery place”. It may be that too much is made of the meanings of such words, especially when there is wide variance concerning the proper translation.

1 Sam. 23:29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.

David’s flight from Saul was not ended. He left Maon and moved into the caves of Engedi. The next chapter will picture one of the most pathetic scenes in all of the Bible, as David comes upon Saul in such a set of circumstances that he could have slain the King without difficulty, but refuses to do so.

Chapter 24

David's flight from King Saul continues. What a sad story this is! The true reason for Saul's pursuit of David was jealousy. The people had cried out that Saul had slain his thousands and David had slain his ten thousands. Saul saw David as a threat to his throne. This chapter pictures Saul at the complete mercy of David. David then returns good for evil when he refuses to kill the one who is trying to kill him.

1 Sam. 24:1 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.

Saul had been called away from a situation in which his men had surrounded David and his six hundred men and was ready to destroy them. The Philistines had made an attack on territory which Saul felt must be protected. He had left the forces of David to defend himself against the Philistines. Now Saul had returned and it was reported to him that David had moved to the cave country of Engedi.

1 Sam. 24:2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

This is an uneven battle. David has six hundred men. Saul chooses three thousand of the best men in Israel to go out after David. Saul has five men for every one supporting David.

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The country in which David was hiding was extremely rugged. Wild goats love this type of terrain as they jump from one rock to another. Men do not gather in such areas except as pasture land for sheep.

**1 Sam. 24:3 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.**

The sheep were often driven into some of the larger caves at night to protect them from wolves. A fence of rocks was constructed at the mouth of the cave. This protected area was called a sheepcote.

It just so happened that Saul came to a cave where David and his men had hidden. This may seem difficult to believe for those who have not seen the size of some of the caves of the world. Some are large enough to contain more than a thousand men. The caves have passageways which wind and turn. David's six hundred could have all hidden in one of such caves in the region of Engedi.

Saul is said to have entered the cave to "cover his feet." There are two possible explanation for the meaning of this phrase. He could have felt the need to answer the call of nature and have a bowel movement. Or, he could have decided to lie down under some cover and take a nap. It appears more likely to the present writer than he had chosen to lie down and sleep for a time.

**1 Sam. 24:4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem**

**good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.**

David's men were excited when they saw what had happened. Saul had placed himself in a situation where he could have been killed with little or no resistance. God had even predicted the time would come when He would deliver David's enemy into his hand. They felt this must be the fulfillment of that prediction.

David would not take the advice of his men. Instead, he went quietly to where Saul was and cut off the skirt of his robe. The reason I feel that Saul was sleeping is that it would have been almost impossible for David to have sneaked up on Saul and cut a piece off his garment if he was only in the process of relieving himself at the call of nature.

There is the possibility that both of the above suggestions were combined. Saul may have entered the cave and taken off his outer garment and cast it aside while he had a bowel movement, and then laid down for a short nap. In that case David could have accomplished the action described and cut off a piece of Saul's robe.

**1 Sam. 24:5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.**

**1 Sam. 24:6 And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.**

David's conscience cried out to him that he had



done something very wrong. He had been a cause of embarrassment to the King of the nation of Israel. We are not told what percent of the King's robe was cut off. It may have been a sizable portion. God had made it clear that He did not favor an uprising of the subjects of a king against their king. David regretted what he had done.

**1 Sam. 24:7 So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.**

David backed up his feelings by commanding his men to remain hidden and make no attempt to slay Saul. Saul was allowed to go on his way without fully realizing the degree of danger he had passed through.

One writer humorously suggested that Saul might have been quite surprised to find out his robe had turned into a "miniskirt."

**1 Sam. 24:8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.**

When Saul had left the cave, David moved out of the entrance after him and spoke to him. When David addressed Saul as "My lord the king", Saul turned around to see him. At that point David demonstrated his desire to be a dedicated subject to Saul, if he was allowed to be. He bowed deeply before Saul before continuing his words.

**1 Sam. 24:9 And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?**

David wished with all his heart that Saul had been at peace with him. He could hardly believe Saul had added the gossip of his men to his own jealousy to reach such a state of hatred toward his own son-in-law.

Surely Saul should be able to see now that he was in no danger from David. The piece of the robe was absolute proof.

**1 Sam. 24:10 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.**

Saul should have realized that God had arranged it so that the King would be completely helpless before the one whom he had been pursuing. David's men had urged him to kill the King, but he would not do so because Saul had been accepted as the King whom the people had chosen. Though Saul had not been God's choice, God had anointed him at the will of the people. David would not kill him.

**1 Sam. 24:11 Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.**

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A father is one who is responsible for the guidance and welfare of those under him. Potentates were often referred to by this word because they were responsible for the citizens of the nation over which they ruled. But in addition to this, Saul's daughter Michal had married David.

1 Sam. 24:12 The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

David was willing to let the God of heaven be the judge and jury. If God decided to punish Saul for his wicked ways, that was fine. Even if He did not do so, David would not avenge himself. We must here recall the words of the inspired apostle who wrote,

“Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. I will repay.”
(Romans 12:19)

1 Sam. 24:13 As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

The proverb David mentions is not taken from the Old Testament scriptures. Sometimes truth is spoken by wise men. An evil man will produce evil fruit. A good man will produce good fruit. David's argument was that he had not shown wickedness; therefore he was not a wicked man.

1 Sam. 24:14 After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.

David wished to know why such a powerful King would spend his time chasing after such an insignificant person as he was. It would be no more satisfying that catching up with a dead dog, or swatting a single flea. David was overdoing his point, but the point itself was absolutely right.

1 Sam. 24:15 The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

David called up God to defend his cause. God is a righteous Judge and would see that David was not harmed by Saul for deeds or thoughts of which he was not guilty. David was willing to be subject to Saul, but God was Saul's superior.

1 Sam. 24:16 And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

For the moment Saul was penitent. He asked if the voice he was hearing was truly that of David. It may be that David was hidden from his view and he could only hear his voice. However, that does not seem likely since David bowed before him after leaving the entrance of the cave.

Saul was overcome with shame. He called David "My son." The reader will recall that David spoke to Saul as his "Father." The overall position David had taken was more than Saul's emotions could bear. He wept!

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**1 Sam. 24:17 And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.**

**1 Sam. 24:18 And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.**

When Saul made an honest comparison between David and himself, he was forced to the conclusion that David was more righteous than himself. He had given David evil, even as David had given him good. Saul's statement that David was "more righteous than himself" does not quite go far enough. Saul had very little righteousness, if any. He would have killed David if he had the same opportunity David had to kill him.

**1 Sam. 24:19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.**

David had proved he did not consider Saul an enemy. A man does not allow his enemy to get away when he has the chance to destroy him. Saul actually called at this time for God to bless David.

**1 Sam. 24:20 And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.**

Saul's words here logically follow what he had just said in verse 19. The reward Saul expected for David was that David would succeed him as King of Israel.

This was in harmony with what had been spoken by Jonathan in verse 17 of the last chapter.

*1Sa 23:17 And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.*

**1 Sam. 24:21 Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.**

Saul was reduced to begging. He tried to extract a promise from David that when David became King, he would not cut off the name of Saul's family from the face of the earth. This was not uncommon at that time and place in world history. The incoming ruler would gather all of the previous ruler's male descendants and murder them.

**1 Sam. 24:22 And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.**

David promised what Saul had asked. Later David proved true to his word when he showed warmth and kindness to Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson through Jonathan. (See 2 Samuel 9.)



## Chapter 25

In chapter twenty-five we have the death of Samuel, David's request of help from Nabal and the resulting denial. Abigail's decision to help David, Nabal's death and David's marriage to Abigail.

**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.**

Samuel was the last of the judges and was the leader in the school of the prophets. He has less faults mentioned than any of the other main figures of the Bible, other than Jesus Christ. Actually he was a more important person than Saul who was the King of Israel at the time of Samuel's death. Saul can more properly be thought of as a general of the military, whereas Samuel was the spiritual leader.

It was a sad day for the nation when they lost this great man. He was mourned by the vast majority of the population. It is said that he was buried in his house. This probably means no more than that he was buried in the yard near his house.

Following Samuel's death, David chose to move farther away from Saul's headquarters. This may have been an attempt on David's part to discourage attacks upon him and his men by Saul. Samuel would have discouraged Saul in any attacks upon David.

David went to the wilderness of Paran. It is also said in the next verse that he went to Maon. Since the two are so close together geographically, this difference

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is not really a problem. The main fact to remember is that the territory to which David and his men went was unpopulated pasture land.

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.

David and his men found themselves in an area where a very rich man had thousands of sheep and goats. Twice a year the sheep were sheared. David arrived there at a time when the sheep were being sheared at Mount Carmel. This is not the same place as the Mount Carmel near the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. As the text speaks of this man as being very great, it does not imply that he was of noble character. It is telling of his great riches.

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.

The man's name was Nabal. This is the same word as is translated "fool" in Proverbs 14:1. Surely no parent would deliberately name a son "fool." It is more likely that this was a nickname he was known by because of his wicked character. Although Nabal was a descendant of Caleb, he did not resemble Caleb in his personality.

Nabal had married a woman named "Abigail" who was of just the opposite nature. She was both attractive

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and wise. We wonder why such a woman would have married such a despicable man. One possibility is that she was given to Nabal by her parents who wanted her to marry wealth. She would certainly not have been the first to fall into such a trap.

**1 Sam. 25:4 And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.**

Sheep shearing time was very special. Some of the readers will recall threshing time on the farms in their neighborhood. Several farmers would gather at one farm and share the labor. Their wives would get together in the house and prepare a fine meal. Everyone would have a great time.

It was like that at sheep shearing time in the wilderness of Paran. Not only did those who had plenty enjoy themselves, they looked with favor upon the less fortunate and shared the blessing with them.

Someone informed David that Nabal was shearing sheep. He felt that this was a perfect time to make an appeal to the rich man.

**1 Sam. 25:5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:**

David picked out ten of his six hundred men and told them to go to the location where the shearing was taking place. They were to greet Nabal and were to greet him in David's name.

**1 Sam. 25:6 And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and**

**peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.**

The ten young men were to remind Nabal that he was living in luxury. Of course this implied that he had enough that he could share with others and suffer no shortage in his own comforts.

The men were to pronounce a blessing upon Nabal and upon all those who were a part of his household, as well as his possessions. The pronouncement of peace was a way of saying David desired that Nabal's good fortune not be disturbed, but continue in the future.

**1 Sam. 25:7 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.**

David's young men were to call upon Nabal to remember that his six hundred men had done nothing to hurt either Nabal's shepherds, or the sheep and goats which they tended. This was a mark of respect for another man's prosperity.

**1 Sam. 25:8 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.**

If Nabal would ask his own young men, he would find them backing up what he had said. They would witness that David and his men had done them no harm. Verse sixteen will tell us that David and his men  
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went much farther. They had acted as a protective wall for Nabal's shepherds against roving bands of thieves and robbers who otherwise might well have done great damage to his livestock. Now David was asking Nabal to return the favor by sharing some of his abundance with him and his men.

David was not asking for the best Nabal had. But, he did expect that Nabal would act generously. Let us point out that this was not a "protection scheme". Although Nabal had not requested the arrangement, he had certainly profited by it to a far greater extent than David was now politely asking him to offer in return. The thieves and robbers were not working in harmony with David. They would have bitterly resented David's interference.

1 Sam. 25:9 And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

David's young men relayed all the words of David to Nabal. They made certain that Nabal understood and that they were speaking in David's name. Then they paused and waited for Nabal to answer the request.

1 Sam. 25:10 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.

Nabal was indignant. Just who was David anyway? He spoke as if he was discussing a complete unknown. We know better. He even knew David's father was Jesse. Nabal, along with a vast number of persons in that area knew of David and his feud with Saul.

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Nabal then downgraded David and his men even further. He claimed David was not only insignificant. He was leading a band of men who had been servants and who had broken loose from their master.

**1 Sam. 25:11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?**

Nabal made it perfectly clear that he was not about to part with any of his wealth just to donate it to those who were no more than fleas in his sight. Nabal had made a terrible mistake. He would find out just how serious it was just a little later.

**1 Sam. 25:12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.**

**1 Sam. 25:13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.**

When David's ten young men returned to him and told him the words of Nabal, David was furious. He commanded four hundred of his men to arm themselves with their swords and follow him. The other two hundred were to remain with their possessions to guard them. Nabal would have been absolutely helpless against a force of four hundred.

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1 Sam. 25:14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.

One of Nabal's young men realized that Abigail, Nabal's capable wife, would not have acted as Nabal had. He hurried to Abigail and informed her of how her wicked husband had treated David's men. This young man who went to Abigail must have known Abigail had the wisdom to reduce the danger into which Nabal had plunged his household.

1 Sam. 25:15 But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:

1 Sam. 25:16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

The young man of Nabal's household went on to say that Nabal had no right to act and speak as he did. David and his men had not at any time done any damage to them. On the contrary, they had protected them against robbers both in the daytime and during the night. Nabal owed David much.

1 Sam. 25:17 Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.

The young man urged Abigail to decide what needed to be done. If something was not done, the entire household could be wiped out. He was of the opinion that Nabal was completely unreliable. He called Nabal a son of Belial. The word "Belial" means "stupid and worthless." That was a pretty plain term for a servant to use in discussing his own master. Nevertheless, it was exactly right.

1 Sam. 25:18 Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.

Abigail hurried to remedy the situation as rapidly as possible. She did not even bother to consult her husband Nabal before she commanded the servants to gather some food for David and his men. She assembled enough food to provide a meal for all six hundred of David's men. Two hundred loaves would have meant one third of a loaf for each of the men. Five dressed sheep would be divided among the six hundred. This was not enough to give them indigestion. There was also parched corn, clusters of raisins and cakes of figs. These were loaded upon asses and made ready to deliver the food to David.

1 Sam. 25:19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

Abigail then told her servants to go on ahead of her and she would follow them. The food was the first thing David would see.

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**1 Sam. 25:20** And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.

David came down from an elevation in one direction. Abigail and her group descended from another hill. Abigail's group was hidden by the hill until she came close to David's onrushing young army.

**1 Sam. 25:21** Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

David was either talking to himself, or expressing his anger to his men as they came upon each other. His anger was fed by the memory that he had neither taken any of Nabal's livestock, or damaged any of his men. David had done Nabal good and Nabal had returned evil for good.

The Bible recommends just the opposite. The faithful disciple of Christ is to return good for evil. David knew that was the proper attitude, just as all righteous persons know it.

**1 Sam. 25:22** So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

David was so filled with wrath that he used some very vivid language in telling what he was about to do to Nabal and his men. He did not intend to leave

a single man alive until the next day. Men and dogs urinate standing. Women do not.

**1 Sam. 25:23 And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,**

Abigail and David saw each other at about the same time. The hill had hidden Abigail until they came close together. As soon as David came into view, she dismounted from the ass she was riding and stopped in front of him. She bowed deeply, in the manner we see those of the same region still doing today. They kneel and place their forehead on the ground.

**1 Sam. 25:24 And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.**

Abigail begged David to deal with her instead of her husband. Would he please allow her to let him know her view of what had happened?

**1 Sam. 25:25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.**

She readily admitted that her husband was a worthless man. His name was folly, and his actions were just as foolish as his name. He had plunged his  
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household into an impossible situation.

Abigail declared that she had not even known the young men of David had made the request for food. Her statement indicated that if she had known about it, she would have acted quite differently than did her husband. She indicated her respect for David by using the word “lord” three times in a row.

1 Sam. 25:26 Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

Abigail told David that thus far the LORD had kept David from taking matters into his own hands and shedding the blood of his enemies. She prayed that David would allow God to handle the punishment of Nabal and of any other of his enemies

1 Sam. 25:27 And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

Abigail’s speech was a relatively long one for a woman to make and have recorded in the Holy scriptures. She went on to say she had tried to remedy the problem by bringing what David had requested of her husband. If it pleased David, she would like for him to accept the food and give it to his men.

1 Sam. 25:28 I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.

Abigail was not guilty of the trespass which had been visited upon David. She is humbling herself in his presence in the hope that he will be calmed and persuaded to turn back from his intentions to kill every male in the household of Nabal.

Abigail knew David had been fighting on the Lord's side, and that the Lord had been with him. He had protected David for years and she prayed that His protection would continue in the future.

1 Sam. 25:29 Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.

The man who had arisen to pursue David was Saul. Yet Abigail was persuaded that David's life would be wrapped up in the protective arms of the God who gives life and sustains it.

Do not miss the contrast between what Abigail says about those whom God protects and those who are His enemies. His faithful followers are held in His embrace and their life is secure. His enemies are like stones hurled from a sling and he casts them far away from Him. David knew all about slings. He had used one to slay Goliath.



1 Sam. 25:30 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

Samuel had predicted that some day David would be the “prince” of Israel. That prediction would come to pass and David would become the ruler. God would not ignore His promise.

1 Sam. 25:31 That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

What a powerful statement we see in this verse! Abigail is warning David that if he moves forward in taking personal revenge upon the household of Nabal, he will look back later and be heartsick over the shedding of innocent blood. David needed to be patient and wait for Jehovah to deal out the correct punishment.

When that had occurred, she hoped that David would remember this humble handmaid. Did she anticipate David not being able to forget her beauty and upright character and think about possible future marriage? Or was she only saying not to forget what she had said to him and let God do the avenging rather than David?

1 Sam. 25:32 And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:

1 Sam. 25:33 And blessed be thy advice, and
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**blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.**

Her plea was highly successful. David's wrath was abated and he thanked God for sending Abigail to advise him. He asked a blessing on her advice and promised that he would follow it and allow God to tend to the punishment of Nabal.

**1 Sam. 25:34 For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.**

Just as God had sent Abigail to keep David from killing this gracious woman and her friends, David would turn from his intention to kill every man in Nabal's company.

**1 Sam. 25:35 So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.**

David took the food which Abigail had brought for his men and told her to return to her house in peace. He would not go against her wishes. The household of Nabal was safe as far as his own vengeance was concerned. When he said he had accepted her person, he was telling her he had been much impressed with her behavior and her words.



**1 Sam. 25:36 And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.**

Abigail did as David requested and returned to her house. When she arrived she found her husband Nabal in the midst of a drunken feast. He was light hearted and very likely was singing the songs of drunkards.

She decided not to mention what she had done until the next morning when he had sobered up. Drunks can change moods like the pendulum of a clock. If she had told him in his drunken state, he might have murdered her on the spot.

**1 Sam. 25:37 But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.**

She did tell him the next morning. The news was more than he could handle. That jolly heart of the evening before died and he was paralyzed. Commentators suggest several possible scenarios. One possibility is that he had a heart attack which left him unable to move. Another is that he went into a coma and did not recover.

**1 Sam. 25:38 And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.**

The attack was fatal. Ten days after he became sick, he died. God is careful to tell us that it was He who killed Nabal. It was no natural event. David would not

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suffer the grief of a guilty conscience for taking things into his own hands.

1 Sam. 25:39 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.

David thanked God for having taken Nabal's punishment under His own control.

We do not know just how much time passed between the death of Nabal and David's proposal of marriage. Considering the impression she had made on him, he may have taken quick action. This was the kind of woman most men would be proud to call their wife.

1 Sam. 25:40 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.

1Sa 25:41 And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

Abigail had asked David to remember her after the Lord dealt with the punishment of Nabal. David did not forget.

May I inject a personal note here? I met my wife while singing for patients at a tuberculosis hospital. She went home and told her sister she had met the man she was going to marry. She wanted to make certain I did
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not forget her so she sent a box of home made fudge candy to my dormitory room the next day. It worked. I did not forget her!

**1 Sam. 25:42 And Abigail hasted, and arose and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.**

Abigail knew this was a very special man. She went to David riding on an ass and surrounded by five maidservants. The two were married.

**1 Sam. 25:43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives.**

It is unfortunate that we must close our discussion of this present chapter by a consideration of polygamy. David had by this time been married to at least three wives. He had married Michal, the daughter of Saul. He now married Abigail. But apparently before this marriage to Abigail, he had married Ahinoam. His wives are mentioned in several scriptures. Each time Ahinoam is mentioned before Abigail. Ahinoam was the mother of Ammon who gave rise to the Ammonites.

**1 Sam. 25:44 But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which was of Gallim.**

Though David had been married to Michal, he was deprived of her as a wife when Saul gave her to another man named Phalti, or Phaltiel. Later, David took another man's wife. Bathsheeba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite when David saw her bathing and had

Uriah killed in order to possess his wife.

The Lord was quite right when he made one woman for the first man and said from the beginning it was not so that a man could marry multiple wives. He did not destroy men for doing so, but he did let men know he was opposed to it. Over and over again the scriptures point out the miseries which arise when wives compete for a husband's attention. (See Met. 19:8-9.)

*Mat 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.*

*Mat 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*



## Chapter 26

For a second time, David demonstrates his unwillingness to kill Saul whom he describes as the “Lord’s anointed.” The similarities between the account given in this chapter and the one given in chapter twenty-four have caused some Bible students to conclude that the two accounts are varying records of the same series of events. This is very doubtful. The differences in the two accounts outweigh the similarities. The present writer is convinced that they refer to two completely separate times and places.

**1 Sam. 26:1 And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?**

The Ziphites were in support of Saul’s efforts to destroy David. They were the ones who reported his location to Saul in chapter twenty-four. Now they do the same. We do not know the reason for their choice of action. They informed Saul as to the very specific site where David and his men might be found.

**1 Sam. 26:2 Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.**

Saul left his headquarters in Gibeah and set out with three thousand choice soldiers from his army. This was the same number as he had taken the previous time. This does not mean the two events were the same. It seems that Saul had three thousand chosen men whom

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he could call upon at any time to accompany him in conflict.

1 Sam. 26:3 And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

Saul went to the location where the Ziphites had reported the presence of David and his men. This could have been a mistake. Saul was not acquainted with the terrain of the wilderness. David, having spent much time there evading Saul, had a very good knowledge of it. Saul had a much larger force than did David, but David had the advantage of familiarity with the countryside.

1 Sam. 26:4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed.

Saul was not the only one to have spies. David sent out his own spies who came back the informed him Saul had truly sought him out again.

1 Sam. 26:5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

It was probably late in the evening when David came to the place where Saul and his men had pitched camp. He could see the arrangement of the camp. Saul was located in the midst of his forces, along with Abner, the captain of his men. The word which is translated
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as “trench” can mean something which is round. We shall assume that this then refers to the men who are arranged in a circle around Saul and Abner. It was common practice in Arab countries to place their officers and dignitaries in the center of their forces for the sake of protecting them.

**1 Sam. 26:6 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.**

David invited two of his men to go down with him to the camp of Saul. Ahimelech is not mentioned after this while it is said that Abishai said he would go with David. Ahimelechs reasons for not accepting David’s invitation are not given to us.

**1 Sam. 26:7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.**

It was dark by the time David and Abishai arrived at the camp of Saul. Saul had gone to sleep and had stuck his spear into the ground near his pillow. Abner was nearby.

**1 Sam. 26:8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.**

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Abishai suggested that God had arranged these things in such a way as to invite David to kill Saul. David would not even have to do the deed himself; he could give Abishai permission and with one stroke of the same spear Saul had stuck into the ground, Abishai would pin him to the earth. He would not need a second try.

1 Sam. 26:9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?

The Bible teaches respect for those in authority, even when one does not agree with their decisions. David had no intention of giving Abishai permission to slay the King of Israel. When God had allowed Saul to be anointed as King, the man who did him damage would be guilty before the Lord.

1 Sam. 26:10 David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

David added that just as surely as the Lord exists, he would leave it in the Lord's hands to deal with Saul. David knew he would succeed Saul. He would let Jehovah determine how the succession was to take place. It might be that Saul would die of some disorder sent upon him by God. It might be that he would die of old age. It might be that he would be killed in battle. But, David would not kill God's anointed King.

1 Sam. 26:11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S
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**anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.**

What were they to do, if they did not kill Saul? David commanded Abishai to take both the spear and the container of water Saul had with him. The spear represented power. The water represented life. David was implying that Saul had no control over either his power or his existence.

**1 Sam. 26:12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them.**

How was it that David and Abishai were able to pass through the men surrounding Saul without being seen or heard by some of his men. Under normal conditions one or more of Saul's men would have been disturbed, or would have been lying awake and would have called out an alarm.

The reason was that God had caused all of Saul's men to fall into a very deep sleep. The word used for sleep here is the same as the one used of Adam's condition when a rib was taken from his side to create Eve. It is not surprising that the men did not notice the coming of David and Abishai.

**1 Sam. 26:13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space being between them:**

**1 Sam. 26:14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest**

**thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king?**

After having taken the spear and the water container, David crossed over the valley to a hill in the distance. He then called out to Abner and waited for a response. Abner did respond and wanted to know who wished to speak to Saul. David had directed his call to Abner, but since Abner was the next in command, he assumed David wished to speak to the King.

**1 Sam. 26:15 And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.**

David then began to taunt Abner with sharp sarcasm. Abner was reputed to be a great soldier. He was thought to be the greatest in Israel. Why then had he not offered any resistance when someone came into the King's very presence and could have easily slain him?

**1 Sam. 26:16 This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD'S anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.**

Abner had been so careless that he deserved to die for his laxity. Abner was invited to look and see where the King's spear and his container of water were. Both of these items had been by his side. Now they were in the hands of David.

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1 Sam. 26:17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.

The deep sleep was wearing off. Abner had heard David. Now Saul heard him. Saul recognized the sound of the voice. Strangely, Saul referred to David as his son. David had been his son-in-law when he was married to Saul's daughter Michal. Since then Saul had given Michal to another man. It sounds as if Saul had come to the realization that he needed to pay David a little respect.

David replied to Saul that it was truly his voice the King had heard. He had some questions he wished to ask the King, and also some comments he wanted to add.

1 Sam. 26:18 And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand?

First, he asked why Saul was so insistent on searching him out for injury. He knew of no reason why this should be. Had he mistreated Saul, if so what was it that he had done. He would see that all was made right.

1 Sam. 26:19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.

If God had sent Saul to punish David for some sin, David was willing to make an offering to let God and Saul know he was sorry. If there were men who had stirred up Saul's wrath toward David, those men deserved to be placed under a curse. They had made it necessary for David to leave his own people who worshipped Jehovah and move out into the presence of others who served idols, or false gods.

The usual case was that when one associated himself or herself with a given people, he agreed to worship the god, or gods with that people worshipped.

1 Sam. 26:20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

David wondered what a strange thing it was that a man such as the King of Israel would lower himself to spend time in hunting out someone as powerless as himself. It was as if a man were to pit himself against a flea, or as if he were to go hunting for partridges. Saul surely had more important things to do.

1 Sam. 26:21 Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

Saul at least pretended to have tears in his eyes. He admitted he had seriously missed the mark. He promised to change his ways and do David no more harm. A fool is one who makes unwise decisions. Saul

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admitted such folly. David had valued his soul and preserved his life.

**1 Sam. 26:22 And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.**

David held out the King's spear and called for one of Saul's men to come and get it. He was willing to forgive and forget. He was happy that Saul had promised no further harm.

**1 Sam. 26:23 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.**

David was convinced that the Lord would see every man rewarded and punished in such degree as that man had lived in obedience or disobedience. It was not up to David to take vengeance. God would see that such matters were dealt with as they should be.

**1 Sam. 26:24 And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.**

Just as David had valued the life of Saul and had not destroyed it, David prayed that his own life would be valued by the Lord and would be brought into a more comfortable condition.

David did not accept Saul's offer to return into his presence. He had learned his lesson. Saul might even

be sincere in his offer and his promise. That did not mean the King's emotions would remain the same in the days to come as they were at the time.

**1 Sam. 26:25 Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.**

Saul admitted David had a great future ahead of him. David would accomplish even finer things than he had done in the past. His life would be safe in the protecting hand of God and would continue.

The two men parted ways, with Saul returning to his headquarters in Gibeah and David going in his own direction. The two men did not meet again. Saul was killed in a battle with the Philistines only a short time after this.





## *Chapter 27*

There are but two main events recorded in chapter twenty-seven. David left Israel and moved his men and their families into Philistine territory. He then began to make raids on the enemies of Israel in the territory of the tribe of Judah.

**1 Sam. 27:1 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.**

David made a serious mental error here. He concluded that as long as he remained in Israel, Saul would continue to search him out until he finally succeeded in destroying him. He should have had more faith. God had kept him alive to that point. He would have done the same in the future. The move into the Philistine area had far more serious consequences than he anticipated.

**1 Sam. 27:2 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.**

David took his men and moved them to the city of Gath where Achish was the ruler.

**1 Sam. 27:3 And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his**

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household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife.

The reader may wonder why David and his followers were received among the Philistines this time, when David had been considered an enemy when he fled from Saul a previous time. If we add the women and children to the six hundred men, the total group would have numbered over one thousand persons. This would seem to be enough to give the Philistines room for thought, and perhaps action.

There is a difference. This time David was known by the Philistines to be running from Saul with this large group of followers. King Achish had reason to believe David would add power to his own position. If David was an enemy to Saul, he might make a very good ally to the Philistines.

We find David's two wives mentioned. Ahinoam is listed first and Abigail second. This leads us to think He was already married to Ahinoam at the time he married Abigail.

1 Sam. 27:4 And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.

When Saul discovered that David and his men had moved to Gath, he was willing to let him alone. He did not care to follow him into the land controlled by the Philistines.

1 Sam. 27:5 And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give

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**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?**

It is not known just how long David stayed in the area of Gath. He did decide it would be better for him to move away from the royal city. He asked Achish if he could be given a place in the country, distant from Gath. He no doubt realized there was a strong possibility that King Achish might become wary of him just as Saul had.

Also, David would have had greater freedom to worship Jehovah without risking Achish taking offense toward him and his men.

**1 Sam. 27:6 Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.**

King Achish may have accepted David's request without objection because he was already beginning to wonder if he had made a mistake. At any rate, he gave David and his men the town of Ziklag. Ziklag was actually in land which had been given to Israel at the time they entered into Canaan. But they had never conquered it and driven out the inhabitants as God had commanded them.

After this time Ziklag became subject to the kings of Israel and Judah until the time of writing of this book of I Samuel. Some think this indicates a late date for the writing of the book. Others debate this point in that we do not know the exact meaning of the words "unto this day."

**1 Sam. 27:7 And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.**

This seems to mean that David and his men lived in the vicinity of Ziklag for one year and four months before the events described next. This would allow time for Achish to decide he was not a disturbing factor.

**1 Sam. 27:8 And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.**

After a time David and his men invaded land which was promised to the Israelites when they entered the land of Canaan. This land had been held by the people listed in verse eight. David saw this as a time when the conquest of the land could continue. The Amalekites, Gezrites and Geshurites were all closely related, even though the Amalekites are far more often mentioned.

**1 Sam. 27:9 And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish.**

David may well have thought he was keeping the commandment of Jehovah when He placed a complete ban on the nations of Canaan and told Israel to destroy every soul in the land. Saul had failed to kill all when he saved King Agag. God was displeased with his disobedience. David intended to obey the command and  
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obliterate the inhabitants.

David killed everyone, man, woman and child. Then he and his men took spoils for their own use. (Compare Exodus 33:55-56.)

Num 33:55 But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.

Num 33:56 Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them.

1 Sam. 27:10 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.

After visiting destruction upon the Amalekites, etc., David reported to Achish. He was still trying to maintain friendly relations with the King and prevent hostilities with the Philistines.

When Achish asked David which direction he had taken that day, David lied to him and said he had invaded Judah and attacked the inhabitants. He had invaded the land of the tribe of Judah, but he had not attacked Israelites. He had destroyed those who hated Israelites. One deception leads to another. David was sinking deeper and deeper into the Devil's sinkholes.

1 Sam. 27:11 And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and

so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.

David had made certain that the truth of what had happened would not get back to Achish. The destruction of every soul in the ambush guaranteed that no one could carry the word back to Achish.

1 Sam. 27:12 And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

Achish believed David completely. He came to a very logical conclusion if we assume David was being truthful. Surely he would have made his own people enemies if he had done to them what he had done to the Amalekites, Geshurites and Gezrites. By making Israel his enemy he would have placed himself in a condition where he would be bound to Achish far into the future.

We must add a note here. Much of what David did, as reported in this present chapter cannot be excused. Deception is wrong. Why then did the Lord call David a “man after mine own heart?” The answer is that David was like the vast majority of mankind. He had times of weakness. This was one of those times. When David’s entire life is viewed, rather than such days as we read of here and in his adultery with Bathsheba, the positive times far outweigh the negative ones. If David fell in times of trial, we must be ultra cautious that we maintain a high level of faith to protect us in such cases.



Chapter 28

In this chapter Saul is frightened by the sight of the Philistine forces which were obviously ready to move into Israel. Since God had removed His support from Saul, he went to the witch of Endor to try to make contact with Samuel and obtain advice from the Lord through the prophet. The effort proved to be fruitless. He was informed that he was to die in battle.

1 Sam. 28:1 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.

If Israel had dealt with the Philistines as God commanded back when they entered Canaan, the present problem would not have arisen. The Philistines had been perpetual enemies from that time onward. Sometimes the Israelites attacked the Philistines. Other times the Philistines attacked Israel. This time the Philistines had taken the initiative. They knew David and his men had departed from Saul and had been living in Ziklag which was controlled by King Achish. This would be an opportune time to enter into battle with them.

Achish considered David to be his ally and thus called upon him to join forces with him. There was every reason for Achish to think David would agree with his request.

1 Sam. 28:2 And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

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David was very careful not to commit himself to Achish. His statement that Achish should know what his servant could do was double edged. It could mean that Achish would find out how much David and his men would do *to* Israel. Or, it could mean Achish would find out how much David would do *for* Israel.

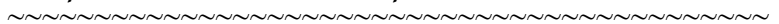
Achish believed David had been making raids into the territory of Judah and doing damage to the Israelites there. This had not been the case. David had been damaging the Amalekites and aiding Israel rather than harming them. Since Achish took David's statement as a promise to support the Philistine troops, Achish promised to make David his own bodyguard. David would protect his own head.

**1 Sam. 28:3 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.**

Now God makes certain we understand Samuel was dead, and had been dead for a mourning period. He had been buried in the city where he lived in his latter days.

A second fact God wishes for the reader to know was Saul's strong efforts to remove all who claimed to be able to contact the dead from Israel. He had been quite successful, but not completely. The effort was in complete harmony with God's instructions. (See Deut. 18:9-12.)

*Deu 18:9 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.*





*Deu 18:10 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.*

*Deu 18:11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.*

*Deu 18:12 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.*

**1 Sam. 28:4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.**

The two armies had gathered within sight of one another. Saul and his forces were assembled on Mount Gilboa. Saul could get a clear view of the enemy.

**1 Sam. 28:5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.**

Saul's heart nearly failed him when he saw the strength of the opposing forces. He knew he was in trouble if he could not depend upon the assistance of Jehovah.

**1 Sam. 28:6 And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.**

Saul tried every method he knew to make contact with the Lord. None of these methods was successful.

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Sometimes God had revealed his advice in dreams, but Saul had apparently prayed that he might have such a dream and had no response. Sometimes God had offered information through the Urim and Thummim through the priesthood. Saul had killed a large number of priests and Abiathar, the one who might have helped him, had left to be with David. Sometimes the prophets had revealed information, but Samuel was dead.

Things looked hopeless with respect to making contact with Jehovah through the usual methods. What was Saul to do? Let us add here that this followed the pattern of many even to the present day. God is insulted and blasphemed in times of well being and prosperity. Then, when disaster strikes, the same persons expect God to be at hand to answer their prayers. How foolish!

1 Sam. 28:7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

Saul came upon another plan. He felt certain there were still some living in the land who claimed to have contact with familiar spirits. This might be a way in which he could gain superhuman help.

He commanded that his servants find a woman who made such claims that he might use her abilities. He was told there was a woman such as he was seeking. She lived at Endor. It just so happens that in order to get to Endor, Saul would have to bypass some of the Philistine soldiers to get there.

1 Sam. 28:8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men
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**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.**

Since those who claimed to have familiar spirits had been threatened with death, Saul found it necessary to disguise himself and to avoid being discovered by the Philistines, he waited until night to make the journey. Also, the woman may well have plied her trade in the wee hours of the night.

**1 Sam. 28:9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?**

Though the woman did not recognize Saul at this point, she was concerned about Saul hearing about her and perhaps killing her or driving her out of the land. How was she to know these who had come were not trying to set a trap and then take her life?

**1 Sam. 28:10 And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.**

Saul replied that she could be absolutely certain nothing would happen to her for doing as they had asked. He set this promise upon an oath which depended on the very existence of the Living God. This is queer. With as little respect as he had shown for the will of God in recent days, he should have known such an oath

would hardly be taken seriously by the Lord.

**1 Sam. 28:11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.**

The woman was convinced she was safe. She asked whom the men wished for her to bring up. The answer was that she should bring up the Prophet Samuel. Samuel was dead, and everyone knew it. They were asking her to bring Samuel up from the dead. The assumption was that since the dead were buried down in the ground, they must be caused to come up from the ground.

**1 Sam. 28:12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.**

Samuel appeared. The woman was quite terrified. She cried out as soon as she saw Samuel that she had been deceived and the one who had asked her to bring up Samuel was Saul himself.

Why was she so shocked? This writer believes it was because she had been in the habit of using trickery in the past that she realized this was something far different than her previous experiences. It is likely that she had either deceived those who came to her by muttering and peeping and telling them she had made contact with a familiar spirit, when she had not. Or perhaps she had succeeded in making contact with evil spirits from the demonic realm and she knew this was a good man.

**1 Sam. 28:13 And the king said unto her, Be**  
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not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

Saul assured her that even though she had correctly identified him, she was in no danger of harm from him. He wanted to know what she saw. He apparently did not see the spirit of Samuel as she had.

She answered that she had seen “gods” arising from the earth. It seems that the plural is out of place here. She had seen Samuel. There is no evidence she saw any other spirit. If Samuel appeared in spirit form how could she see him? This is not explained. We do accept the fact that spirits could take on visible characteristics at times.

1 Sam. 28:14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

Saul wished to know what form she had seen. Her reply was that it was that of an old man dressed in a mantle. This was an apt description of Samuel. Saul knew it was Samuel. He bowed humbly before Samuel.

1 Sam. 28:15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I

have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

The reader will note that this verse says “Samuel” spoke to Saul. This was not some apparition. It was Samuel. Did the woman actually have the power to bring Samuel from his place in Sheol to appear in the land of the living? No, but God did. It was through the direct command of the Lord that Samuel appeared. That is why the woman was so shocked when she saw him. It was not her that brought him up. It was the Lord.

Samuel asked Saul why he had disturbed him to bring him back. This seems to be evidence that the righteous do find a place of peace after death, even though all the joy of heaven will only be enjoyed after the judgment.

Saul answered Samuel that the Philistines had declared war on him and God had forsaken him. He had called Samuel because this was a last hope for help. Would Samuel tell him what he should do?

1 Sam. 28:16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

Samuel’s answer to Saul was far from comforting. If Jehovah had forsaken Saul, why had he come to Samuel? Did he not know Samuel acted only under the direction of the Almighty? Saul had, by his behavior, made God his enemy instead of his ally.

1 Sam. 28:17 And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David:



The use of the word “him” in this verse does not mean Samuel was speaking to the woman. He was only visualizing himself, God and Saul. God had made it known by him before this that would happen. The kingdom was no longer Saul’s. God had torn it from Saul and it now belonged to David.

1 Sam. 28:18 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.

Samuel was still speaking to Saul. Because Saul had not killed all of the Amalekites, but had kept King Agag alive, he had brought the present situation into being. That was why Saul was in such serious trouble.

1 Sam. 28:19 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.

The bad news for Saul continued. On the following day Israel would be defeated by the Philistines. Saul and his sons would be with Samuel and Israel would be taken by Achish and his forces.

Samuel does not mean Saul and his sons would be in a place of peace and comfort such as Samuel had been in when disturbed. He only meant that They would be removed from the land of the living and taken to be with the dead.

1 Sam. 28:20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the

words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

Saul was overcome when he heard of the upcoming disaster. He had not eaten for a day and a night. Now he received the news that he was to die the next day. He fell flat on the ground, still conscious but paralyzed by fear.

1 Sam. 28:21 And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.

The woman had overcome her shock by this time and offered her help. She reminded Saul that she had placed her life in his hands and had done what he had asked. He had promised she would not be harmed. She expected him to keep his promise.

1 Sam. 28:22 Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.

Since she had hearkened to Saul, she urged him to hearken to her. She wished to feed him and send him on his way strengthened. This was probably as much a defense against any anger he might display, in hope that her own life would be safe.



1 Sam. 28:23 But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

Saul at first refused to eat. But, when the woman and the men who were with him continued to urge him, he was finally persuaded to do so.

1 Sam. 28:24 And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof:

The hot weather of that portion of the world would cause the quick decay of meat. It was common for the dwellers there to keep fat young animals such as lambs, calves and kids, and to kill them and prepare them quickly for those whom they wished to honor. The woman used unleavened bread in that time is required to allow the bread to rise when leavened.

1 Sam. 28:25 And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

She fed Saul and his servants, after which they disappeared in the darkness. Would they have slept that night. It is highly doubtful!

Chapter 29

David had made a very serious error in leaving Israel to escape the persecution of Saul, and allying himself with the Philistines under King Achish. We now see him facing what appeared to be an impossible decision. The armies of the two peoples are ready to enter mortal combat. Would he remain loyal to Achish, or would he turn back and fight against those who had befriended him?

Without the providential guidance of Jehovah, David would have been at a complete loss to find a satisfactory solution. Fortunately, God was still with him.

1 Sam. 29:1 Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel.

There had been some movement of the two forces when we compare their locations given in this instance with those given in chapter twenty-eight. Some of the commentators claim this chapter should precede the other.

The valley of Jezreel is mentioned in the book of Revelation as the site of the battle of Armageddon. The book of Revelation is filled with types and figures. The reader must not take some of the accounts there too literally.

The important point in the present verse is that Israel had pitched their camp where they had access to an abundant supply of water.

1 Sam. 29:2 And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but

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**David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish.**

There were five major cities of the Philistines, ruled by five different lords. These lords, along with David and his men were arranging themselves for their positions in the upcoming conflict. The Philistines were placed in the forefront, while David and his men were positioned in the rear of the Philistine force.

**1 Sam. 29:3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?**

The princes, or lords of the Philistines were intensely concerned that these Hebrews, under David, were about to enter the battle on their side. As we shall see in a moment, they had several good reasons for their concern.

Achish has been called the King of the Philistines, but it seems he did not have as much power over the other lords as some kings have over their highest ranked generals. Achish had to defend himself for inviting David to enter the combat on the Philistine side. He contended that he had observed David for more than a year and had seen no reason to distrust him.

It had been just the opposite. David had reported to Achish regularly and had honored him with spoils taken in his raids on the Amalekites, though Achish did not know the source of the spoils and thought David

had been attacking the nation of Israel from which he had fled.

**1 Sam. 29:4 And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?**

The lords of the Philistines were not about to back down in their demand that David and his men had no place in their ranks during the coming confrontation. They insisted that Achish sent David and his men back to Ziklag.

They were convinced that David might very well do just what had happened before when some of the Israelites had entered battle on their side and then turned against them at a critical time. (See chapter 14, verse 21.)

*1Sa 14:21 Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.*

*1Sa 14:22 Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle.*

*1Sa 14:23 So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Bethaven.*

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1 Sam. 29:5 Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

Not only was there a danger that David and his men might turn against the Philistines to get back into the good graces of Saul; they knew David was the one who had killed Goliath and the people had sung a song about Saul killing his thousand and David killing his tens of thousands. They were applying perfectly good logic in wishing to have him sent back to Ziklag.

1 Sam. 29:6 Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not.

Achish was very reluctant to dismiss David. He called David to him and explained that it was not his fault the decision had been made. He had found no reason at all in his relationships with David to complain about his actions.

1 Sam. 29:7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.

However, in spite of his own objections, the pressure exerted upon him by the other lords was too heavy to resist. He was outvoted. He ordered David to depart peacefully in order that there might be harmony in the Philistine camp.

1 Sam. 29:8 And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

David made objection. He claimed he had done nothing all during the time he had been with the Philistines which would warrant sending him away. He insisted that he wanted to fight on the side of Achish.

Most students of the Word of God doubt David's sincerity in the stand he presented here. They believe he breathed a sigh of deep relief within his heart that he was not going to be forced to fight on either side. His statement could be understood in two ways, depending on whether the king he was speaking of was Achish, or was Jehovah.

1 Sam. 29:9 And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

Achish repeated that as far as he was personally concerned David was innocent of any disloyalty. Nevertheless, David must leave for Ziklag. The other lords would not have it any other way.

This is an illustration of the care God uses in protecting those who struggle to live in accord with His will. Yes, it is true that David had shown a lack of faith in fleeing from Saul and uniting himself with the Philistines. But God was able to see the good which David had done, and would do, in His service. Thus,

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the escape route was provided for the future ruler of Israel to evade a decision which would have hindered him in future service.

**1 Sam. 29:10 Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.**

David was commanded to gather his men and leave early in the morning, as soon as there was sufficient light to do so. It was well that he did so. He would arrive back in Ziklag just in time to defend his people there from an attack by the Amalekites.

**1 Sam. 29:11 So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.**

David and his men separated themselves from the army of Achish and the other lords of the Philistines to move back to Ziklag. The Philistines moved in the opposite direction to meet Saul and his men in the upcoming battle.

## *Chapter 30*

David and his men had been dismissed from the Philistine forces and told to go back to Ziklag. The Philistines had been fearful that they might turn against them in the battle against Saul and Israel.

**1 Sam. 30:1 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;**

Estimates vary as to the distance traveled to get back to Ziklag. The exact location of many sites is questionable. Some suggest as much as eighty miles. Others think the distance was less than fifty. Even fifty miles on foot would be a difficult pace to accomplish in three days. They must have been extremely tired.

When they arrived at Ziklag, expecting to enjoy a reunion with their families and homes, they were astonished to find everything in black ruins. The Amalekites had attacked the city while they were absent and had burned it to the ground.

This might have been in retaliation for the raids David and his men had made earlier upon the Amalekites. Then again, it may have been a result of the departure of the men of the city when they went north to fight alongside the Philistines.

**1 Sam. 30:2 And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.**

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Not only had the Amalekites plundered the city, they had taken the women and children with them. Slave trade was common in that part of the world, and they no doubt looked forward to either selling their captives as slaves or else using them as a means of getting further advantages from David.

They had not killed anyone. Every last person was kept alive. This would work to the relief of David and his men later on.

1 Sam. 30:3 So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

1 Sam. 30:4 Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

These were not year old infants who were weeping. It was fighting men who were drowned in their own tears at the loss of their wives and children. They wept until the tears could not longer flow. As far as they knew, the entire population of the city had been slain. What were they to do?

1 Sam. 30:5 And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

Neither did David escape the horror. He had already lost his wife Michal when Saul gave her to another man. Now both Ahinoam and Abigail were gone. It would be difficult for him to offer strength and comfort to his men when he had just as much reason to grieve as they did.

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**1 Sam. 30:6 And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.**

David could very easily have buckled and lost faith in the glory and power of the Lord. The people were about to stone him. After all, he was the one who led them away from the city to enter the battle between Israel and the Philistines.

When things are going well, leaders bask in glory as the people admire them and give them credit for the success. When things are going badly, the opposite is true. The leaders are held responsible for the disappointments, even when the leaders were powerless to prevent them.

David did not lose faith. He rested his fate in the God of heaven. He found encouragement to go on in the confidence that God would deal with him and his people in a just manner.

**1 Sam. 30:7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.**

It will be remembered that Abiathar had earlier left the company of Saul and joined with David. Abiathar had possession of the ephod which was used to determine the Lord's will in just such situations as faced David here.

**1 Sam. 30:8 And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I**  
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overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

David asked the Lord to answer two yes or no questions. Should he pursue the Amalekites? If he did pursue them, would he be successful in recovering that which had been taken?

Through the assistance of Abiathar and the ephod, David received a yes answer to both questions. He was to go after the enemy. He would recover what had been taken.

1 Sam. 30:9 So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed.

In spite of their weariness from the three day journey which they had just endured in returning to Ziklag, David and his six hundred men set out in search of the marauders. Some have wondered how they knew which way to go. There would have been recent tracks which could be followed. The entire problem lay in trying to match the speed of the Amalekites, and then how to proceed when and if they caught up. Would they even have energy enough to undo the damage? God had said they would have.

1 Sam. 30:10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.

When they arrived at the brook Besor, two hundred of the men were unable to go farther. This left only four hundred to continue the chase. It was not that the two hundred did not wish to continue. They were unable to continue.

1 Sam. 30:11 And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water;

As the four hundred went onward, they came across an Egyptian lying half dead in a field. They had compassion on him and brought him to David, who decided to offer him bread and water. If this had not been done, death would be certain in the next few days.

1 Sam. 30:12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.

He was not only given bread and water. He was also provided with figs and raisins. David's men may have wondered at this last action. Figs and raisins were not necessities. They were luxuries to these men. David was running a risk.

1 Sam. 30:13 And David said unto him, To whom belongest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.

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When the Egyptian was strong enough to speak with them, he was asked about his companions and the reason why he was lying alone in the field. He replied that he was a slave to an Amalekite and had been left behind when he became so sick he was a detriment rather than an advantage. In other words, he was no more valuable to his master than a crippled donkey.

**1 Sam. 30:14 We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire.**

He informed David of the recent activities of the Amalekite band. They had traveled some distance and had attacked the Cherethites and cities of the tribe of Judah and men of Caleb in particular. Then, in the face of possible death, the man admitted he had been among those who burned the city of Ziklag. It seems that sometimes following the example of the good Samaritan pays huge dividends. David now knew for certain who had done the great damage.

**1 Sam. 30:15 And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company.**

Since the man had been so willing to give the information he had already given, David felt that he might be willing to go further and guide them to where the Amalekite band was headed.

The man was ready to make a bargain. If David would take an oath before God that he would not kill

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the man, nor would turn him over to his master, he would lead them to where they could find the wicked band.

1 Sam. 30:16 And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

The Egyptian kept his word and led David and his men to where the Amalekites had gone after they left Ziklag. The raiders were partying and gloating over what they had stolen from Ziklag, and what they had also taken from other parts of both the land of Judah and the Philistine territory. The last thing they were expecting was the arrival of some four hundred angry men from the city they left smoking and in ruins.

1 Sam. 30:17 And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled.

There is a difference of opinion concerning just what this verse means when it speaks of David smiting the Amalekites from twilight until the evening of the next day. Some think of it as being but one of our days. Others see it as one of our days plus a part of another. Whichever is the case, the smiting took some time and was very effective. Only four hundred of the Amalekites young men escaped being destroyed.

If the reader wonders how David's four hundred
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could so completely rout a number so large that the four hundred who escaped are spoken of as if they were only a part of the total, it must be remembered that the Amalekites were drinking and dancing and were spread out upon the face of the earth with no organization whatsoever. They were unable to gather in any united effort.

**1 Sam. 30:18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives.**

**1 Sam. 30:19 And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.**

The wives and children of the men were recovered, along with all of the goods. David was delighted to find his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail. The same was true of the rest of the men. They also were reunited with their families. God had said they would recover what had been taken. As usual, He was correct.

**1 Sam. 30:20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drave before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil.**

The same persons who were ready to stone David shortly before this now agreed for him to have possession of the flocks and herds of the Amalekites. He was no longer the criminal who had made a horrible decision in going to fight on the side of the Philistines. He was now the hero who had caused all to be recovered.

**1 Sam. 30:21 And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them.**

As David and his men were returning to Ziklag, they rejoined the two hundred men who had been unable to continue past the brook Besor. They were happy to see the effort had been successful and went out to meet the returnees. David was just as happy to see them. He greeted them in friendly fashion.

**1 Sam. 30:22 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.**

David was criticized by some of his men for being friendly to those who had not gone with them and risked their lives. They were afraid they would have to divide that which they had taken from the fleeing Amalekites with those who had not gone with them.

They did not intend to give away any part of that which they had possessed. They did not mind allowing each man of the two hundred to have his family back, but they felt the goods should remain in their hands. They even suggested that those two hundred had not part even in their company, and should depart, or separate, from them.





**1 Sam. 30:23 Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.**

David would not agree. God had allowed the four hundred to vanquish the Amalekites and had seen to it that their property was returned. Since God had been so good to them, they should certainly share with their brethren.

**1 Sam. 30:24 For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.**

David would not listen to their complaints. He hoped that others would have the same attitude and be willing to share with the two hundred. It was just as important that those who stayed with the stuff as it was with those who went to the battle front. It was David's decision that everyone should share alike.

**1 Sam. 30:25 And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.**

This procedure had been applied before this time, but it seems this particular instance paved the way for a binding statute to be observed from that time on. Those who stayed home to protect the goods were to share equally with those who fought on the front.

**1 Sam. 30:26 And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even**

**to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD;**

This verse sounds as though David did what he could to return what had been taken, to the other places which had been robbed by the Amalekites. This was David at his best. Let us not forget this when we find him guilty later of adultery with Bathsheba, and murder of her husband. He, like the apostle, could be a chief of sinners.

**1 Sam. 30:27 To them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in south Ramoth, and to them which were in Jattir,**

**1 Sam. 30:28 And to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa,**

**1 Sam. 30:29 And to them which were in Rachal, and to them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them which were in the cities of the Kenites,**

**1 Sam. 30:30 And to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach,**

Thus we have a list of some of the cities to which goods were returned. Perhaps some of the grief caused by the Amalekites could be washed away.

**1 Sam. 30:31 And to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.**

David and his men owed a debt of gratitude to those localities where he and his followers had received  
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friendship and food. Also, it would do no harm later on when David was appointed King and reigned from Hebron for seven years. The people were left with a pleasant feeling toward him.

Chapter 31

Chapter thirty of First Samuel gave us a change of scenery, though neither it nor the one it followed are very pretty scenery. It appears that God wished to keep what was taking place at Ziklag where David and his men were apace with what was going on at the valley of Jezreel where the armies of Israel and of the Philistines were facing each other.

After describing the success of David and his six hundred, we are now returned to what is about to happen to Saul and the army of Israel.

1 Sam. 31:1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

The Philistines quickly took the initiative. If God had been with Israel this would not have happened. God was not with them. We can almost see in our mind's eye the frantic retreat of the Israelites. Large numbers of them were slain.

1 Sam. 31:2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons.

The Philistines knew that if they could kill Saul and his sons, they would have cut out the heart of their opposition. They therefore made a special effort to focus on them. Saul's three sons who were capable of going into battle were killed. The names of the three are given. Jonathan was one of them. Even though his

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father had treated him with scorn a number of times because of his friendship with David, Jonathan stood side by side with his father at this time.

**1 Sam. 31:3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.**

The king was struck by the arrows of the Philistine archers and he was severely wounded. He was aware that he was about to die and might be tortured in his last minutes by his foes.

**1 Sam. 31:4 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.**

Saul called for his armor bearer to end his life by thrusting his sword through him. He did not wish to be abused as some captives had been in that land. They were sometimes stripped of both their armor and their clothes, then mutilated in the genital area and finally beheaded. Saul would rather not face such a fate.

The armor bearer was afraid. This could have been because the Philistines were so close he felt he did not have time to deal with Saul. It is far more reasonable to believe he had the same hesitancy David had in thinking about stretching out his hand against the anointed of the Lord. Saul had not been the choice of God when he was selected by the people, but God did recognize him as King and warned that it was a serious matter to injure the King of Israel.

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When the armor bearer refused to slay him, Saul took “a” sword and deliberately allowed his body to fall upon it. Did he commit suicide and take his own life? I think we can say it was the archers who killed him. He only hastened the end.

1 Sam. 31:5 And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

1 Sam. 31:6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

The armor bearer than fell upon his sword and joined his master in death. If we can call Saul’s death a suicide, he and his armor bearer join an extremely limited group of suicides mentioned in the pages of God’s Word. The rest of the group are, Ahimelech, Zimri and Judas Iscariot.

The losses in manpower were vast. It is claimed by some that the word “all” in this verse is a bit of an exaggeration, but most certainly the defeat was complete. Saul would have been in far different condition if he had depended upon Jehovah for guidance all along the way, than to wait until conditions became impossible and then consult a witch.

1 Sam. 31:7 And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.



Not only the army of Israel fled; many of the Israelites in the entire area left their homes and cities to move out into caves and other hiding places. The Philistines then moved into the deserted cities. Fear reigned supreme among the people of Israel.

1 Sam. 31:8 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.

It must have been late in the day when the battle ended. The Philistines waited until the next morning to scour the battlefield in search of spoils. As they did so, they came upon the bodies of Saul and his three sons. This was glorious news as far as they were concerned. The reign of Saul had come to an end after forty years. He had no qualified son to ascend to the throne upon his death.

We might add that Samuel had died in the days before, leaving a vacuum in the leadership of the nation.

1 Sam. 31:9 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.

Long before this time, David had cut off the head of Goliath, and had shown his disdain for the power of the gods of the Philistines. Now the tables were turned. The Philistines cut off the head of Saul and sent it from one of their temples to another to show their disrespect for Jehovah, the God of Saul. They had not really overpowered Jehovah. They had reaped the

advantage because of the insolence of Saul toward the will of the Lord.

1 Sam. 31:10 And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan.

Bethsan was a walled city. They took Saul's armor and hung it in the temple of Ashtaroth, or Astarte. Then they fastened the bodies of Saul and his sons to the wall of the city. This was usually done by hanging the bodies on metal hooks.

1 Sam. 31:11 And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul;

1 Sam. 31:12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.

Jabesh-gilead was just a few miles from Bethsan. When the men of that city heard of the fate of the bodies of the four men, they took it upon themselves to put an end to that mockery. They traveled during the night to Bethsan and removed the bodies from the wall. Saul had honored the city of Jabesh-gilead when he first became King. The men of the city wanted to demonstrate their respect.

The statement about the "burning of the bodies" has created some discussion. It was highly unusual for Israelites to burn a corpse. The normal procedure was to bury the dead. The reader would do well to compare the record given in the tenth chapter of I Chronicles with this present account and try to harmonize the

two. It may be that incense was burned, and then the bodies were buried under the Tamarisk tree.

1 Sam. 31:13 And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

A seven day fast was sometimes held as a mourning period for the dead.

We come then to the end of the reign of King Saul. He began as an humble young man who had to be found hidden among the baggage to make him King. It ended by an exhibition of pride which left him beheaded and the nation in disaster.

Those who would lead God's people, must first learn to humble their spirit and allow themselves to be led by the omnipotent power and wisdom of the Creator. Then, and only then, will their efforts prove successful.





**The Book Of
2 SAMUEL**



Chapter 1

There is no need for a separate introduction to Second Samuel. First and Second Samuel were originally one book. Because of the bulk of the scrolls when they were combined, they were separated at the point of Saul's death. Second Samuel is the record of Davids' forty year reign as King.

2 Sam. 1:1 Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag;

Saul and Jonathan had been killed during the battle between Israel and the Philistines. David and his men had been dismissed from the Philistine side because the military leaders of the Philistines were fearful that at a critical moment, David might turn against them and fight on the side of Israel.

When David and his men arrived at home they found the city of Ziklag had been invaded by the Amalekites. Their city had been burned, and their families had been taken captive. They immediately set out after the invaders and recovered what had been taken. This chapter picks up at the time they returned from that effort.

2 Sam. 1:2 It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

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The third day after their return, a man came to them from the battle area and the camp of Saul. He pretended to be in a state of mourning. His clothing was torn and he had covered his head with dirt. These were symbols of serious mourning at the time.

When the man found David, he fell to the ground and indicated subjection to David as his superior. David must have suspected the man was bringing bad news.

**2 Sam. 1:3 And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.**

David wished to know the identity of the man and what his business was. He asked him from where he had come.

The man replied that he had been in the camp of Israel, but that he had escaped. This would have added to David's anxiety. What did the man mean by saying he had "escaped?"

**2 Sam. 1:4 And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.**

David pursued the matter farther. If the young man had been in the camp of the Israelites, he should be able to give first hand information of what had been happening in the conflict. How had the battle gone? It is probable that David had already learned things had not gone well. After three days surely someone would have given him some general description of the outcome.

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He was no doubt expecting the young man to fill him in on the details.

The answer came back that Israel had been routed. There were many dead and wounded. Even Saul and Jonathan were dead.

2 Sam. 1:5 And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

David wanted to know from the young man just how he knew Saul and Jonathan were both dead. If the man could give first hand information, David would know his word was trustworthy. This would be horrible news if it was true.

2 Sam. 1:6 And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

The man indicated to David that he had just happened to be on Mount Gilboa. He had seen the chariots and horsemen of the Philistines attacking the defeated Israelites. He had found Saul leaning upon his spear in a very weak condition.

2 Sam. 1:7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I.

According to the man's story, Saul had seen him and called out to him. He responded to the call to let Saul know he had heard him.

2 Sam. 1:8 And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite.

Saul wished to know whether the man was a Philistine. He had answered that he was an Amalekite and not a Philistine. This is most interesting in view of the fact that if Saul had done as God commanded him, there would have been no Amalekites. He had been told to destroy all of them. He had not done so. According to the man's report, Saul would now ask that the Amalekite kill him.

2 Sam. 1:9 He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.

Saul had told the man to come to where he was and take his life. He was in the process of dying and it was better that he be slain than to continue in this helpless and agonizing condition.

The words "stand upon me" could also be translated as "stand beside me." It makes little difference in the final outcome, but it causes one to wonder why the young man would have been told to stand upon Saul to end his life.

Here we must mention a concern of some Bible students over conflicting details of the man's story. This man indicated he was passing by and happened by chance to see Saul in his distress. Other accounts say Saul's armor bearer was the one who killed him. It could hardly be true that a passerby would be Saul's armor bearer. One of the accounts says Saul had leaned upon his sword. This young man says it was a spear. The two weapons are quite different. It would be difficult to lean upon the end of a spear. Not so with a sword.

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Putting everything together, we are forced to conclude that the young man had concocted a lie in order to receive some favor from David. He could have been aware that David and Saul had at one point been on opposite sides in the battle, and assumed that David would be pleased to hear of the death of Saul. He could not have been more wrong!

**2 Sam. 1:10 So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.**

When the man made this statement that he was the one who had actually killed Saul, David must have shown shock. The young man then added that he felt justified because he saw Saul was going to die and he had only put him out of his misery. To prove his story was dependable he had taken Saul's crown from his head and his bracelet from his arm and David could see for himself, Saul was dead.

**2 Sam. 1:11 Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him:**

What must have been the young man's surprise to see David tearing his clothing in grief rather than shouting for joy at the news of Saul's death.

**2 Sam. 1:12 And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the**

**house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.**

David and his men wept and refused to eat throughout the entire day. Some of the grief came about because of the death of King Saul and his son Jonathan. Some of it was because of the defeat of the army of Israel by the Philistines.

**2 Sam. 1:13 And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.**

David asked the young man a second time, “Whence art thou?” He wished to know the young man’s ancestry and not just where he had been in the last few days.

The answer was that the man was not an Israelite, he was an Amalekite. He must have been very concerned by this time as to what David had in mind by asking these questions.

**2 Sam. 1:14 And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD’S anointed?**

More than once David had found opportunity to kill Saul. He had refused to do so because that would have been disrespect for God who had agreed with Israel’s request that they have a King like those of the nations around them. Why then, did this young man think he had the right to kill God’s King?

**2 Sam. 1:15 And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.**

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David commanded one of his soldiers to fall upon the Amalekite and kill him. The soldier did as he was commanded. Saul lost his crown through failing to kill Agag, an Amalekite. David would take that crown through killing an Amalekite.

2 Sam. 1:16 And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD'S anointed.

Perhaps, even as the Amalekite was dying, David explained to him that he had been responsible for his own death. His blood had been shed because of his confession that he had shed the blood of the Lord's Anointed.

This writer believes the young man was lying when he said he had slain Saul. He was not Saul's armor bearer. Saul was slain by a sword and not by a spear. Either way, Saul was clearing himself. If the man had actually killed Saul, he deserved to be slain for taking the life of the King. If he was lying, he had placed the guilt upon his own head. His execution was not the fault of David. It was his own.

2 Sam. 1:17 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son:

We now come to the second division of the present chapter. This describes the lament David wrote over the death of Saul and Jonathan. It contains surprising words of commendation for the King who had tried to kill him. It might be expected that David would mention the bad side of Saul as well as the good side. That side

is not given. The words of praise for Jonathan are what might have been expected with respect to the death of his dear friend.

2 Sam. 1:18 (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.)

The words “the use of” are not in the original Hebrew. It simply reads that David bade them teach the children of Judah “the bow.” A suggestion has been made that “the bow” was the name of the lament, and that David wished for the Israelites to remember King Saul and Jonathan through the singing of the lamentation.

The book of Jasher is not one of the books included in the Old Testament canon. It is not considered inspired. It is supposed that it was a book containing songs memorializing the heroes of Israel.

2 Sam. 1:19 The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

The beauty of Israel was the two military men, Saul and Jonathan. They had been killed in the line of battle on the mountains of Gilboa. David was grieved at the fall from glory and power to the darkness of the grave.

2 Sam. 1:20 Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

Gath and Askelon were both cities of the Philistines. Gath was the capitol city. The lamentation urged that
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the death of the two leaders might not be spread abroad in the great cities of the uncircumcised Philistines in that the women of the cities would dance in triumphant joy at the thought of it.

**2 Sam. 1:21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.**

The song of lamentation calls for a curse to be placed upon the very soil of the battlefield where the two were killed. As the two men had lost their lives on those mountains, the mountains of Gilboa where to lose the plant and animal life which existed there. The rains would fail and the fields would no longer produce an abundant yield which could be used as an offering to God. Saul had been treated as if he was no more than a common man.

**2 Sam. 1:22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.**

Saul and Jonathan had been very successful in their military struggles, with the exception of this last one. They had returned from battle having accomplished that which they intended. The sting of defeat was nearly unknown.

**2 Sam. 1:23 Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they**

**were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.**

It is most amazing that David would say Saul had lived a lovely and pleasant life. The man had begun humbly, and had then progressed to a position of haughty pride and jealousy. David chose to ignore the dangers to which he had been exposed through Saul's attempts to murder him.

Yes, Saul and Jonathan had been close for the most part, although not always. They had died on the same side in their last battle. They did have the reputation of being both strong and swift.

**2 Sam. 1:24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.**

The women of Israel were called upon to weep over their fallen King. He had been responsible for the beautiful clothing and jewelry which they wore. With a weaker King, this could not have occurred. God and scarlet were indication of the finest and most beautiful of adornments.

**2 Sam. 1:25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.**

For the second time, David exclaims the same words, "How are the mighty fallen!" This time he narrowed his expression to laud the name of Jonathan. He had been taken from the land of the living on the heights of the mountains of Gilboa. That had been a sad day.

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2 Sam. 1:26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

Truly David felt the greatest of sorrow for his dear friend Jonathan. Their relationship had been very strong, even while Saul was trying to take David's life.

This verse has no reference to a homosexual attraction between the two. The love between David and the women in his life was not the greatest ever known. Michal was given to another man. Bathsheba was the kind of women who bathes where men can gaze upon her body. Is it not possible that the bond of friendship between David and Jonathan was dearer to him than any of his several wives?

2 Sam. 1:27 How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

For the third time, these same words are written. Most writers think the "weapons of war" do not refer to bows and arrows, spears and swords, but that the weapons of war were the two men who are lamented in the song. Tears could well have been flowing from the eyes of the sweet singer of Israel as he wrote these words.

Chapter 2

The reader who only reads through the Bible will normally hurry through this portion of it. The one who writes commentary on it is expected to look at it in more depth. It is gory enough when one moves through quickly. It is even more distasteful when it is given closer attention. But, that is the way sin is. The more closely one looks at it, the more hideous it becomes. In this chapter we will see the beginnings of the long dispute between the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

2 Sam. 2:1 And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

David was anointed as King by Samuel before he died. He is anointed as King of Judah in this chapter. Later he will be anointed as King over the united Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. At this point he wonders if it is time to take a place as ruler of some of the cities in the south. Rather than assuming anything, David made inquiry at the throne of the Lord. This was undoubtedly done through the Urim and Thummim which was in the possession of Abiathar.

David asked two questions. Should he go up to any of the cities? If so, to which city should he go? To the first question God answered, "Yes, go up." To the second question, God answered, "To Hebron." Thus it was by the authority of the Lord that David moved forward, and not as a result of his own reasoning alone.



2 Sam. 2:2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite.

The move was made. He took his two wives with him. Ahinoam is again mentioned first. These were not the only wives David had. These were the ones with him at the time.

2 Sam. 2:3 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

The men who were with him were the six hundred mentioned many times previously. The men brought their families with them and they settled in the cities of Hebron. The reason the plural is used here is that Hebron was a cluster of four smaller cities. The population of Hebron was increased sharply by the entrance of these men and their families.

2 Sam. 2:4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul.

David had befriended the people of the cities of Judah. The Amalekites had ransacked these cities. David then defeated the Amalekites and restored the stolen possessions to the cities. This endeared the people to him and paved the way for him to take the rulership of the tribe of Judah.

The reader may recall that the men of Jabesh-gilead had been courageous enough to slip into the area where the bodies of Saul and Jonathan and removed them from

the walls where they had been pinned. David was now told that these were the people who had done that.

2 Sam. 2:5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabeshgilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

2 Sam. 2:6 And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

It may be difficult for us to understand why David commended these men for taking down the body of Saul, who had tried to kill him more than once and call for a blessing on the men who had given him a decent burial. The answer is that David had a tremendous respect for authority which had been approved by the God of heaven. These men were commended by David because they had a similar respect, even though not as great as his own.

God has promised that those of His followers who are kind to their fellow man will receive kindness from His own hand. David believed that.

2 Sam. 2:7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

A new leader is wise to unite and encourage those whom he wishes to follow him. The crown had passed from Saul to David. He was doing what he knew would be necessary if he was to lead with effectiveness. He pointed out that Judah had accepted him as King. He

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would like to have seen the rest of the tribes follow that example.

**2 Sam. 2:8 But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim;**

**2 Sam. 2:9 And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.**

Unity was not to be. Abner, who had been the military leader of Saul's forces refused to follow David. He took Ishbosheth, who was the remaining son of Saul and installed him as King over Gilead, over the Ashurites, the Jezreelites and all of the other tribes except Judah.

This tells us something about both Abner and Ishbosheth. Abner was power hungry. Ishbosheth was incapable of strong leadership. Ishbosheth was merely a puppet of Abner.

**2 Sam. 2:10 Ishbosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David.**

The reign of Ishbosheth was short. It lasted only two years. In the meantime Judah continued to follow David.

**2 Sam. 2:11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.**

There is controversy over whether Ishbosheth's two years were at the beginning or at the end of the seven and one half year reign of Saul. This matters little. The point of the two above verses is that David continued to lead, but Ishbosheth did not.

**2 Sam. 2:12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.**

A conflict is about to develop between the subjects of Abner and Ishbosheth, and those faithful to David. The pool of Gibeon is to be the site of the meeting.

**2 Sam. 2:13 And Joab the son of Zeruah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.**

Abner's forces were on one side of the pool. Joab, David's military leader had gathered his men on the opposite side. We are not talking about a swimming pool in a back yard. We are talking about a major water reservoir.

**2 Sam. 2:14 And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.**

Abner took the initiative and made a suggestion to Joab. Why not pick a few of the choice young men on each side and let them determine who was the victor. The rest would not then be involved in the battle. Joab



agreed that this was an acceptable plan. He called for the action to begin.

**2 Sam. 2:15 Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.**

**2 Sam. 2:16 And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkathhazzurim, which is in Gibeon.**

Twelve of Abner's men and twelve of Joab's men were chosen, and the fight began. The outcome of the fight was inconclusive. All of the men on both sides died. As a result, this place known as Gibeon became known also as Helkathhazzurim, which means "edge of the sword", or "sharp sides."

To say each one caught his opponent by the head may mean he held him by the beard. We would not expect that they divided off two by two and each stabbed his opponent simultaneously. That may have been the beginning, and the action continued until every last one of the men on both sides was mortally wounded and died.

**2 Sam. 2:17 And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.**

Since the fight between the twelve men on each side did not solve the matter, the rest entered into battle. Abner and his forces were defeated by the followers of David and Joab.

**2 Sam. 2:18 And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe.**

**2 Sam. 2:19 And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.**

Joab had two brothers who were also present in the confrontation. They were Asahel and Abishai. Asahel was recognized as a very fast runner. He was compared to a wild animal which is extremely fleet. Asahel saw Abner fleeing from the scene of the battle and began running after him. He was not interested in chasing anyone else. He was only after Abner.

**2 Sam. 2:20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, Art thou Asahel? And he answered, I am.**

Abner saw him coming and asked him if he was Asahel. He was assured that this was true. He probably realized Asahel would catch up with him very shortly.

**2 Sam. 2:21 And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him.**

Abner warned Asahel that he was making a serious mistake. He needed to quit chasing him and look around to find another foe. Asahel paid no attention. He was bent on just one target, Abner.



**2 Sam. 2:22 And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?**

Abner explained why Asahel should cease chasing him and turn to someone else. Just as sure as Asahel caught up with him, he would kill Asahel by pinning him to the ground with his sword.

This would have brought on the wrath of Joab, Asahel's brother, and Joab would try to avenge Asahel's death. Abner did not want to bring on a feud with Joab.

**2 Sam. 2:23 Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.**

Asahel turned a deaf ear to Abner's warning. He did catch up with Abner. When he did so, it seems that Abner stopped quickly and struck Asahel a backward stroke with the butt of his spear. The spear went all the way through the body of Asahel and came out on his backside. Asahel died on the spot.

The latter part of verse twenty-three tells us of the effect of the memory of Asahel upon those who passed by the place where he died. They paused and stood still in honor of the man. This passage can be easily misunderstood. This pausing did not have to be done during the midst of the present battle. It could have been done at some time afterward. Pausing at the tombstone

in a cemetery to honor the memory of the one buried there years before could be a similar situation.

**2 Sam. 2:24 Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.**

As might be expected, Asahel's two brothers then decided to take revenge on Abner for killing Asahel. They chased him until the sun was ready to set. They would not be able to finish the matter because the darkness would prevent it.

**2 Sam. 2:25 And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill.**

**2 Sam. 2:26 Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?**

Some of the troops following Abner came to his side and stood on the top of a hill where they could be both seen and heard.

Abner called to Joab and asked him if the fighting between the two sides must go on with no end. This is most interesting! It was Abner who proposed that the fighting begin. If his side had been winning we can predict that his words here would have been different. Since he was losing, he could see no reason for the bloodshed to go on.





**2 Sam. 2:27 And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.**

Joab replied to Abner that it was not the fault of Judah that the battle had begun. All of the men could have been back home if Abner had not been so eager to fight.

**2 Sam. 2:28 So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.**

Joab sounded a trumpet and called for his men to retire from the battle. They obeyed the signal and the battle was over.

**2 Sam. 2:29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.**

Mahanaim, which was the location where Ishbosheth had been installed as King of the northern area, was on the east side of the Jordan river. The forces of Abner traveled some distance from the site of the battle, continuing their retreat throughout the entire night.

**2 Sam. 2:30 And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel.**

It was time to count up the losses. As Abner and his men had left for Mahanaim, Joab gathered his men and did a tally. Altogether twenty men were lost to the side of David and Joab.

**2 Sam. 2:31 But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and threescore men died.**

The losses to Abner's men was far greater. Three hundred and sixty men were lost. When an army is in the process of being defeated, they tend to become chaotic. The lack of organization brings on much higher losses than would have been suffered if they had been on the winning side.

**2 Sam. 2:32 And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.**

The body of Asahel was found and he was given respectful burial in the village of Bethlehem. Just as the forces of Abner traveled through the night in one direction, the forces of Joab traveled in the other direction until the dawn of the next day.

The division seen in this chapter is but a taste of that which will be seen much later after the reign of Solomon when we find a much more permanent break than that which was evident here. David will later become recognized as the King of all twelve tribes, but that united Kingdom will be shattered again.



## *Chapter 3*

Saul had persecuted David for a number of years, but Saul was no longer a part of the picture. Ishbosheth had been promoted by Abner as King of the eleven tribes. The friction did not disappear. The opening verse of this chapter explains that the controversy was drawn out for an extended period of time. The events recorded here are only a small portion of the entire war.

**2 Sam. 3:1 Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.**

One might have anticipated that the greater population of the eleven tribes would have sealed the issue. It did not! It was just the reverse. David and Joab provide leadership superior to that of Ishbosheth and Abner.

God had forecast that from the house of David would come a Saviour whose influence would reach out into the entire world. We can see the forecast coming to life.

**2 Sam. 3:2 And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;**

During the seven and one half years David ruled in Hebron, he sired the six sons listed here. Each of these was by a different wife. This was not because God condoned multiple wives. Christ said it was only permitted because of the hardness of men's hearts. David was to suffer much from the rivalry which came about as a result of his polygamy.

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In addition to the sons mentioned in this verse, we know he had at least one daughter, and probably about an equal number to that of his sons. Also, thirteen more sons are listed in I Chronicles. 3.

2 Sam. 3:3 And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;

2 Sam. 3:4 And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

2 Sam. 3:5 And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

The six sons mentioned here are probably included because they were possible successors to David on the throne. The list also hints at the influence of politics. By such marriages with women of different areas, David could have been cementing relationships with these areas.

2 Sam. 3:6 And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul.

Abner had backed Ishbosheth to succeed Saul as King of the eleven tribes. It would appear that Abner realized the weakness of Ishbosheth and felt that he might become the actual ruler, though the title belonged to Ishbosheth. Abner rose in power. The contention between the house of Saul and the house of David went on.



2 Sam. 3:7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ishbosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

Contention arose between Ishbosheth and Abner. Ishbosheth accused Abner of sexual relations with Saul's concubine, Rizpah. Abner knew that accessibility of a king's concubines was considered the right of his successor. His relationship with Rizpah could have been a statement that he had now become the actual ruler, even if Ishbosheth had the crown. Ishbosheth saw the possibility of the threat and let Abner know he had.

2 Sam. 3:8 Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ishbosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head, which against Judah do shew kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to day with a fault concerning this woman?

It is not certain as to whether or not Abner was guilty of the act of which he was accused by Ishbosheth. Whether guilty or not, Abner acted as if he had been handed a major insult by the King. He pointed out that he had supported the house of Saul and had even managed the rise of Ishbosheth to the throne. How was it then that Ishbosheth had the boldness to accuse him of undermining the house of Saul?

2 Sam. 3:9 So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him;

Abner declared that God had sworn to David that he was to be a great ruler. Abner called upon God to punish him severely if he did not now remove his allegiance from the house of Saul and see that God's statement came true. Abner would from that time on work to promote the house of David rather than that of Saul.

2 Sam. 3:10 To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba.

Abner promised to do his very best to see that David became ruler over all twelve of the tribes, from Dan in the extreme north to Beersheba in the extreme south.

2 Sam. 3:11 And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him.

Abner was stronger than Ishbosheth. He could have demonstrated his influence by punishing the King. Ishbosheth backed off in fear of what might happen if he retaliated.

2 Sam. 3:12 And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose is the land? saying also, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee.

Abner lived up to his word. He sent a message to David saying that the land could be claimed for David if an agreement could be made between David and

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himself. He could see that the entire twelve tribes became subject to David.

**2 Sam. 3:13 And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.**

David was agreeable to the suggestion. However, there was one condition which must be met if Abner was to become a partner with him. Michal, who was Saul's daughter, and had been given to another man while David was gone. David had not forgotten her and insisted that Abner bring Michal with him when he came into his presence.

**2 Sam. 3:14 And David sent messengers to Ishbosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.**

David sent his forceful message to Ishbosheth. He had fought against the Philistines and brought the evidence of his success to Saul in order to be given Michal. She belonged to him. Send her back!

**2 Sam. 3:15 And Ishbosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Phaltiel the son of Laish.**

Ishbosheth demonstrated his lack of courage in doing just what David had insisted upon, and what Abner would have expected. He took Rizpah from the man

who claimed her as his wife with very little concern over the feelings of either the man or Rizpah.

**2 Sam. 3:16 And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.**

When Rizpah's supposed husband followed her as she was being led away from him, Abner took action. He commanded the man to leave. The man knew better than to resist. He left. Abner was able to force his way on practically anyone who opposed him.

**2 Sam. 3:17 And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you:**

**2 Sam. 3:18 Now then do it: for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.**

Abner then made contact with the elders of the eleven tribes and reminded them that in the past they had longed for David to become their King. This was the time to fulfil that desire. He claimed that God had promised the rule of all Israel to the house of David. David would deliver Israel from the oppression, not only of the Philistines, but of every enemy.

We can see through the mind of Abner. This appeared to him to be a way that he could become the practical ruler of the entire nation of Israel. All he had to do was help David become King, and then manipulate David just as he had Ishbosheth.

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2 Sam. 3:19 And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

Everything seemed to be going Abner's way. He made his plan sound glorious to David and the whole house of the tribe of Benjamin. All that was needed was to put the plan into action.

2 Sam. 3:20 So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that were with him a feast.

Abner came southward to meet with David. He was very careful to bring a bodyguard of twenty men along with him. David welcomed him warmly and had a feast prepared for the entire group.

It is most interesting to watch the providence of God in action. Abner saw an opportunity to increase his level of power. God had predicted that David would be the owner of that power. God allowed the plans of Abner to proceed for a time, until they interfered with His own long range view. Abner was actually arranging for God's promise of power to the house of David to be realized, though Abner had not the least thought of serving anyone but himself.

2 Sam. 3:21 And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

Abner made a solemn promise to David that he would do just what he had told Ishbosheth he would. He would arrange for the entire nation to fall under David's reign. David could then have absolute control over all. There need no longer be conflict between the house of David and that of Saul.

Abner had achieved at least a part of what he intended to do. He and his men left David as friends. To depart in peace what similar to the present day parting, "Have a good day."

2 Sam. 3:22 And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from pursuing a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner was not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

After Abner had left, Joab, David's military chief returned home after attacking a caravan and taking possession of much goods. He arrived after Abner had gone and had to be told what had happened, and how Abner and David had agreed to work together to make David ruler over all Israel.

2 Sam. 3:23 When Joab and all the host that was with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

2 Sam. 3:24 Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?

When Joab was told of the meeting between Abner and David, he let it be known that he did not like the
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news. How was it that David had met with Abner and sent him away peacefully? Joab would not have expected a peaceful meeting between the military leader of the eleven tribes and the King of the tribe of Judah. This had not been the case in the past.

Joab's intuition told him it would have been best if Abner and his men had been arrested and placed in confinement. Nothing good could come of an alliance between David and Abner.

**2 Sam. 3:25 Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.**

Abner wanted to know if David was so gullible that he did not know Abner had come to make a fool out of him. Abner was only acting as a spy who wished to learn secrets about the inner workings of David's government, so that he might take advantage of him later. Abner had not come to promote David. He had come with the intention of dominating him.

**2 Sam. 3:26 And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew it not.**

Joab decided to take things into his own hands. Without letting David know about it, he sent for Abner to return to the area. Abner had gone some distance, but was willing to come back. Things looked promising. There was no reason to object at this point.

**2 Sam. 3:27 And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.**

Joab did not waste time when Abner appeared. He invited him to join him and speak privately with him. When they were by themselves, Joab stabbed Abner in the abdomen and he died.

Hebron was a city of refuge. A killer could be safe within the walls of one of these cities until the elders of the city took action. Joab did not wait for Abner to get inside the gate of the city. He took him aside and killed him outside. Supposedly his reason for doing this was that Abner had murdered Asahel, who was the brother of Joab, and the nearest of kin was expected to avenge the murder. That may have been one reason. It can hardly be denied that Joab knew Abner's reputation and did not wish to compete with him for power in a united nation.

**2 Sam. 3:28 And afterward when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner:**

David was furious when he learned of the murder of Abner. He immediately denied any guilt in the crime. Neither he, nor those under him were guilty of the killing.

**2 Sam. 3:29 Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or**  
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that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.

David proceeded to utter a curse upon the head of Joab and his household. He included many woes in the curse.

1. Running sores such as Gonorrhoea would plague them.
2. Leprosy would be a continuous problem.
3. Crippled and lame would always be present.
4. War would kill many.
5. Hunger pains would rack their bodies.

David was expressing true concern over Joab's act. He had thought Abner could unite the house of Saul with his own. Now that hope had vanished.

2 Sam. 3:30 So Joab, and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

2 Sam. 3:31 And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David himself followed the bier.

There was a difference in the condition when Abner killed Asahel. That was in a time of war and premeditated deliberate hatred was not a strong factor. This time, the act was deliberate.

David called for the two brothers of Asahel to mourn over what they had done. They should be filled with grief and repent of their deed. David himself followed the funeral carriage and lamented the death of Abner.

Who does the reader side with? Was Joab right to eliminate Abner? This present writer can hardly feel sorry for Abner. It is anticipated that Abner would have tried to do precisely the same thing with David that he did with Ishbosheth, turning David into a puppet and moving as Abner pulled the strings.

2 Sam. 3:32 And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.

2 Sam. 3:33 And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth?

David was not the only one who wept over the death of Abner. Joab had done a very effective job of persuading the people, as well as the King that he could bring peace and unity. The people wept along with the King.

2 Sam. 3:34 Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him.

Fools walk into danger with their eyes closed. David wanted to know if the death of Abner was not like that. He had not been overcome with force. He had been deceived by the wicked and had been outwitted.

2 Sam. 3:35 And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down.

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The people were concerned about David's grief. He had refused to eat. They attempted to persuade him to do so. He refused to eat throughout that day. He was sorry for what had happened and the people needed to know this had not been something he had planned. He called upon the Lord to punish him if he broke his fast before nightfall.

**2 Sam. 3:36 And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.**

David got his point across. The people were pleased to see that the King regretted the murder of his long time opponent in war. The people were on the side of David. They would have liked to see the peace which Abner had promised.

**2 Sam. 3:37 For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.**

The way this verse is phrased would almost lead the reader to think David's grief was both sincere and well taken. In truth, the verse is only saying the people *believed* David's grief was in order.

**2 Sam. 3:38 And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?**

The latter part of the present verse has been used often in the funerals of faithful men of the Kingdom of God. Was Abner truly a prince and a great man?

David sincerely believed he was, and that he could have unified Israel.

**2 Sam. 3:39 And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.**

Though David had been anointed as King, he felt helpless. The sons of Zeruiah and brothers of Asahel had accomplished something which he could not prevent. He called upon Jehovah to see justice done.

David could probably have called for the execution of Joab and Abishai and have had enough support from his subjects to see it done. He did not do that. We are dealing with troubled times and great confusion. David had the greatest of confidence that the Judge of all the earth would do right.





## Chapter 4

The northern portion of Israel, under the leadership of Abner, had been steadily growing weaker. At the same time, the power of the tribe of Judah had been increasing. We shall see now how these changes were coming to a head.

This is not one of the most attractive chapters in the Bible. Few commentators will have found the experience of discussing it a pleasant one.

**2 Sam. 4:1 And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.**

Ishbosheth, Saul's son, had been merely a puppet whose strings were pulled by Abner. The death of Abner left the position of Ishbosheth completely exposed. This had its effect upon the entire eleven northern tribes. They were very uneasy.

**2 Sam. 4:2 And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin.**

Two of the men who had led raiding bands under watchful eye of Abner decided this was the time for them to make a name for themselves. To an extent, they succeeded in doing that. We are presently writing and reading about their escapades many centuries later. Still, their recognition was not of the type for which

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most men would hunger.

One of these men was Baana. The other was Rechab. These men were brothers, and both were sons of Rimmon who was of the city of Beeroth and of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 Sam. 4:3 And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.)

This verse contains some evidence that the writing of the book of Second Samuel was at a date somewhat later than that of these related events.

2 Sam. 4:4 And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

Saul had a grandson through Jonathan who was an heir to his leadership. The grandson's name was Mephibosheth. When Saul and Jonathan were killed in the battle with the Philistines, his nurse took the five year old in her arms and tried to escape with him. While his nurse was making haste, Mephibosheth was dropped and this resulted in his becoming crippled.

2 Sam. 4:5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon.

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Rechab and Baana decided that if Mephibosheth were to be removed, they would clear the pathway to their own rise in power. They went to the house where the crippled grandson of Saul lay on his bed.

**2 Sam. 4:6 And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth rib: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.**

Under false pretenses they entered the house. They pretended to be bringing wheat, which would be used to make flour, into the house. They stabbed Mephibosheth in the abdomen and managed to leave without being punished for their crime.

**2 Sam. 4:7 For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.**

It mattered nothing to the two murderers that the young man was incapable of defending himself. They killed him; then followed the murder by cutting off his head.

The present writer remembers no more than one or two times in over fifty years of Bible classes that this gory chapter was used as a basis for the lesson. It is not difficult to see why!

**2 Sam. 4:8 And they brought the head of Ishbosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ishbosheth the son of**

**Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.**

The two men then made a serious mistake. They took the head of Ishbosheth to David and pointed out to him that they had brought the head of Ishbosheth to David as evidence that they had dispatched Saul's grandson and beheaded him.

They felt that David would rejoice at the disappearance of King Saul's grandson. They knew very well that Saul had tried to kill David more than once. If David were properly grateful for their having eliminated Saul's grandson and heir from the picture, perhaps he would reward them handsomely. After all, David would be avenged of Saul and would find the way clearer to the rulership of all twelve tribes of Israel.

**2 Sam. 4:9 And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,**

David reacted quite unexpectedly. In David's eyes, it was a terrible thing to do. One did not rebel against rulers whom the Lord had accepted. Saul had been accepted and by murdering Mephibosheth, these two men had ignored God's will. If God desired to punish Saul and his house, he would see that it was brought about. God had proven in the past that He would work on David's behalf. David was convinced He would continue to do that without the aid of Baana and Rechab.

**2 Sam. 4:10 When one told me, saying, Behold,**  
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Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings:

When someone had come to David in the past and reported that Saul had been killed, they had suffered punishment rather than receiving a reward. David had actually slain the man who reported the death of Saul. This was far from being what they had expected.

2 Sam. 4:11 How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?

David explained that he viewed the actions of Baana and Rechab as being even worse than that of the ones who had rejoiced in the death of Saul. By their own confession, these men had attacked and killed a man who was laid up in bed and unable to defend himself. They did not deserve a promotion for their cruelty. They deserved to give their own blood for that of the man they had killed.

2 Sam. 4:12 And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

David issued a command for Baanah and Rechab to be executed. Just as they had removed the head

of Ishbosheth from his body, they were to have their hands and their feet cut off. Then their bodies were to be hung up where all could see them when coming to the water supply in Hebron. After executing the two, David ruled that the head of Ishbosheth was to be given a place for burial in the same sepulchre as Abner at the city of Hebron.

The present writer recalls reading horror story magazines when he was a teenager. The events described in this chapter of the Bible are no less gruesome. The thought has even crossed the mind of the writer that a powerful sermon might be based on “Those Good Old Days!”



Chapter 5

The next few chapters of Second Samuel tell of the rise of David as King of the United Kingdom of Israel. David is stated to be a “man after God’s own heart”. After the death of Saul and his son Ishbosheth, David was the logical selection to be ruler of the united nation. With God’s approval, he defeated most of the enemies of God’s people and has been recognized through the centuries as God’s anointed.

This does not mean he lived a spotless life. He took another man’s wife, then murdered her husband. He took at least a dozen wives and concubines, with the possibility of as many as twenty. God permitted such behavior, but He did not approve of it. David suffered much from these sins. His later life was far from being as glorious as the early years.

In this chapter we will see his appointment as King, His defeat of the Philistines, and his alliance with Hiram, King of Tyre.

2 Sam. 5:1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

With the death of Saul and his son Ishbosheth, the northern tribes were left with a vacuum of leadership. As a result of this the rivalry between Judah and the other tribes to the north began to melt away. Recognizing the need for a tested leader, the entire nation approached David with the request that he assume that role.

They pointed out several reasons why it was reasonable to ask him to do so. First of all, he was of their own flesh and bone. They could well be overcome



by strangers from outside the chosen nation. David could help prevent such a thing from taking place.

2 Sam. 5:2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

Even while Saul was still the appointed King, it was David who had led the Israelite army into battle, and brought them back victorious.

In addition, God had said that David was to be responsible for their properly nourishment and guidance in military affairs. If he had been tested and sustained as leader in the past, it was but reasonable to look to him in the future.

2 Sam. 5:3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.

Hebron was the location of David's headquarters during the seven and one half years he ruled over Judah. Now the elders of the other eleven tribes came to him seeking a unified government over the entire twelve.

David agreed to serve as their king. This meant he would be responsible for coordinating all of the people that all might benefit by the entire association. He would be the leader in both military and other civil affairs. In return, the people would support him and follow his leadership.

This was not just a civil government. The agreement was made before the Lord. As long as the people and
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the King respected the will of the Almighty, things would go well.

**2 Sam. 5:4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.**

**2 Sam. 5:5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.**

Thirty years of age is not considered the apex of efficiency in the century during which I write. David would have been considered lacking in experience today. In his own time thirty years was quite suitable to attain the maturity required.

David had reigned seven and one half years in Judah. This was followed by thirty-three years of rule over the entire twelve tribes, making a total of forty years and six months. Since he was thirty when he began to rule, he would have been seventy at the close.

Here is one evidence that at least a part of the book of Second Samuel was composed after the death of King David. One does not write about events having taken place before they happen.

**2 Sam. 5:6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither.**

David was ready to transfer the capitol of the nation to Jerusalem which lay on the border between Judah and the northern tribes. The Jebusites controlled the city of

Jerusalem and intended to maintain that control. Earlier God had instructed Israel to drive out the inhabitants of the land. This included the Jebusites. David was not out of place in taking the action he did.

As might be expected, the Jebusites resisted. They felt they were more than capable of defending themselves against the Israelites. They sent a message to David indicating their feelings. There are two quite different explanations of the statement which they made about the blind and the lame. The first is that the only way Israel could be allowed to enter Jerusalem would be to cure and care for the handicapped of the city. The other explanation is that the Jebusites felt they could successfully defend themselves against the Israeli forces by manning the defenses with the blind and the lame among them. They would not even have to call upon the able bodied soldiers.

Jerusalem was built upon a ridge which jutted out in between a U shaped valley. It was not an easy target for invaders. The Jebusites felt they were quite secure against any force David might send upon them.

**2 Sam. 5:7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.**

We will now be given a description of the manner in which David and his men captured the city of Jerusalem. Mount Zion was an elevation associated with the city. After the capture of the city, it was commonly called the city of David. How was the victory accomplished?

**2 Sam. 5:8 And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and**  
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captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.

There was an opening which led from a sizable spring above the city, through it's wall. This supplied the water for the population. David promised that the one who succeeded in moving men through that gutter and driving the Jebusites back would be made captain of the army.

The discussion of the "lame and the blind" as mentioned in this verse has been very difficult for the commentators to explain. Were these the lame and the blind that the Jebusites spoke of using to defend the city against David and his forces? Were they those who hated David, or were they hated by David? Who was it that said the lame and the blind were not to enter the house? Was the house the temple of the worship of Jehovah?

The most plausible explanation the present writer can see is that those lame and blind which were to prevent David and his men from entering the city would be overcome and when that occurred they would not be allowed to enter into the house of the worship of Jehovah.

2 Sam. 5:9 So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.

David and his men were able to pass through the water gutter and take the city of Jerusalem. He then proceeded to build up terraces from the walls of the city toward it's center. Millo is thought to be connected with the walls defending the city.

2 Sam. 5:10 And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.

2 Sam. 5:11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house.

The successful invasion and conquest of Jerusalem was evidence that Jehovah was with David. The word soon was passed that it might be wise to honor the leadership of the new King of all Israel.

Hiram, the king of Tyre was friendly to David over a lengthy period of time. He was quite willing to send building materials, as well as carpenters and masons to do the building of a house from which David might rule.

2 Sam. 5:12 And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

At this point in time David showed a mixture of wisdom and folly. He showed his wisdom by recognizing that all of the good fortune had come about because God was with him. It had not been just for David that God had aided Israel. It was a part of God's plan for the future influence of the Kingdom of Israel.

2 Sam. 5:13 And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David.

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But, as we said, David demonstrated folly along with his wisdom. His folly consisted of taking multiple wives and concubines for himself, and fathering a sizable number of offspring by these women.

Women were a serious threat to the spiritual purity of this man. The attraction between men and women is a God given blessing. Much joy and pleasure can come about through the satisfying of their mutual needs. But, when this attraction is abused and allowed to take control of the persons involved, it can be devastating. On occasion David became the servant of his sexual desires.

**2 Sam. 5:14 And these be the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shammuah, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon,**

The only names we will pause and consider in this list are those of Nathan and Solomon. These were both the sons of David by Bathsheba, whom he took from her husband and then caused him to be murdered. Those were hardly appropriate actions for one who was pictured as a “man after God’s own heart.”

**2 Sam. 5:15 Ibhar also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia,**

**2 Sam. 5:16 And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphalet.**

**2 Sam. 5:17 But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.**

The Philistines were very much concerned when they learned of David’s appointment over the whole twelve

tribes. As long as there was rivalry between the tribes, the Philistines felt no great threat. But the new unity of the Israelite nation could mean serious danger for the Philistines. They were ready to resist the new ruler.

We do not know just what is meant by saying David went down to the hold. Perhaps it has to do with David's finding a place of security from an anticipated attack by the Philistines.

**2 Sam. 5:18 The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.**

**2 Sam. 5:19 And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.**

The Philistine forces approached the city of Jerusalem and gathered in the valley of Rephaim just a short distance from the city. David knew the situation was serious. As he did before this time and also afterward, he went to inquire concerning the will of the Lord. We are not told in this case just how the inquiry was made. Sometimes the questions were asked in such way they could receive a "yes" or a "no" answer. Stones were sometimes cast down and from the position they took, the answer could be determined. Sometimes dreams and visions were provided.

David had two questions for the Lord. Should he take his men and meet the Philistines in battle? If he did enter into battle, would he be victorious? God's answer in each case was "Yes." The Philistines would be defeated.

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2 Sam. 5:20 And David came to Baalperazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baalperazim.

As Jehovah had indicated, David was victorious. He therefore named the place of the battle Baalperazim. This name is taken from two thoughts. Baal is another name for Lord. Perazim means to break forth. The name of that place was to remind Israel of the time the Lord God broke forth upon the Philistines and washed them away like waters would break through an opening in a dike.

2 Sam. 5:21 And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

The Philistines were put into a panic. They departed so hurriedly that they left the images of their false gods behind them. David and his men burned them.

There is a problem here, in that the record in First Chronicles chapter fourteen paints a slightly different picture. Did David and his men carry the images away, or did they burn them? It is possible that they carried them away and then burned them.

2 Sam. 5:22 And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

The Philistines had still not learned their lesson. They decided to make another attack. They spread their army again over the valley of Rephaim.

2 Sam. 5:23 And when David enquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.

David returned to Jehovah for advice as to how he should react this second time. This time he was told not to put his forces in array against the Philistines face to face. He was to instruct his forces to encircle the Philistines and come in behind them. There were mulberry trees in the area. They were to approach them from the region where the mulberry trees were found.

2 Sam. 5:24 And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

When it was time for Israel's forces to attack, they would hear a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees. The sound in the trees would be an indication that the Lord was leading them into the battle.

The reader may remember that in the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit's appearance was compared to the rushing of a mighty wind. (See Acts 2:1-4.)

Act 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Act 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Act 2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,
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*and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Another possibility is that the sound in the trees resembled marching footsteps and thus threw the Philistines into chaos.

**2 Sam. 5:25 And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.**

David did as God had commanded. The result is predictable. The Philistines were no match for Jehovah and his anointed. The Lord had secured David's position as ruler of Israel from the city of Jerusalem.

## *Chapter 6*

David had been ruling over the single tribe of Judah from Kirjath-Jearim. The ark of the covenant had been kept in the private home of Abinadab. There was good reason now to move it. The Philistines could have more readily attempted to capture it while it was near their territory than if was to be moved to a greater distance. David decided to move it to Jerusalem and rule over the nation of Israel from that city.

**2 Sam. 6:1 Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.**

To guarantee it's safety during the move, David chose thirty thousand men to accompany it during the journey. This group probably consisted of both dignitaries and fighting men. The fact that they were called chosen men may refer to the soldiers being especially efficient.

**2 Sam. 6:2 And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims.**

David and the group of thirty thousand moved to the location in Judah where the ark had been resting for several years. To assure the reader that this was the one and only ark of the covenant, it is said that it was called by the name of the LORD of hosts. Jehovah is the Lord of the earth, but He is also the Lord of the host of angels. God cannot be contained in a single location. But here it is said that He dwelleth between

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the cherubim because that is where the High Priest made contact with Him.

2 Sam. 6:3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.

The setting of the ark of God upon a new cart was a very serious mistake. When it was removed from the house of Abinadab it should have been carried just as God had instructed. (See Numbers 4:15 and Num. 7:9.)

Num 4:15 And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Num 7:9 But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders.

God had instructed that the ark be made with rings through which poles could be inserted. The transporting of the ark was to be carried out by passing the poles through the rings and then placing the poles upon the shoulders of the priestly family of Kohath. God had a reason for giving such instructions. Although men did not see that reason, it will become apparent very soon.

2 Sam. 6:4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.

2 Sam. 6:5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

One named Ahio went before the ark and another named Uzzah walked beside it. The occasion was one of great joy. David and others were playing on many different types of musical instruments as they moved along. Some of these instruments were stringed. Some were wind instruments. Some were percussion instruments.

We should note here that this was in a day when God dealt with man on a more physical basis than is the case at present during the Christian age. We are commanded today to sing and make melody in our hearts through the use of hymns, and spiritual songs. Nothing is said about using man made musical instruments.

2 Sam. 6:6 And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.

As they were moving along, the oxen that pulled the cart upon which the ark had been placed made some type of movement which shook the ark and caused it to begin to topple. Uzzah then, fearing that the ark would fall to the ground, reached out and steadied it with his hand.



There should have been no need for Uzzah to touch the ark. If God's instructions had been followed the ark would have been carried by the poles which were commanded to be inserted through the rings of the ark. Thus it would have been much more stable and in no danger of being dropped to the earth. This was God's throne on earth and was to be held in the highest dignity.

2 Sam. 6:7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

The casual reader may conclude that God is displeased over trivial matters. That is not true. When God gives instructions, they are given for a reason. To allow the ark to fall to the ground was a blot on His glory. He was justified in becoming angry.

Uzzah was struck dead as a result of his disobedience. But was not Uzzah just trying to help? Why should he have to forfeit his life when he was attempting to help? We would be wise not to Judge Jehovah in this punishment. The verses say nothing about the eternal condition of Uzzah. He may well be in heaven with the saints of all the ages when time has come to an end. His physical death at this time may have saved large numbers of others from being careless about following God's will and being lost and separated from God forever.

2 Sam. 6:8 And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah to this day.

David made the mistake of judging God. He was extremely unhappy about the death of Uzzah and called the place Perez-uzzah. Perez means the “breaking forth”. Perez-uzzah was the place where the Lord broke forth upon Uzzah.

2 Sam. 6:9 And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?

David saw no solution to the problem facing him. If men died while trying to transport the ark, how was he to get the ark to Jerusalem where he wished to move it? The answer to his puzzle is most obvious. Carry the ark in the way God commanded that it be carried, whether God’s reason was seen or not seen.

My friends, do what God commands in the way He commands and trust in God’s wisdom!

2 Sam. 6:10 So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite.

David concluded that there was no way he could move the ark to Jerusalem without endangering those who carried it. He decided to place it in the house of Obededom.

2 Sam. 6:11 And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obededom, and all his household.



Then a strange thing happened. Instead of endangering the house of Obededom, that household was blessed and prospered. After a period of three months this could hardly be ignored. We can assume that the household had excellent health, fine crops and a high level of confidence.

2 Sam. 6:12 And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David with gladness.

When word reached David that all had gone right with the household of Obededom while the ark had been resting in his house, David was persuaded that God was not displeased with the moving of the ark. He made the decision to go to the house of Obededom and bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem as he had intended before. He was overjoyed at the thought.

2 Sam. 6:13 And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

A short test was applied. They would move the ark just a few steps and see if all went well. That was the case. Oxen and fatlings were sacrificed to the Lord to show the gratitude of the people. It must be assumed that the procedure for moving the ark was changed to honor God's commandment.

2 Sam. 6:14 And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.

David's emotions took control of him. He was so filled with joy that he proceeded to dance mightily before God. There is disagreement as to whether this was another mistake. Dancing is often a matter of sexual gratification. In that case it would be wrong unless it was done in the privacy of one's own home with one's own mate. But in this case it seems David was just leaping about in time with the music. This would be more like the jumping around which might take place among athletes on winning an athletic contest, except that it was rhythmic and accompanied by the music.

However, there is still another point of discussion. It is said that David was girded with a linen ephod. Why would this be mentioned? Was this the only garment David was wearing? The ephod was a small apron type garment worn by the priests. They were also to wear an undergarment with it. Leaping around mightily with only an ephod for coverage could have meant indecent exposure.

2 Sam. 6:15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

All seemed to be going well. The ark arrived in Jerusalem without further deaths such as Uzzah had suffered. It was a time of great celebration and gratitude to God for having allowed the successful transport.

2 Sam. 6:16 And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter
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**looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.**

All was not as well as it might have seemed. Michal, Saul's daughter and one of David's wives looked out the window and saw David in his undignified dancing. She took exception to his behavior and despised him.

This may not have been the only reason Michal despised David. She had been given to another man in the past by her father Saul. David had then taken her from that man and added her to his own harem. If Michal loved that other man, she might have had a pretty good head start in despising David from that time on.

**2 Sam. 6:17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.**

The tabernacle which is mentioned here is not the same as the one which had housed the ark during the wilderness wanderings. This one had been made and pitched at David's command.

David then thanked God by offering both peace offerings and burnt offerings to demonstrate a grateful heart.

**2 Sam. 6:18 And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.**

We noted earlier that David was wearing an ephod. There are a number of times when David acted as a priest would act. Jesus Christ was Prophet, Priest and King. David was a type or shadow of Christ. Perhaps he served in all three capacities. The blessing of the people would have fit into the role of a priest.

**2 Sam. 6:19 And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine. So all the people departed every one to his house.**

Eating together is a sign of companionship. David took it upon himself to make the arrival of the ark in Jerusalem an occasion for a fellowship meal. Both men and women were given a cake of bread, a sizable portion of meat and a container of wine or grape juice. It seems that all is well that ends well!

**2 Sam. 6:20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!**

It did not end as well as David might have thought. Michal came out to meet David with fire in her eyes. She had been seething since she first saw him leaping around as the ark arrived. She had not come out to meet him and greet him with a kiss.



She attempted to shame him by the use of sarcasm and irony. Can we not almost hear the bitter tone of her voice as she accused him of exposure of his secret parts before the lowly female maids of his servants. This supposedly took place before David's household. Michal had overstepped her bounds in attempting to publicly shame her husband.

**2 Sam. 6:21 And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD.**

As we might expect, the King immediately spoke in his own defense. He declared that he had not been making a display of himself before the handmaids. His actions were intended as a method of telling the Lord that he was grateful for the safe transfer of the ark to the city of Jerusalem.

He added that Michal was not quite as important as she thought she was. God had chosen David's house to replace the house of Saul as the source of the ruler of Israel. Since God had appointed him as ruler over His people, David would continue to act just as he had been.

**2 Sam. 6:22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.**

He added that what she had said might well cause him to be even more vile. If what he had done was to

be counted by her as vile, she might expect that vile to increased. At least the maidservants would give him honor which Michal had failed to do.

**2 Sam. 6:23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.**

As a result of these events, Michal remained childless all the days of her life. There are two possible reasons for this condition. It may be that David was so revolted by her sarcasm that he never again called her to his bedroom. It may be that God disapproved of her words and actions and closed her womb.

But who was at fault, and to what degree? The present commentator is unable to sift through all of the details and be absolutely certain of the conclusion. David may not have exposed himself in an indecent manner. If he had worn the undergarment which the priests were to wear along with the ephod, the situation would be considerably different than it would if his only garment was the ephod. If he had indecently exposed himself, Michal would have been advised to deal with her complaints in private rather than in public.

If the childlessness was a result of David's contempt for her because of false accusations, the degree of guilt may have fallen mostly on Michal. If the childlessness was the result of God's closing her womb, this would have deprived David of bringing forth children through her.

Much depends upon whether David did actually allow his sexual instincts to take control for the moment. After all, he was not incapable of such conduct, as demonstrated by his affair with Bathsheba.



## *Chapter 7*

This is one of the more significant and interesting chapters of the entire Old Testament. It speaks of the coming of the Messiah to build a house for God. It has some difficult passages in it because there are certain types and shadows involved. Verses may apply to David's fleshly son, Solomon, his later descendant, Jesus Christ, or even to those who in the Christian age are found "in Christ." It occurs to us that this multiplicity of applications may be a deliberate tool to allow men the experience of watching God's plans develop and then realizing the full meaning only after the events.

**2 Sam. 7:1 And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies;**

Hiram, King of Tyre had brought cedar to Jerusalem to construct an impressive palace for David. David had been given God's assistance in overcoming much of the threat of the Philistines and other enemies. As a result David was sitting in his palace contemplating the blessings which had been poured out upon him and the nation of Israel.

**2 Sam. 7:2 That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.**

Here we have the first introduction to Nathan the prophet. He will become more visible as God's plans unfold. It appears that David began to have some degree of guilt concerning his own prestige and the neglect



he had paid to God who had made it all possible. He decided to consult with Nathan as to what he should do to remedy the neglect.

This is interesting in that David was also a prophet. Why did one prophet go to another to determine God's will? The truth seems to be that David did not go to Nathan as a prophet, but as one in whom he felt he could share his concerns. He pointed out to Nathan that the ark of God was still enclosed only by a tent, while he lived in luxury. He had considered the possibility of building a far more dignified shelter for the ark.

**2 Sam. 7:3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee.**

Nathan responded by telling David he agreed. David should go ahead with his plan. Nathan felt that God would be with the project. It should be noted that Nathan did not add a "thus saith the Lord" to his remarks. He was obviously giving David his own opinion rather than that of the Lord.

**2 Sam. 7:4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,**

**2 Sam. 7:5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?**

Even that same night God did speak to Nathan about David's plan. He informed Nathan that David's plan and his own advice were wrong. God asked Nathan a question which He clearly meant to receive a "No"



answer. It was against His will that David build a material house as His dwelling place.

**2 Sam. 7:6 Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.**

God is not only everlasting; He is also omnipresent. It is a mistake to think the Lord can be confined to a specific location. He had not dwelt in a permanent location since the people left Egypt. He had been perfectly satisfied with a tent which could be moved from place to place. His throne was between the cherubim on the cover of the ark, but His presence fills the universe.

**2 Sam. 7:7 In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?**

At no time had God ever requested the Israel build Him a palace of cedar such as David dwelt in. He was quite satisfied with the tabernacle or tent.

**2 Sam. 7:8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheeppcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:**

Now that the Lord had made his will clear with respect to the plan which David had suggested, He went on to tell David, through Nathan, what He had done and what He planned on doing about a dwelling place.

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There was a temple in the future, but it would be one of David's descendants who would build it.

He reminded David that the young man had been taken from tending the sheep of the pasture to the task of leading the people of God's chosen nation, Israel. That had been a tremendous change, and David could not have accomplished it without divine aid.

2 Sam. 7:9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth.

He also reminded David of what was said earlier about his enemies having been defeated and driven from the land. David had become known to the extent that his name was properly mentioned along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Since it was added that his name was like unto the great men that *are* in the earth, the statement may include the most famous men of David's own time.

The point is that God had providentially worked in David's life to prepare him for a very important place in the history of the entire world.

2 Sam. 7:10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime,

This is one of those very interesting verses which contain possible truths from different time periods. The primary reference here seems to be that of the nation of
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Israel in the land to which God had led them. A time would come when they would settle in one place. No enemies would then terrify them.

Israel did see a time when there was far less fear of invasion and they had the privilege of calling Palestine the "land of Israel." But there may be much more in this verse. It may be a type of the time when the people of God are told to enter into the joy of their Lord where Satan and his angels no longer threaten.

**2 Sam. 7:11 And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.**

The Lord had caused the primary fulfilment of that hope in the time of the judges. If God had allowed David to defeat his enemies and given Israel rest, He could be depended upon to bring about that which He was about to predict.

Rather than having David build Him an earthly material palace, God would build a house for David. It would be a continuing dynasty which would endure until the end of time.

**2 Sam. 7:12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.**

David's life would come to an end, but that did not mean the rule of Israel would be taken from his descendants. A son of David would inherit the rulership of God's people, and that rulership would not see an

end.

When we are told the seed should proceed from out of his own bowels, David is not to conclude that one of his own immediate children would rule until the end of time. Seed is used in the scriptures to refer to any descendant through the ages. Jesus Christ was the seed of David. (See 2 Tim. 2:8.)

*2Ti 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:*

**2 Sam. 7:13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.**

Jesus Christ would build a house for His Father's glory. This was not to be the role of David himself. It was to be accomplished by one of his seed generations later. The house which Jesus was to build was not to be a palace made with cedar. It was to be a living temple made of the souls of the faithful. God would not be confined to a specific location as the palace David had in mind. It would extend throughout the earth.

**2 Sam. 7:14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:**

Some see great difficulties in this verse. If the verse is speaking of Christ as the son of David, how is it possible to accuse Christ of sin? He is presented as the perfect Son of God who knew no sin. This is explained

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by seeing those who are in Christ as being a part of the seed of David. The Christ was of the fleshly seed of David, and those who have been baptized into Christ are one with Him. (Note Heb. 3:6

Heb 3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

If this is a correct view of the passage, the son of David's house is capable of sin, even if He Himself did not sin. When such sin is found in the spiritual seed of David, those who commit such sin are to be punished for their crimes.

Some see Solomon in the verses. This seems shortsighted. The one spoken of here was one whose throne was to be established forever.

2 Sam. 7:15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

There would of course be no need for the mercy of the Father if the seed of David was the perfect Son of God without considering those who are baptized into Him. It is a different story when all those who are "in Christ" are considered. They will commit iniquities, but God will not separate them from His kingdom. He will offer forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb.

Saul and the kingdom of his day were separated. Those who are found faithful in Christ will find mercy and forgiveness.

2 Sam. 7:16 And thine house and thy kingdom

shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

The house that God would allow this “Son of David to build would rule until time will be no more. An earthly palace made of cedar would some day rot and decay. The house David’s Son was to build for the Father in heaven would not end.

After all of these considerations, we need to make a final statement. David would not build the Lord a material dwelling. God would cause David’s household to lead to a spiritual dwelling and a spiritual kingdom which would be eternal.

2 Sam. 7:17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

We can envision David as listening to the words of Nathan the prophet with fear and trembling. He had thought he was about to recognize the glory of God through building Him a palace in Jerusalem. Now God had declared that plan to be a mistake and had commanded him to abandon his plan. What would come next?

2 Sam. 7:18 Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

David apparently went into the tabernacle and began to pray to God. The Lord had said he would use one from the house of David to build Him a house. He needed more details. How could the family of a man
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like himself be considered capable of doing what God had declared? What was there about his house which would lead God to choose it for His eternal plans?

**2 Sam. 7:19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?**

What God had done for David was very small in comparison to God's actual power and glory. Now he was promising that fantastic and eternal things were to come about through his seed. The events which God had promised were far beyond the ability of any man. How could this be?

**2 Sam. 7:20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant.**

David would hold his hand over his mouth and wait for God's plan to unfold. There was nothing else he could say. God knew him far better than he knew himself. If God chose to use his seed to set up a kingdom which would never end and would be victorious over all enemies, David could only say, "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth".

**2 Sam. 7:21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.**

David understood that the things God had done for him in the past were fitted into His eternal plan for all time. He was but a small piece of the entire puzzle. He

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was also grateful to God for allowing one like himself to know of that which was to come.

It is well that David did not stand up and inform the Lord that this was what might have been expected in view of his own skill and insight. He accepted the fact that he was but God's willing servant and the glory belonged to his Creator and Sustainer.

2 Sam. 7:22 Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

David's prayer sounds somewhat like that which the Christ taught his disciples to pray when he said the prayer should be concluded by giving God the glory, the honor and the praise.

Not only are there no other gods like unto Jehovah. There are no other gods. He is the only True and Living God. All that is necessary to do to realize God's greatness is to open one's eyes and ears to God's two books, the book of nature and the book of Holy Scripture. David was pleased to admit that truth.

2 Sam. 7:23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

This verse speaks both in the second person and the third person of Yahweh. No nation on earth is like God's chosen nation. As a result of God's blessings to
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Israel, Israel was indebted to glorify God's name in both word and deed.

**2 Sam. 7:24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.**

Abundant proof had been given to the world that Israel was in a covenant relationship with the Creator. God had committed Himself to the care and guidance of the nation of Israel and He had made it evident that He expected Israel to demonstrate gratitude by serving Him and observing His will.

**2 Sam. 7:25 And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.**

David was quite willing that the things spoken to him through Nathan the prophet would come to pass. He would refrain from building a permanent dwelling for the ark. He would look forward to God using his own seed to establish a kingdom which would last forever.

**2 Sam. 7:26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.**

David is not commanding God to do anything. That is the last thing in his mind. What he is doing is informing God that he is delighted to hear of God's plan for man and is happy to be a part of it.

**2 Sam. 7:27 For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.**

No, David would not build God a house as he had planned. God would not be confined in such a house as that. But God would build David's seed into a house which would result in blessings for all who became a part of it. That was good reason to pray this prayer of thanksgiving.

Some have noticed that in verse eighteen we are told David went and sat to pray. They are properly concerned with the degree of sincerity necessary for God to hear petitions. Jesus spoke of those who stand and pray in the marketplace to be heard of men. He called them hypocrites. This verse, however, tells us David "sat" as he prayed. Is this proper respect for God's greatness?

I once knew of a man who always kneeled to pray. When prayer was offered in chapel services at the college he made it a point to sit on the end of the pew where he could quietly slip out and drop down on his knees as prayer was offered. Our present verse says David prayed a heart felt prayer while he was sitting. Acceptable prayer may be offered in many different body positions. It is the condition of the heart which determines whether or not God will hear and answer.

**2 Sam. 7:28 And now, O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:**

Jehovah was the one who had blessed David and  
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the nation of Israel in the past. He had now promised even greater blessings through the seed of David. How wonderful it was that such blessings lay ahead, and that the Lord had been gracious enough to use him as a servant to participate in bringing these good things to pass.

2 Sam. 7:29 Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

This is David's "Amen", or "Be it so." If it pleased God to make use of him and his house to magnify His name and bless men, David was delighted.

The above is a beautiful picture. All is right between David and his Lord. Perhaps we should not inject the following thought into such a bright scene, but it is true that David did not always live up to the man we view here. He sinned grievously with Bathsheba and in the murder of her husband. Would it not have been wonderful if this man whose seed was to bless mankind had always lived in as great harmony with God's will as he showed himself willing to do at this time?

Nevertheless, we must remember that each of us who have committed ourselves to the Father and the Son today, all too often find ourselves walking the wide way which leads to destruction. We have great need to pray for guidance and strength to walking with the Lord.

Chapter 8

We continue now with the record of David's triumph over all of the foes of Israel in the land of Canaan. God had promised the land to His people and here we find the fulfillment of that promise.

2 Sam. 8:1 And after this it came to pass that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Methegammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

The phrase "after this" needs a slight clarification. It does not indicate a set of events immediately following the victory over the Philistines. Some of the matters related in the chapter are much farther removed from that time than others are.

The smiting of the Philistine was no easy task. They had been fierce enemies of Israel for a long time. Without the help of Jehovah it would have been a much more difficult, if not an impossible task.

The word "Methegammah" means "bridle of the mother city." In the book of I Chronicles it is called Gath. Gath may have been the more influential of the five major cities of the Philistines. To bridle the mother city would have been to stifle her power to control.

2 Sam. 8:2 And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

The Moabites had also been a major thorn in the side of God's people. Moab had been one of the groups rejecting the entrance of Israel into the land east of the Jordan. They also fell to the Israeli forces.

This verse is one of the more difficult passages in the books of First and Second Samuel. There are many possible suggestions as to its meaning. It is clear the Moab was defeated. But, what is done after the defeat provides a challenge. What does it mean to say that David had measured Moab with a line. And then put two lines to death and one line kept alive?

The best explanation seems to this writer to be that David caused the Moabites to fall to the ground, and then measured their numbers. The two lines would have been two thirds of the victims. The one full line would have been one third of them. The two thirds were put to death while the other third was kept alive. The one third which was kept alive became servants to Israel, and were forced to pay tribute to him.

2 Sam. 8:3 David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.

Hadadezer was a powerful king east of the Jordan. He had taken over a portion of the land which God had promised to Israel between the Jordan and the Euphrates Rivers. He also was soundly defeated and driven back.

2 Sam. 8:4 And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them for an hundred chariots.

God had forbidden Israel to multiply chariots and horses. David could not use these horses and chariots in battle. Jehovah was to be the source of strength and power. Horses and chariots were not. David thus either separated the horses from their chariots, or cut the hamstring tendons of the horses to render them useless as beasts of battle. Some believe the hocking was merely separating the horses from the chariots. Others believe the tendons on the back of the lower leg was severed to eliminate most of their power.

David did leave one hundred of them for drawing chariots, perhaps for royal processions. Even this would have been questionable.

2 Sam. 8:5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

When the Syrians heard of the defeat of Hadadezer, the king of Zobah, they determined to help him. This was a mistake on their part. They lost twenty-two thousand men. Again you are reminded that these victories were a result of the assistance of the God of heaven.

2 Sam. 8:6 Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

Damascus was a major city of the land of Syria. The Syrians were also made servants to the king of Israel, and were forced to pay tribute to him. The statement that the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went is a key to this entire chapter. These were God's victories.

2 Sam. 8:7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

These shields of gold were likely not shields large enough to protect the body from enemy swords and spears. They were more apt to have been some type of ornament which was worn as a symbol of their power and success. They were removed from the Syrians.

2 Sam. 8:8 And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.

Brass is composed partly of copper. Copper seems to have been abundant in the area which had been controlled by Hadadezer. Israel was much enriched by taking possession of large amounts of brass.

2 Sam. 8:9 When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer,

2 Sam. 8:10 Then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. And Joram brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass:

Upon hearing of the defeat of Hadadezer and the Syrians, Toi, the king of Hamath decided it was much the wiser path to make an alliance with David than to oppose him. It is also true that Hadadezer had been a persistent enemy of King Toi and there was good reason for Toi to rejoice at his defeat.

Toi demonstrated his willingness to subject his own

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forces to David by sending vessels of gold, silver and brass. This placed Hamath in the position of vassal to Israel.

**2 Sam. 8:11 Which also king David did dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued;**

Gold, silver and brass can be used for a variety of purposes. David decided to dedicate the tribute received from the conquered nations to Jehovah, who had made the victories possible. Later, David's son Solomon used much of these valuables to beautify the temple of God built in Jerusalem.

**2 Sam. 8:12 Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.**

**2 Sam. 8:13 And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, being eighteen thousand men.**

Another eighteen thousand men of Syria were taken and David became a famous man among many nations.

Now we have a list of the conquered foes of Israel.

1. Syrians
2. Moabites
3. Amalekites
4. Hadadezer
5. Philistines, and in the next verse the
6. Edomites



**2 Sam. 8:14 And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.**

God leaves no doubt in the Biblical record that it was not David alone who deserved the glory. He had seen to it that David was preserved and prospered. O that David had carried the memory of the successes when he was allied with God, as later he fell victim to lust and power. Men after God's own heart often come crashing down when they decide to divorce themselves from his will.

**2 Sam. 8:15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.**

All Israel was the land which God had promised to His people in the long ago. David, at this time was a successful leader. He saw to it that the oppressed were relieved, and the courts were fair to all men. There was no reason for justified complaints by any that justice had been denied. David was in charge and was discharging his responsibilities in fine fashion.

**2 Sam. 8:16 And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder;**

A difficult set of circumstances had to be handled. The eleven tribes in the north had a military leader and so did Judah in the south. David placed Joab over the military of the nation.

As recorder Jehoshaphat was placed in the position of

personal attendant to the king. He would have delivered important messages from the people to the king. He would also have made royal proclamations from the king to the people.

**2 Sam. 8:17 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were the priests; and Seraiah was the scribe;**

Normally there would have been but one priest who stood above the others. Because of the unique situation after the twelve tribes had been united, we have both Zadok and Ahimelech listed.

**2 Sam. 8:18 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.**

The Pelethites and the Cherethites appear to have been David's personal bodyguards. They were deliberately chosen from outside the family of Israel in order that any collaboration between power structures within the nation might be prevented. David was safer under the protection of hired foreigners than he would have been under that of Israelites with a sizable following.

David's sons were appointed to high positions in view of their possible rise to the throne after his death.

As we close this chapter, we remind the reader that the eighteenth chapter of the book of First Chronicles covers much of the same material as is covered here. I have avoided much discussion with respect to duplicate names of both persons and cities by not placing the two accounts side by side.

It is my intention to treat First and Second Samuel, and also First and Second Kings, as independent records



for the present. Since the two books of Chronicles overlaps the events of these four books to such a great extent, I have decided to treat those two books more as a harmony than as an independent record. There will be further discussion and attention given to any discrepancies when we arrive at those two books.

## Chapter 9

In this present chapter we are presented with the good side of David. It is likely that there were many other occasions in which the king showed the behavior which one might expect of one labeled as a man “after God’s own heart”. We tend to focus upon the blood which David shed in his conquest of the nations which his forces overcame in the taking of the land, and upon his adultery and murder of Bathsheba’s husband Uriah.

We need to remember that it was this same David who showed kindness to the descendants of Saul, who pursued him relentlessly in years gone by. We also need to recall that this David was the author of many Psalms which express humility, plus a willingness to honor and glorify Jehovah.

**2 Sam. 9:1 And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?**

It had been many years since David and Jonathan had made a covenant of peace between them, with God as their witness. (See I Samuel 20:16-21)

*1Sa 20:16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David’s enemies.*

*1Sa 20:17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.*

*1Sa 20:18 Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.*

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1Sa 20:19 And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

1Sa 20:20 And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

1Sa 20:21 And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt; as the LORD liveth.

Mephibosheth had been but five years old when Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle. He was now old enough to have a son. Yet, David had not forgotten that covenant. He desired to see if there was anything which he might do to bring peace and comfort to the descendants of Jonathan.

2 Sam. 9:2 And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he.

When a new dynasty began in these eastern countries at this time, the new king customarily put all of the descendants of the previous ruler to death to prevent opposition from them. David had nothing to fear on those grounds. Rather than having to contend with Saul's successors, he had to seek them out.

Ziba seems to have been a servant of Saul who had been placed in charge of Saul's estate after his death. We can guess that he may have been a bit apprehensive when the new king called for him to appear before him. Would he be in danger merely for being associated with

the estate? He did, however admit that he was the one for whom David was seeking.

2 Sam. 9:3 And 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.

Ziba would have been the one most apt to know if any of the house of Saul still remained. He admitted that Jonathan, with whom David had made the covenant of peace, had a son who was lame. The reason for this handicap was an accident when the man was but a lad. He had been crippled most of his life.

2 Sam. 9:4 And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar.

Ziba revealed the location of Jonathan's son. He must have wondered what the results of that information might be. Would David murder Jonathan's son?

2 Sam. 9:5 Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar.

Now it would have been Mephibosheth's time to wonder about his fate. He had been living peacefully in the household of Machir when David sent for him. It was strongly possible that his life was in serious danger.

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**2 Sam. 9:6 Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!**

There are other passages in which the name of this man is given as “Meribaal.” There are a number of names which show the letters “baal” as a part of the name. This particular one means “baal fighter.” It is not clear whether this was intended to mean that his father expected him to be a fighter for Baal, or a fighter against the false god, Baal.

Mephibosheth fell upon the ground with his face down to show his subjection before David. He proclaimed himself to be a servant, ready to obey David’s will.

**2 Sam. 9:7 And David said unto him, 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.**

David quickly dissolved his fears by telling him he would not only preserve his life, but because of the covenant which he had made with Mephibosheth’s father, Jonathan, he would present to him all of the land which had belonged to the private estate of Saul. Saul was actually Mephibosheth’s grandfather, but was from Saul’s seed.

In addition, David would make room for Jonathan’s son at his own table. This was more than just a promise to see that the younger man had enough food to eat. It carried with it a stamp of approval which would be recognized by all.

**2 Sam. 9:8 And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?**

Mephibosheth was overcome. He again humbled himself before David and expressed his surprise that one so insignificant would be given such favor. The form of expression which he used was only a way of saying thanks from the bottom of my heart.

**2 Sam. 9:9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.**

Ziba was the one who had been charged with administering the estate of Saul. He was also the one who had revealed Mephibosheth's place of residence to David. At this time, David is saying to Ziba that he has a new master. He has given Jonathan's son the estate of the former king.

**2 Sam. 9:10 Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.**

Ziba was to see that the land which had been placed under his charge was cultivated and brought forth food which could be used to feed the family of Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth would have a place at David's own table, but his family and household would need food. Fifteen sons plus twenty servants and their wives and children would require much to eat.



**2 Sam. 9:11 Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.**

Ziba could do little but consent to David's proclamation. He asserted that he would do just as he had been commanded.

The repeating of the statement David had made is only a way of emphasizing that David meant what he had said about making a place for Mephibosheth at his own table.

**2 Sam. 9:12 And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth.**

Micha's name will appear later in the record. It is introduced here in anticipation of what is to come.

**2 Sam. 9:13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.**

All that David had commanded was done. He had kept his covenant with Jonathan, whom he had loved dearly in earlier years.

All seems well with respect to Ziba and his willingness to accept David's decree that he place himself under the charge of Mephibosheth. It may not have been as smooth as it appears. Later, when Absalom rebelled against David, we find Ziba siding with Absalom.

## Chapter 10

This is the last chapter we come to before the other side of David's character begins to show. He has been the hero up to this point. He has been true to God, and God has been with him in his various endeavors. Yes, he has been a man of bloodshed, but David lived in a time and place where matters were very often solved in that way.

With the coming of Christ, the eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth philosophy was largely replaced by "love your enemies." In this chapter we find David's attempts to establish peaceful relations with the Ammonites rebuffed and distorted into a vicious battle. Again God is with him and the enemy is vanquished.

**2 Sam. 10:1 And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.**

In the last chapter we found David showing kindness to Mephibosheth. This time he attempts to do the same for the Ammonites, who were the descendants of Lot. Nahash had been the king of the Ammonites, but had died and been succeeded by his son Hanun. David saw this as an opportunity to show himself friendly and desirous of peaceful coexistence with this people.

**2 Sam. 10:2 Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.**

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We do not know for certain what the kindness was which Nahash had shown to David. It is quite possible that it was befriending David during the time Saul was pursuing him. Saul was an enemy to the Ammonites and Nahash may have aided David in eluding Saul.

David felt that Hanun might be grateful for a word of sympathy after the death of his father. He therefore sent some of his servants to deliver his condolences. They entered into the land of Ammon.

2 Sam. 10:3 And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?

Hanun might have been perfectly willing to accept David's messengers as peacemakers. It was not so with Hanun's underlings. They were not above board in their thinking and they were suspicious of the motives of David and his couriers.

Hanun's men considered him gullible. Did he really think David intended to honor Hanun's father Nahash and send words of comfort to the new king? Surely not! They convinced Hanun that the men had come to their capitol city to spy on it and find means to take possession of it.

2 Sam. 10:4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.

Unfortunately for Hanan, he believed their story. He shaved off half of the beard of each of the messengers. This was a very serious insult to a Jew. His beard was a sign of masculinity. The only reason a Jewish man would shave off his beard was to show grief in a time of mourning. No doubt a young Jewish male was extremely proud of that first fuzz on his chin which appeared at puberty.

Nor did Hanun stop there. He also cut off the garments of the messengers all way up to their buttocks. It is fairly certain that the robe was all the garment which these messengers were wearing and that cutting the clothing off at that level would have left their genitals exposed. They had been doubly insulted by their hosts.

2 Sam. 10:5 When they told it unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return.

The situation was reported to David who sent someone to meet them. The men did not wish to appear in their own country in such a humiliating condition. They might replace their robes fairly easily, but it would take some time for their beards to grow back to what they would have considered respectability.

Jericho was a relatively deserted city at the time. The walls had been demolished in the time of Joshua and had never been rebuilt. The population would have been sparse and the men would have been less exposed to ridicule.

2 Sam. 10:6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of
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**Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Bethrehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men.**

It did not take long before the Ammonites found that they had made themselves abominable to the nostrils of David. What they had done was such an insult that it actually could mean violence between Israel and Ammon.

The Ammonites decided it was wise to prepare for their defense if David did send his army against them. They hired soldiers from Syria to fight alongside them in case that took place. In addition to their own forces, they had thirty-two thousand footmen. These were what we presently call mercenaries. They were hired soldiers without the commitment the Ammonites themselves might have had.

**2 Sam. 10:7 And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.**

David did not take the first step. However, when he heard the Ammonites and their allies were being amassed, he sent for Joab, the captain of his own forces, and enrolled his own military men. Efforts to establish friendship and peace had turned into war.

**2 Sam. 10:8 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishtob, and Maacah, were by themselves in the field.**

The battle would be fought near the gates of the city of Ammon. The Ammonites themselves gathered at the gates of their city. The Syrians whom they had hired were gathered in the open country nearby. Thus they could enclose the army of Israel in a pincer movement, with the enemy in front of them and also behind them.

**2 Sam. 10:9 When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians:**

Joab did about the only thing he could do. He divided his own forces and sent part of them against the Ammonites and the rest against the Syrians.

**2 Sam. 10:10 And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon.**

Joab led the most efficient men against the Syrians, and the rest were sent against the Ammonites under the leadership of Joab's brother, Abishai.

**2 Sam. 10:11 And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.**

Joab then gave Abishai some excellent advice. If the Syrians were getting the best of him, Abishai was to turn and aid him. If the Ammonites began to defeat the forces led by Abishai, Joab would turn his forces

attention to helping him. This meant that they must pray that one of the other of them would be able to more than hold their own in their part of the battle.

**2 Sam. 10:12 Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good.**

At first reading, this verse may look quite difficult because of the words “play the men for our people.” It is really very meaningful. Other translations than the King James use the word “man” rather than men. Joab was telling the soldiers that they must stand up and act like men. There were three reasons for acting with such courage. They were fighting for their families, for their nation and for the Lord. This would have stirred both their patriotism and their faith.

After they had done all they were able, they must place their destiny in the hands of the Lord. He could do that which was good in His sight. Joab was willing to place their lives under God’s grace and power.

**2 Sam. 10:13 And Joab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him.**

After the speech which Joab had just made we can see that the intensity of the Israelites might have been much greater than that of the hired soldiers who had allied themselves with the men of Ammon. The Ammonites soon turned tail and left the field of battle.

**2 Sam. 10:14 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.**

When the Ammonites saw that the Syrians had left them by themselves, they realized they were now up against the entire army of Israel and had no chance of defeating them. There seems to have been no fighting at all between the soldiers who were with Abishai and the Ammonites. They fled and retreated behind the walls of their city.

**2 Sam. 10:15 And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together.**

The war was not quite over yet. The Syrians had retreated in chaos before Joab and his men. Now they were ready to prove this was just a short term defeat.

**2 Sam. 10:16 And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river: and they came to Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer went before them.**

The reader may be a bit confused over the two names by which this man is known. He is called Hadarezer, and is also called Hadadezer. This is probably due to a similarity in the Hebrew letters of his name. The letter with the “d” sound is almost identical in shape with the letter of the “z” sound. On primitive writing materials



the copyist could easily misread, or be misread.

This man was convinced that the Syrians should not have retreated before Israel. He assembled more of his men from the territory east of the Euphrates and came back for further confrontation.

**2 Sam. 10:17 And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.**

David was not ready to accept defeat before meeting the enemy. He called the entire Israeli army together and marched them across the Jordan river to meet the forces of Hadarezer. All of the conflicts mentioned in this chapter took place a few miles northeast of the city of Jericho. Jericho lay near the edge of the Jordan on the west side of the river.

**2 Sam. 10:18 And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew the men of seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there.**

This battle was also decisive. The Israelites soundly defeated the Syrians, killing seven hundred of their charioteers, and forty thousand men mounted on horses. They also slew Shobach, who was the captain of their forces.

**2 Sam. 10:19 And when all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and**

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served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

This victory assured David again of gaining control over the land from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates river. It would be much more satisfying to leave David at this peak of success, than to follow his actions through the latter chapters of the book of Second Samuel. All too often exaltation leads men to overconfidence and then to humiliation!



Chapter 11

David had been a man of bloodshed previous to this time. But the shedding of blood had been approved by the Lord. The situation changes sharply now. After having been praised and blessed by God, and even presented as a type of the later King of Israel, Jesus Christ, David demonstrates the truth that the man that standeth should “take heed lest he fall”. David did just that.

2 Sam. 11:1 And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

In the previous conflict, the Ammonites had been quite decidedly defeated, but had pulled back with the city walls at Rabbah. David and his forces had left the field of battle and returned to their homes. At certain times of the year it was too cold to enter military action. At other times it was too hot. In the next year, when the season was right, David sent his army back to Rabbah to besiege it.

David was apparently convinced that Joab could handle the management of the troops. Things were going well and there was no need for his own presence. He remained in Jerusalem.

2 Sam. 11:2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

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In the evening while it was still light enough to see well, David arose from an evening siesta and went to the roof of his palace where he could enjoy the evening breezes and cast his eye upon God's capitol city.

As he did so, by chance he happened to see a woman washing herself. Although the text does not say she had removed her clothing, it would appear that he could see more of her charms than just her face and hands. He took note that she was extremely beautiful.

David would have been wise to have left it at that. Lust can easily lead to immorality, and immorality to death. David failed to turn his eyes away and forget the sight. He decided to follow up on what he had seen.

Was what took place after this partly the fault of the woman, Bathsheba? Probably so. Most women are aware of the effect their charms have upon men. Pure women will avoid tempting men by displaying their bodies carelessly. Bathsheba had been careless. As a result, she had been a partner in the lust David felt. He had committed adultery already with her in his heart.

**2 Sam. 11:3 And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?**

David already had a number of wives. God had intended from the beginning that one woman was sufficient to satisfy the desires of one man. His harem should have been more than enough.

Nevertheless, he sent to find out details. He found that she was a married woman. To take her would have been adultery and this was a sin punishable by death. Both the man and the woman who committed adultery

were worthy of death.

Bathsheba was the wife of one of David's most valiant soldiers. Uriah the Hittite was her husband. The Hittites had been enemies of Israel in the past, but some, such as Uriah had united themselves with Israel and served beside them.

**2 Sam. 11:4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.**

Bathsheba's husband was a long way from Jerusalem with the Israeli forces fighting against Rabbah. There was no reason for Uriah to have to know that his wife had been with David. Feeling he was safe, David sent for her to come to him. The text simply states that "she came." There is no hint of resistance on her part. This could have been because she was fearful of the consequences if she refused. It could also have been because she was flattered by such attention from the king of the entire nation.

The two had sexual relations. She had just passed through her menstrual period and was considered purified. This may or may not have had reference to the physical cleansing after the menstrual emissions had ended. It could have had to do with the seven days during which men were to refrain from intercourse with their wives because they were considered unclean.

After the sin, Bathsheba returned to her own house. Both David and the woman no doubt felt this was "sin for a moment." They were both to find this was not the case. The consequences were to be felt for years to come.

**2 Sam. 11:5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.**

David soon received a message from Bathsheba which would have produced severe shock. She had conceived and was carrying his child. Was his sin to be exposed? Little did he give thought to the fact that it had already been exposed to the eyes of an all seeing God. He might be able to conceal his guilt from men. He would not be able to hide it from the Lord.

**2 Sam. 11:6 And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.**

David was intelligent, even if he had not used his intelligence wisely. He developed a plan whereby he might cover his tracks and everyone would be happy. If he could bring Bathsheba's husband Uriah home from the battlefield and allow him to spend a night in bed with his wife, Uriah might be very happy to find that he had sired a child. Bathsheba could proudly claim to her husband and to her friends that the babe was his.

Joab must have wondered why David needed one of his best fighters as a messenger to tell him how the battle was going. He could have sent any good runner. But, he honored the command and sent Uriah.

**2 Sam. 11:7 And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.**

David made it appear that the reason he had sent for Uriah was to discover how the conflict was moving forward. Was the leader Joab doing well? Were the  
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soldiers successfully waging the war? Was there any reason for concern?

Uriah must have also wondered why it was necessary for him to leave his command post when there were hundreds of men who could have delivered the information. We have no hint that he suspected his wife of going to bed with the king.

2 Sam. 11:8 And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king.

After going through the formalities of asking for news from the battle front, David attempted to put into action the plan which would solve his problem. He told Uriah to go down to his house and wash his feet. Such an act was often done by a man's wife. David could imagine the results when the beautiful Bathsheba was washing the feet of her husband who had been absent for some time.

As an added means of promoting a meeting in the bedroom between Uriah and his wife, David sent a meal to the two. This would certainly not hurt the possibilities of a romantic night.

2 Sam. 11:9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.

Things did not work out at all as David had planned. Uriah did not even go to his house. He slept all night at the door of the palace with the servants.

2 Sam. 11:10 And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house?

The servants were somewhat surprised that Uriah had not gone to his house. They related these facts to David. Now we have more possibilities of suspicion. Joab must have wondered. Now these servants must have had some concern about the reason for Uriah's strange behavior. It is highly possible that whispers were beginning.

David called for Uriah and questioned him as to his action. After all, he had been away from home for a time. He had been miles from his home and his wife. Was it not reasonable that he would enjoy a night of pleasure and relaxation with his wife?

2 Sam. 11:11 And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.

In Uriah's reply to David we see a picture of great loyalty. What a contrast we have between the unfaithfulness of David and Bathsheba, and the sincerity of Uriah. He would not think of living in pleasure while the ark of the covenant was out on a battlefield. The rest of the army was living in open fields. Surely it would be presumptuous on his part to enjoy the comfort



of his own house, and the company of his wife while others were in hardship.

2 Sam. 11:12 And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow.

David was still not satisfied that his plan had crumbled completely. He extended Uriah's leave from the battlefield for another day. Perhaps this would put enough sexual hunger into his body that he would break down and spend the night as David had intended.

2 Sam. 11:13 And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

David then added another wrinkle in his plan. He determined that he would make Uriah drunk. This might well dull his moral convictions and cause him to change his mind about a relationship with his wife Bathsheba.

It did not work. Even after Uriah was drunk, he refused to go to his house. He slept again with the servants of the king at the gate of the palace.

2 Sam. 11:14 And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

David decided more extreme measures must be taken. Even when drunk, Uriah's convictions were

strong enough to resist the temptation to go to his wife. It would be necessary to deal with the matter on the battlefield. The king wrote a letter and sent it to Joab by the hand of Uriah.

2 Sam. 11:15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

It was cruel and sinful enough to plot the death of Uriah. It is nearly unbelievable that the message to kill him was to be carried by Uriah himself.

The plan was to put Uriah's men in the place of greatest danger and let him lead his men into the fray. Then when he and his men were in the midst of the hostilities, Joab was to remove the rest of the army and let Uriah and his small band attempt to face the enemy without help. This should bring about Uriah's death. David would then feel he had taken care of his own guilt.

2 Sam. 11:16 And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were.

Joab cooperated with the plot. Nevertheless, he must have known there were some unanswered questions. Why did he go along with the plan? We can only guess that he expected to be rewarded later for doing just as he was told. His was not to reason why. His was but to do or die.

2 Sam. 11:17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the
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**people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.**

This battle need not even have been fought. The Ammonites were penned up in the walled city. Their supplies must eventually run out. They would then either have been forced to exit the city and fall into the hands of Joab's forces, or they could stay in the city and starve.

But the battle was fought. Just as David had planned. Uriah was killed. He was not the only one to die. There were other soldiers who shared the same fate. David must shoulder the blame for the deaths of every man who lost his life in that part of the conflict.

**2 Sam. 11:18 Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war;**

**2 Sam. 11:19 And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,**

**2 Sam. 11:20 And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?**

Joab then sent a messenger to tell David the outcome of the plan. The messenger was to inform David that some of the men had been killed in the course of the fight. After David heard that he would no doubt tell the messenger that the men should not have gotten close enough to the wall to get into that type of danger. Surely Joab would know the enemy would be able to shoot at them from the top of the wall.

**2 Sam. 11:21 Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.**

After all, Abimelech had died under just such circumstances. Having gotten too close to a city wall, he had been struck by a millstone which a woman cast down on top of him. If David made any such statement, the messenger was to tell him that Uriah the Hittite had been one of those killed.

**2 Sam. 11:22 So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for.**

**2 Sam. 11:23 And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.**

The messenger did not tell the story just as Joab had told him. He said the reason they had been so close was that the Ammonites had come out of the city and attacked them in the field. They had then fought back and driven them to the very gates of the city.

**2 Sam. 11:24 And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.**

He went on to say that those who were on the wall then shot down upon the Israelites and killed a number of them. Then he added, as Joab had instructed him,  
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“Uriah the Hittite is dead also.”

This was precisely what David was waiting to hear. He and Bathsheba need no longer fear the sentence of death because of their adultery. We can almost hear him breathe a sigh of relief.

2 Sam. 11:25 Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

David pretended to be sympathetic toward the plight of those who had lost their lives. The messenger was to return and tell Joab he should not be discouraged at the loss of the men. Any man who entered into battle knew he could be killed. War did not choose who would live and who would die. The messenger was to offer Joab words of encouragement from the king.

2 Sam. 11:26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

Was Bathsheba’s mourning genuine, or was it an act? She was no doubt relieved that her adultery had not been publicized. She could have truly loved her husband and mourned over his death, but it is more likely that she was looking forward to being a favorite wife of the king of Israel.

2 Sam. 11:27 And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she

became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

It did not take David long to attend to her sadness. He must have liked what he experienced with her before. He sent and brought her to his palace where she became one of his wives and gave birth to his son.

All was well except for one thing. That was the displeasure of Jehovah at what had been done. Before this time David had acted as a man after God's own heart. After this God's attitude toward David was not the same. David was later forgiven of his sin, but even though forgiven, he suffered grief and misery for the remainder of his life. The next chapter will introduce the beginning of these sorrows.



Chapter 12

In the last chapter, David may have been feeling fairly comfortable, except for a terribly guilty conscience. It appeared that he had covered his little escapade with Bathsheba from the eyes of the world. He may have hid it from the eyes of men. He did not hide it from the eyes of the Lord. He will find that out in the immediate future.

2 Sam. 12:1 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

Nathan the prophet stood in somewhat the same position at this time as Samuel had in his day. The relationship between God's prophet and the king of Israel was critical to the welfare of the nation.

Nathan was accustomed to approaching David with pronouncements on cases before this. It was not unexpected to David that Nathan would request a meeting with him. In contrast, David would certainly not have expected the conversation which was just ahead.

Nathan began to relate a parable to the king. It started off much as some other cases might have started as Nathan presented it. David had no realization that it would be a mirror in which he could see his own reflection.

Two men of quite different means lived in the same city. The rich man,

David, had much. The poor man, *Uriah*, had very little.

2 Sam. 12:2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:

At present we would have declared the rich man to be a multimillionaire. It would be difficult to place a true value on all of his possessions. He had more than he could ever make use of.

2 Sam. 12:3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

We would today call the poor man a pauper. All he had to call his own was one little ewe lamb. He did have a wife and family. The poor man was proud of his one little ewe lamb. It was a source of great satisfaction. He fed it and cared for it with all his heart.

2 Sam. 12:4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

A traveller came by, causing the rich man to demonstrate his wealth. He decided to prepare a fine meal for the visitor. But, rather than taking a lamb from his own large flock, he used his power to take the precious ewe lamb and slaughter it.



2 Sam. 12:5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:

Without realizing what was about to be revealed, David became furious! What a horrible sin this was, for the lamb to be taken from the poor man and used to furnish the rich man's table!

David swore the Lord Himself that the rich man must die for what he had done. According to the law of the Lord, the man must be punished for his robbery.

2 Sam. 12:6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

David then demonstrated his knowledge of the law of God. (See Exodus 22:1.)

Exo 22:1 If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.

A man who stole a sheep was expected to pay the victim back with four sheep in place of the one he had taken. David had no idea that he was pronouncing sentence upon himself. He had shown no pity for Uriah. God could be expected to lay a heavy fine upon him.

2 Sam. 12:7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

Countless powerful sermons have been preached under the title “Thou art the man!” Those who deceive themselves into thinking they can oppress others without answering to God for their lack of pity will one day be shocked back into reality.

2 Sam. 12:8 And I gave thee thy master’s house, and thy master’s wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

David had received the kingdom from Saul. As the new king, he had inherited Saul’s harem of wives. He lived in a mansion. God was even prepared to increase his blessings if he had continued faithful.

May I again repeat that such statements as are found in this verse do not indicate God’s approval of polygamy. It was not so from the beginning. God was not saying he would see that David multiplied wives. That was included only because that was the key to the parable.

2 Sam. 12:9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Now we have the startling words Nathan spoke to the king. David was the rich man. He had knowingly ignored the commandment of God against both adultery and murder. He had taken the poor man’s lone wife and added her to his bedroom. Then he had been guilty of the
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murder of Uriah through the sword of the Ammonites. He had just as surely killed Uriah as if he had swing the sword with his own hand.

**2 Sam. 12:10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.**

The punishment was to fit the crime. As David had used the sword to murder Uriah, God would see to it that David would have to suffer from the sword through the rest of his life. He would not take Bathsheba from David, but would visit great suffering upon him. He would have to pay back fourfold.

**2 Sam. 12:11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.**

**2 Sam. 12:12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.**

David was to experience horrible anguish as a result of the abuse of his own wives by members of his own household. He had committed his sin with Bathsheba in what he thought was secret. It would not be that way when David's own wives were taken. The abuse would be in broad daylight, within sight of all who passed by.

The announced punishment was to become real. David's son Absalom took some of David's women on a housetop to show he had more power than his father David.

*2Sa 16:21 And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong.*

*2Sa 16:22 So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.*

**2 Sam. 12:13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.**

It took enormous courage for Nathan to boldly point out to the king that he had been a rank sinner and would be punished for his defiance of the Lord. Nathan did not flinch. He spoke the word of the Lord and expected God to take care of the consequences. Preachers and dedicated Christians sometimes face similar dangers. To speak the truth in the face of danger is not always easy. It is always right!

Nathan informed David that as a result of his penitent attitude, he would be allowed to live. Sometimes life is more difficult than death. David's life would take an abrupt turn after this time. Many of the blessings of the past were replaced by sorrow and anguish.

**2 Sam. 12:14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.**

For some reason David had a particularly strong affection for the infant which Bathsheba brought into  
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the world. He must have had many other children through his other wives and concubines. But this one was special. God used that fact to show David the folly of ignoring His commandments.

2 Sam. 12:15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

Nathan left with David wondering just what was in store for the future. Would the babe truly die? Perhaps there was a chance that God would repent of this horrible threat. God had shown surprising grace at times in the past when men turned from their sins and determined to leave them behind. Maybe, if he fasted, prayed and humbled himself sufficiently, God would lessen the sentence upon him.

To add to David's concern, the newborn babe became very ill with the first week of it's life. There was reason to think it might die, just as the Lord had predicted.

2 Sam. 12:16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

David prayed with all his heart for God to spare the life of the baby. He fasted. He lay on the ground all night instead of sleeping in his bed. In every way he knew, David attempted to show Jehovah how sorry he was for his defiant actions.

2 Sam. 12:17 And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

Those to whom he would normally have gone to get advice in times of difficulty offered such advice. It was not right for the king of Israel to lie on the ground in tears. David would neither get up off the ground, nor would he resume eating his food. This went on for seven days.

2 Sam. 12:18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

Under the law of Moses, on the eighth day of a newborn male's life, he was to be circumcised. This placed him in covenant relationship with the God of heaven. The day before that was to have taken place, the babe died!

The servants were at a complete loss as to what they should do. David needed to know, but they were afraid of what might occur if they told him of the death of his child. If he had reacted so seriously at the sickness of the baby, what would he do when he heard of it's death? He might well commit suicide or become irrational and violent toward others.

2 Sam. 12:19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

They did not have to tell him. David saw them whispering to one another and concluded the death had

occurred. He asked if his conclusion was correct. The servants told him he was right. His baby was dead!

2 Sam. 12:20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

What was their surprise but to see David get up off the earth, upon which he had prostrated himself for those seven days, wash the dust off his body and head for the house of worship where he prayed to Jehovah.

Then he went to his own house and when they offered him food, he satisfied his hunger, which must have been great after the fasting.

2 Sam. 12:21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

To the servants, this was a most amazing turn around in the actions of David. They wished to know why he seemed relieved after the death when he had been acting so inconsolably during the sickness. He would not even eat while the child was sick. Now he had arisen and eaten a meal.

2 Sam. 12:22 And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

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David's answer made very good sense. He was doing everything possible to keep the babe with him while there was still hope of avoiding the end. It was just possible that God might reduce the sentence and allow life to continue.

**2 Sam. 12:23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.**

All of that hope had disappeared when the death took place. God had decreed that the punishment should stand. There was no reason to continue pleading and showing regret for his sin. All David could do was live in such a way that he could be reunited with his child in death.

Does this mean David was certain of conscious existence after death? Quite likely it does. Yet the case is not absolute. David could have been thinking that it would be better to die than to live under the circumstances which he realized could lie ahead for him.

The verse before us has been the text for many many sermons. When a child passes on shortly after birth, David's statement has been comforting to many grieved parents. The grieving must not go on everlastingly. The thing to do is live life in accordance with the will of God and look forward to the company of the lost one when this life is over.

**2 Sam. 12:24 And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.**



Up to this point we have not read a word about Bathsheba's thoughts from the time David took her from Uriah until now. We now find that she also grieved over the loss. David had to a degree settled his own mind. He would do his best to comfort the woman.

The committing of adultery was a sin worthy of death for both the man and the consenting woman. Neither David nor Bathsheba lost their lives as a result of their sin. When David repented, God said He would not take the man's life. Did Bathsheba repent? We do not know. We do know from this verse that they continued to live together and have sexual relations.

The result was that Bathsheba conceived and bore another male child. This child was named Solomon, a name which means "peace." David and Bathsheba may have thought the birth of this child was indication God was through punishing them. Solomon did not become sick and die as the previous baby had done. God loved him and allowed him to live.

**2 Sam. 12:25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.**

In fact, God's love for the new child was sufficient that He instructed Nathan to inform the parents He was "beloved of the Lord." This is the only time Solomon is called by this name. During the life of Solomon there was a far greater degree of peace than during the reign of David.

**2 Sam. 12:26 And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.**

Many commentators feel this does not mean we are following the actual chronological order of the events. The following verses, to the end of the chapter, may be a return to shortly after the battles with the Ammonites. It is difficult to tell.

Joab decided to continue the war with the Ammonites and attacked their major city.

**2 Sam. 12:27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.**

Joab sent word to David that he had succeeded in taking the “city of waters.” This apparently meant he had taken the part of the city which protected the water supply. It did not mean he had conquered the entire city. That still remained to be done.

**2 Sam. 12:28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.**

Both Joab and David knew that the control of the water supply would spell the quick end to resistance. In very short time the Ammonites would find it impossible to defend the city.

Joab did not wish to bring on the jealousy of his king. If David was not there at the surrender of Ammon, everyone would be tempted to name the city after him. He invited David to bring more soldiers and be present at the final battle.

**2 Sam. 12:29 And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against**  
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it, and took it.

2 Sam. 12:30 And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was set on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.

David did as Joab suggested. The city was taken and David took the crown from the king of the Ammonites and had it set upon his own head. This was a pronouncement of victory and of the subjection of the Ammonites to Israel.

There is discussion regarding the weight and value of the crown taken from the king of the Ammonites. It is said to have had a weight of a talent of gold. Since a talent of gold would have been approximately seventy-five pounds, this would have been an unlikely weight for one to balance on his head. This may well mean the precious gems embedded in the crown were worth as much as a talent of gold would have been worth.

Also, the talent has been estimated at more than one weight. It may be that the talent spoken of here was a smaller unit than the normal one. Whichever the case, the crown was very valuable and David also took possession of other spoils, which may have been used later in the building of Solomon's temple.

2 Sam. 12:31 And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

There is strong disagreement concerning what is meant by this last verse of the chapter. The first impression the reader gains is that David cut the defeated soldiers into pieces with saws, dragged harrows over their bodies, used axes to hack them to pieces and burned them up in the ovens where bricks was baked. This could be the case. God approved of the killing of all of the Amalekites and punished Saul when he left Agag alive. David shed much blood during the course of his victories over the nations inhabiting the promised land.

Most of the writers do not agree with that first impression. It is pointed out that the word “under” is not in the original Hebrew. It could mean that David put the conquered soldiers to hard labor, using the saws, the harrows, the axes and the brick kilns. The battle was concluded. The Ammonites would not be capable of further resistance.

Chapter 13

God had pronounced curses upon the house of David as a result of his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband Uriah. This chapter shows the pronouncement was not an idle one. It will begin to become reality!

2 Sam. 13:1 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.

We are not told precisely how long it was from God's pronouncement of the curses until the events of this chapter. It was probably not a very lengthy period.

Both Tamar and Absalom were the children of David through Maacah. They were full brother and sister. Tamar is described as being "fair." We thus see some similarities with Bathsheba. David had noted Bathsheba's beauty while she was bathing. The similarities between David's sin and that of his son Amnon will be quite evident in the verses just ahead.

Amnon was the son of David through Ahinoam. She was a half sister to Absalom and Tamar. Amnon was sexually attracted to his half sister. The word "love" is used. In truth, his feelings could be called lust rather than love. The events to follow show that he had little concern for her well being. Love is an emotion which leads one to seek the well being of the object of that love.

2 Sam. 13:2 And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a

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**virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.**

Amnon would have been well advised to resist the lust which arose in his heart. It might have begun with simple admiration of her beauty. That would have been honorable. He did not do that. He fed his passion until it grew into an unquenchable flame. This caused him to feel great stress. He saw no way in which he could satisfy his desire.

**2 Sam. 13:3 But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtil man.**

Amnon had an acquaintance. I do not wish to admit this man was his friend. The man's name was Jonadab. He proved to be no friend to Amnon.

Jonadab is said to have been a subtil man. Several other words could have been applied to his personality. The words "clever", "shrewd" and "underhanded" come to mind. Jonadab will apply his questionable character to the disease in Amnon's heart.

**2 Sam. 13:4 And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.**

Jonadab took note of the distress written on the face of Amnon and after seeing it continue for a number of days, he asked what was wrong. After all he was the king's son. He could have nearly anything he wanted. There was not reason to lose weight over it.



Amnon admitted that he had a problem. He revealed that he was attracted to his half sister Tamar. He calls her Absalom's sister because of the closer relationship between Absalom and Tamar.

**2 Sam. 13:5 And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand.**

Jonadab's subtlety rears it's ugly head. He makes a suggestion which proves he was not true friend to Amnon. There was a way by which Amnon could have what he desired.

He needed to pretend he was sick and had lost his appetite. When his father David came to see him, he was to tell his father, it would help if Tamar would come and prepare him some food where he could watch her do so. He was to add that he wished to have her actually feed the prepared food to him.

**2 Sam. 13:6 So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand.**

Amnon was all too ready to follow the advice of Jonadab. He lay down on a bed and pretended to be sick. He requested that David send Tamar to make him a couple of cakes within his sight, and then sit beside him and feed them to him with her own hands.

**2 Sam. 13:7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat.**

David had little reason to suspect foul play. He agreed to fill Amnon's wish. He sent word to Tamar to go to her brother Amnon's house and fix him some cakes. Little did he know in what danger he was placing her.

**2 Sam. 13:8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes.**

Tamar did not hesitate to follow her father's directions. She had no more reason than her father to suspect foul play. The danger which lay just ahead was the farthest thing from her mind as she went about preparing to help a sick relative. We admire her willingness to give aid.

When Tamar arrived at Amnon's house she found him lying in bed as if he was unable to arise and enter into normal daily activities. She made the cakes, as she had been asked to do. She may have wondered why it was necessary to do this in his sight, but she did as she was directed.

**2 Sam. 13:9 And she took a pan, and poured them out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him.**

The reader may be wondering how one can bake two, as Amnon had asked, cakes and then pour them  
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out before him. It is possible to think of pouring two cakes out of a container, even if they are solid from the baking process.

Amnon then made a surprising request. He wanted every person to leave the room. He would not eat until they left. Now Tamar might have had some suspicion as to what was about to happen.

2 Sam. 13:10 And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother.

Tamar must have been baking the cakes in an adjoining room where Amnon could see her moving around, though not in the same room with him. He now wanted her to come closer to him and feed them to him by hand. She still saw no reason strong enough to refuse his favor. She brought the cakes to the beside.

2 Sam. 13:11 And when she had brought them unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister.

Now she was in for a serious shock. When she reached out to feed him a cake, he grabbed her and told her he wanted her to lie down in the bed and allow sexual intercourse. He did not let the fact that she was a close relative hinder the proposal.

2 Sam. 13:12 And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly.

Bathsheba may have been a willing participant in her relationship with David. It was no so in this case. Tamar immediately answered, “No.” She added that Amnon should not force her against her will. This sort of behavior was such as would bring shame from those who heard of it. What he had asked was absolute foolishness.

2 Sam. 13:13 And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.

Tamar was proud of her chastity. She was a virgin and did not want to lose that status under the present circumstances. She would be made ashamed. Not only that. Amnon would be considered a fool. If others knew he could not find a woman who would have him willingly, he would find himself greatly ridiculed.

2 Sam. 13:14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.

Amnon would not listen to Tamar’s pleas, or her reasons for stopping his folly. He forced himself upon her and raped her.

I would like to suggest that most normal men would find such a relationship distasteful. First, the woman could make the experience quite difficult by struggling. Second, even if she did submit under force, the results would be highly unsatisfying. Pleasant sexual relations are most satisfying when the man desires the woman, and the woman returns that affection.

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**2 Sam. 13:15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.**

Amnon's feelings for Tamar were not love. They were strictly animal lust. As soon as he had attained his goal, and the sexual pressure was released, he despised her. If any thing, the revulsion he felt was stronger than the attraction he had felt beforehand.

The insult went even farther. The scriptures decreed that a man who had intercourse with a virgin who was not espoused was to marry her. That was the last thing Amnon intended to do. He demanded that she "Get out!"

**2 Sam. 13:16 And she said unto him, There is no cause: this evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her.**

If this present writer were in the shoes of Tamar, he would not wish to spend the rest of life with one who had treated her as an object of lust. However, Tamar was apparently ready to marry Amnon to save both of them from embarrassment.

She could have meant that she merely expected him to support her as a result of stealing her purity and making her undesirable to possible suitors.

**2 Sam. 13:17 Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her.**

Amnon did not even bother to escort her to the door. He called one of his servants and told him to pitch her out. He was then to lock the door so she could not reenter the room.

**2 Sam. 13:18 And she had a garment of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.**

**2 Sam. 13:19 And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that was on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.**

Tamar had been dressed in a beautiful robe of many colors. King's daughters who were still virgins wore such robes. Well before this time Joseph was shown favor by his father Jacob by receiving the same type of garment. It seems that the robe may have been embroidered with various colors of thread which caused a fine appearance.

When the servant expelled Tamar she went into mourning. She tore her beautiful robe to indicate her loss of virginity. She put ashes upon her head and then placed her hand upon her head and went away weeping.

**2 Sam. 13:20 And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he is thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.**



Tamar's full brother, Absalom, suspected what had happened. He directly asked her if Amnon had been with her. He did not mean to ask if they had been having a delightful conversation. When he found that his suspicions were correct, he told her to maintain her self control. She should not take the insult too seriously. After all, it was not as if some stranger had done this. It was her half brother.

Tamar made the decision to keep the shame and folly at as low a level as possible. She set herself apart by remaining alone in her brother Absalom's house.

**2 Sam. 13:21 But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.**

How did her father, David, hear about the disgrace? We are not told. We do know that things like this have a way of getting around. Absalom may have informed David himself. Regardless of the means by which David found out, he was outraged. He did not follow up on his wrath. David had a discipline problem with his children. Amnon had no doubt gotten away with rebellion many times before, without suffering any painful consequences. Why should it be different now?

**2 Sam. 13:22 And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.**

Absalom was also angry. He intended to do something about the rape. It should be punished, and he intended to see that the punishment was meted out. Tamar was his sister and he would not accept the disgrace which had befallen her without a response.

He did, however, bide his time until there was a convenient season. He would wait until the issue had lain quiet for a while. Then, when it was not expected, he would act.

**2 Sam. 13:23 And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baalhazor, which is beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.**

Absalom saw the opportunity two years later. He was having a sheep shearing which served also as a social event. Agricultural men often share labor at times like these. The women see to it that there is an abundance of food and at mealtime there is great fellowship. Absalom invited all of his father's sons to the event.

**2 Sam. 13:24 And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant.**

Absalom even asked that David come with his sons. He probably did this only as a matter of courtesy. He might have felt that David would decline the invitation and he would have a clear path to vent his wrath upon Amnon.

**2 Sam. 13:25 And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.**

**2 Sam. 13:26 Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And**

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the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?

David told his son that this would be too great an imposition on Absalom's hospitality. After Absalom insisted, David still declined but gave Absalom his blessing.

Then Absalom played his trump card. If the king did not choose to attend, surely he would encourage Amnon and the rest of his sons to attend. David wanted to know what it was so important that Amnon attend. Amnon was David's eldest son and was in line to succeed his father on the throne. David was very protective toward him.

2 Sam. 13:27 But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

David finally agreed to allow all of his sons to attend, including Amnon.

2 Sam. 13:28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

Absalom had his plan completely arranged. When Amnon had gotten sufficiently drunk that he was unable to coordinate any defense against an attack, Amnon's servants were to kill him. If they had any objections to killing him, Absalom would take the blame. He expected his orders to be followed. Following his orders would require courage but it must be done.

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**2 Sam. 13:29 And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.**

When the rest of David's sons saw what had happened to Amnon, they concluded that they might be next in line for murder. If Absalom had killed Amnon, he might well have also planned on murdering the rest and taking the throne after David's death.

The king's sons had been riding mules to the event. They lost no time in getting on their mules and leaving the shearing floor.

The breeding of unlike species was condemned in the law. A mule is a cross between a horse and a donkey. The common people would not have been riding mules at this time, but royalty sometimes did make use of them.

**2 Sam. 13:30 And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.**

It did not take long for word of the murder to reach the ears of David. As gossip sometimes does, it had been highly distorted by the time he heard it. The report was that all of the king's sons had been slain.

**2 Sam. 13:31 Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.**

It was time now for David to tear his royal garments, as Tamar had torn hers. His sorrow was so great that  
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he lay down upon the ground while even his servants tore their clothing. David must have had a remembrance about what the prophet Nathan had told him about the sword not departing from his house.

2 Sam. 13:32 And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.

2 Sam. 13:33 Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

Jonadab, the subtil fellow who gave Amnon such hideous advice as to how he could take possession of Tamar, told David the report had been overdone. The only one of his sons who had died was Amnon. The reason Absalom had murdered Amnon was that he had raped his own half sister Tamar.

2 Sam. 13:34 But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him.

Absalom would have known that David had a special fondness for Amnon. This would mean David might try to kill Absalom. He left the scene!

A young man had been assigned to keep watch over the king, saw a sizable company of persons coming toward King David.

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**2 Sam. 13:35 And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is.**

Jonadab confirmed the report of the watchman. The people who were approaching were David's sons who had not been killed. It was not as bad as David had thought. The watchman had been right.

**2 Sam. 13:36 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.**

It was a very very sad time. Even though not all of David's sons had been slain, the death of Amnon at the hands of Absalom's servants was a cause for much grief. The rest of the sons must have been apprehensive as to what would happen next. Their brother had been killed. Would their deaths follow?

**2 Sam. 13:37 But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day.**

Absalom fled to his grandmother's house. David's wife was the daughter of the king of Geshur. David was terribly distraught. Amnon had been murdered. Now Absalom was afraid to come home. Day by day David wished Absalom would rejoin him.

**2 Sam. 13:38 So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.**





**2 Sam. 13:39 And the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.**

The separation of David and Absalom lasted for three years. The king wanted badly to see Absalom. His sorrow over the loss of Amnon decreased over the three years until it was bearable, but the loss of Absalom bore on his mind.

## Chapter 14

In chapter thirteen Absalom had fled from the presence of David and the rest of the family after having murdered Amnon for the rape of Tamar. It had been three years since he had seen David. His father was torn between two lines of action. He was noted for adhering to the law in the deciding of court cases which came to him after lesser judges felt the need to reach a higher level of the judicial. David knew the law of Moses and was able to apply it with justice and fairness. He had realized that it would be difficult to avoid sentencing his own son to death for his crime. At the same time, he loved his son Absalom and his heart yearned to see him again.

Also entering the picture was the fact that David had favored his son Amnon and felt anger toward Absalom for having deprived him of that favorite son.

Chapter fourteen will tell us how an arrangement was made by which David and Absalom were brought back together in an apparent reconciliation.

**2 Sam. 14:1 Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom.**

Joab was an excellent judge of human feelings. He observed the conflict going on in David's heart. Joab devised a plan whereby he felt Absalom could come back and David would be happy to receive him.

**2 Sam. 14:2 And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put**

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on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead:

Tekoah is the town from which the prophet Amos came. It was located a few miles to the south of Jerusalem. Joab was aware of a woman in that town who had some acting skill. He went to her and asked that she pretend to be mourning for someone who had died. She was to put on mourning clothing and cease to anoint herself with pleasant smelling oil.

2 Sam. 14:3 And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

Under those conditions Joab requested that she go to king David and present a fictitious case to him for a decision. Joab gave here the precise message she was to lay before David. Joab knew enough about the law and about David's line of thinking that he thought the plea would accomplish his purpose of bringing Absalom back

2 Sam. 14:4 And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king.

Those who appeared before the king normally showed their subjection by falling prostrate on the ground before him. She followed that procedure and cried out in a grieved voice for him to help her. It seems that Joab had chosen the right person to get the king's attention.

2 Sam. 14:5 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.

David wanted to know the nature of her case. What had brought her before him? She began to reveal the details of that which Joab had persuaded her to present.

According to her story, she was a widow whose husband had died. A widow was a woman who was to receive special sympathy from others. In both the old and the new testament records, widows and orphans were considered worthy of assistance.

2 Sam. 14:6 And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him.

The woman explained to David that after her husband died, her two sons entered into a fight while out in a field. There was no one present to stop the fight, and thus one went so far as to kill the other. This had left her with but one son and no husband.

2 Sam. 14:7 And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband either name nor remainder upon the earth.



According to the law, the nearest of kin was to kill the one who had committed such a murder. According to the woman's story, the rest of her family had become so angry with the son who had murdered his brother that they wanted him killed according to the law.

The woman explained to David that if her son who was still alive were to be killed, her husband would have no remaining heir to carry on his name to future generations. This was considered a major tragedy among the people of Israel.

2 Sam. 14:8 And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee.

David assured the woman that he would make a determination in the case. She should return to her home. However, he did not tell her what that decision would be.

2 Sam. 14:9 And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my father's house: and the king and his throne be guiltless.

The woman felt the need for a further commitment as to how the case was to be decided. She offered to take any guilt for the bypassing of the law of the avenger of murder upon her own household. The king should not feel any guilt for excusing her living son of his crime.

2 Sam. 14:10 And the king said, Whosoever saith ought unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more.

The woman managed to take another step in carrying out the plan Joab had conceived. David had gone so far as to assure her that if anyone dared to harm her, she was to see that the person who made the threat came before him and he would see that the person would not do so a second time.

2 Sam. 14:11 Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, As the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.

The plan of Joab was unrolling smoothly. David's sympathy for the murderer had been obtained. Now the woman pressed the appeal even farther. She reminded David that God had not always caused the avengers of blood to carry out a death sentence toward the murderer. After all, even God Himself had not killed Cain after he killed his brother Abel. If God had extended His grace in some cases, surely David would not be held guilty of defying God's will if her living son were to be pardoned.

David's reply was that she need not fear for the life of her son. He was willing to make a promise as an oath before God that he would order the son's protection.

2 Sam. 14:12 Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak one word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on.

In most instances the court would have been adjourned at this point. The king had made his decision. But, this time the woman made one additional request.

She had one more thing she needed to say. David gave her permission to continue her plea.

2 Sam. 14:13 And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished.

The woman then had to have great confidence in the advice Joab had given her. It was to be hoped that the plan would survive what was about to be said. She accused David of going against his own judgment in the case of his own banished son Absalom. Absalom was the remaining son of her story. He had been banished from his people for several years because of his murder of Amnon. In doing this David had worked against the people of God. It was only right and merciful that Absalom be allowed to return to his people unharmed.

2 Sam. 14:14 For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.

She also added that all men must die sooner or later. Amnon's death could not be reversed any more than water which is spilled upon the ground can be gathered back up.

If David was worried about being accused of respect of persons as a result of pardoning his son, he should remember that God is no respecter of persons, and yet He provided means by which those who were penitent could come back into His presence.

2 Sam. 14:15 Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid.

The woman went on with her appeal. She had come to David because the people had threatened to see that her remaining son lost his life. She had taken the risk of coming before the king in order that he would protect her son.

2 Sam. 14:16 For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.

She explained that she was confident David would prevent damage to her son, and thus would see that the inheritance was continued.

She was rather carefully bringing the realization to David's mind that if Absalom were to be killed or prevented from succeeding his father on the throne, David's own inheritance was in danger of being cut off. The inheritance of God as far as the woman's case was that which her son would enjoy if his life were to be continued and he could take his place among the people of Israel.

The worm which she was planting in David's head was that the inheritance of the throne of Israel would be denied to Absalom if he was to be banished forever.

2 Sam. 14:17 Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable:
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**for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee.**

The woman was ready to rest her case. She informed David that she had great trust in his ability to discern between what was right and what was wrong. She knew he would act according to the will of Jehovah the Lord.

**2 Sam. 14:18 Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.**

By this time David had suspected that the story of the woman had an ulterior motive. She was hiding something. It was time for her to be absolutely honest in that which she was attempting to do. He was about to ask her a question and she would be wise to answer the question without hiding anything.

**2 Sam. 14:19 And the king said, Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid:**

David suspected that the entire story of the woman was somehow related to Joab. He asked her for a yes or no answer. Was Joab behind her presentation?

The woman did as David asked. She swore that as sure as David was alive, she would tell the truth,

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the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Joab was responsible. He was the source of the words which she had spoken. He had given her the words she spoke.

2 Sam. 14:20 To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.

She was quite surprised that David had discovered the reason for her words. He must be as wise as an angel of God to have drawn his conclusion. The angels of God are said to be charged with overseeing the lives of God's faithful. They therefore know many things we would not suspect. She was paying the king a very fine compliment.

2 Sam. 14:21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.

Is it not interesting that we have not heard before this that Joab was within hearing range of all that was taking place. Now that David had found out Joab's part in the proceedings, he melted to the extent that he ordered Joab to go and get Absalom and bring him back from Geshur. He still did not call Absalom his son. He referred to him as "the young man."

2 Sam. 14:22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.



2 Sam. 14:23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

Joab then fell on his face in humility and thanked David for making the decision which had been made. David could have been furious. Instead, he had judged favorably and asked that Absalom be allowed to return.

Your present commentator agrees with Burton Coffman in his statement that it would have been better if Absalom had been left in Geshur. The events which followed his return will be filled with sorrow for David and the entire nation of Israel.

2 Sam. 14:24 And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

David did not reverse his decision. Absalom was to be brought back to his own house, but he was not to be allowed to present himself before David. At this point then, David had not placed himself in the position of having pardoned Absalom. Nor did David wish to have Absalom appear before him and force him to make such a public decision.

David's longing for his son, plus the persuasive words of the woman of Tekoah, as given her by Joab, had overcome his feelings that he must shed the blood of one who had shed blood. His son could come home but a court case before David would not take place.

2 Sam. 14:25 But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty:

from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

The next two verses seem to be unrelated to the flow of events. They are not. They will pave the way for a description of the death of Absalom as he hung by his hair in the branches of a tree.

This man Absalom was quite a figure of a man. A careful examination revealed no blemishes in his physique from the top of his head to the sole of his feet. As far as outward appearance, he was a perfect specimen. Anyone who gazed at him would be impressed!

2 Sam. 14:26 And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it: because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

Men of Israel were proud of their hair. This writer recalls when most of the young men of his age were having what we called "crew cuts." They cut off nearly all of their hair as a means of catching the attention of others their own age. It was somewhat like this in Israel, but in quite the opposite direction. The more hair a man had, the more impressive he was to others, both male and female.

Absalom had such a fine head of hair that when he cut it at the end of each year it weighed several pounds. There is disagreement as to how much weight two hundred shekels was. Most writers conclude that it was around three to five pounds. That is a lot of hair! It may be that the hair contained oil or ointment which made up part of the weight. The reason he cut it at the end of each year was that it became cumbersome to his movement.

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**2 Sam. 14:27 And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name was Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.**

Some are concerned that Absalom built a pillar named for himself because he had no sons, yet this verse says he had three. It is possible that all three of these sons died early in life and the pillar was built after their death.

He had one very beautiful daughter whom he named Tamar. It is not difficult to discover the reason for her name. Tamar was the full sister of Absalom. Yet every time Tamar's name was called it would have been difficult to avoid a memory of the sister who had been sexually abused.

**2 Sam. 14:28 So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.**

Absalom had already spent three years separated from his father. Now he was allowed to return to the area of his home, but for two more years he was commanded not to come into the presence of his father. For five years they had been apart.

**2 Sam. 14:29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.**

Absalom made an attempt to see David. He felt that Joab might be able to bring about a meeting. Joab refused to come. Joab remembered what David had said. Absalom could come to his own house, but he was not

to be seen by the king. Absalom sent for Joab a second time. Again Joab refused to come.

**2 Sam. 14:30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.**

Absalom did not go back to Joab a third time. There was a more certain way to gain his attention. He directed his servants to go and set fire to Joab's barley fields. That should no doubt catch his eye!

**2 Sam. 14:31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?**

It did! Absalom did not have to go to Joab's house. Joab came to his house. He demanded to know why Absalom's servants had set his barley field ablaze.

**2 Sam. 14:32 And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it had been good for me to have been there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.**

Absalom made it very clear why he had sent his servants. He had tried to get Joab to come to him that he might ask him to allow Absalom to appear before him and ask a question. The question pertained to the reason why he had been returned from Geshur, but  
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had been refused an appearance before his father the king.

He wanted to see David and plead his own case. If David found him guilty of murder, and had so little mercy as to kill him, he was ready to be killed. Otherwise, it would have been much better if he had not been brought back from Geshur.

This was precisely what David had feared. He did not want to be faced with the demand for a “guilty” or “not guilty” verdict. If he declared him guilty, he was inviting Absalom’s execution by an avenger of blood. If he declared him innocent, he would be bypassing the law, which required that those who shed blood must shed their own blood.

2 Sam. 14:33 So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

Joab went to David and asked an audience for Absalom. David allowed Absalom to appear before him. Absalom came to David and bowed himself down before his father. David then kissed Absalom and all seemed well between the two. If it was so, it was soon to change.

We find it strange in the modern world for men to kiss. It was not strange in that day and time. The kiss was just a brush of the cheeks as a means of showing friendship or affection.

Chapter 15

It did not take long for Absalom to begin putting into place a plan for assuming control of the leadership of Israel. It is absolutely amazing that a man's own son would scheme as Absalom did to replace him. Before this present chapter is completed we find David having fled from the city of Jerusalem as a result of the pressure exerted by Absalom and his cohorts.

2 Sam. 15:1 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

Horses and chariots were frowned upon in Israel. Donkeys were used, even in the stables of the kings. The prophets warned the kings of Israel about God's attitude toward horses and chariots. Solomon was told not to multiply horses and chariots, riches or wives. Sadly, he did all three.

The kings of other nations did not hesitate to display their power and dignity through the use of war horses. When Absalom prepared horses and chariots, with fifty men to precede him, David should have realized that his son was vying for the top position in the nation.

2 Sam. 15:2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.



Absalom's plans did not stop with a show of power. He took a place at the gate of the city, where the people passed in and out. This was the area where decisions were made as to complaints one man made against another. Absalom pretended to have a very personal interest in the lives of those who were coming to David for judgment. He would ask the one making a case what city he was from. Thus he began to win them for supporters.

2 Sam. 15:3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

Absalom reminds us of some of the politicians of our own day, who go about seeking to discover the complaints of the people and then telling them they are just the one to adjust matters if they can only be put into office. Then, once getting into office, the issues become shelved in favor of such items as will profit the politician.

He added that the king had neglected to appoint anyone to hear their cases, implying that he would be just the right person to handle the task.

2 Sam. 15:4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

If only he were to be made a judge, he would see that every cause was treated with justice. Of course he had already said every man's case was just. He was really telling every man he met that he would settle every case in their personal favor. This tactic once again brought disgruntled people to his side.

2 Sam. 15:5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

It was a normal custom for persons to bow down before those whom they considered to be their superior. Whenever any came close to him to bow down before him, as soon as he saw they were about to bow, he would extend his hand to them and offer a kiss of friendship. This told the person Absalom was not a haughty man. He was a friend and would care for their needs.

2 Sam. 15:6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Absalom was making himself look important through the use of horses and chariots. He was making himself appear to have the concerns of the people at heart. The truth was far different. He was self serving in everything he was doing. Yet he did succeeded in turning the affections of many people to him. This laid the foundation for his coming effort to become king of Israel and depose his own father, David.

2 Sam. 15:7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.

There is a serious question as to the translation of the Hebrew word which is translated as "forty." Where the King James Version has forty, a number of other translations have "four." David only reigned over Israel for forty years. If "forty" was the correct translation, this

would mean Absalom took his place at the gate of the city back as far as when David was still reigning from Hebron. This writer is convinced the “forty” of the King James Version should have been translated as “four.”

Absalom approached his father with a request to depart from Jerusalem and travel to Hebron. He claimed he had made a vow to God, and that to keep the vow he must go to that city.

2 Sam. 15:8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.

Absalom’s claim was extremely weak. There was no real reason why he should go to Hebron to honor God for allowing him to return to the city of Jerusalem. He could have honored Him just as well in the city where the ark of the covenant rested. He had another ulterior motive for going to Hebron.

2 Sam. 15:9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

2 Sam. 15:10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

David saw nothing wrong about the request of his son. He gave him permission to do as he had asked. Absalom had gained another mile in his plan.

When Absalom arrived in Hebron, he proceeded to send undercover men to every tribe of Israel. They were to instruct those who favored him as ruler of Israel to listen for the sound of trumpets, and when they heard

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the trumpets, they were to cry out that Absalom was ruling the country from Hebron.

**2 Sam. 15:11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.**

When Absalom left Jerusalem, he had taken two hundred men from the city to go along with him. We are not told they were men of influence, but it seems to be a fairly solid guess. This would leave David without some of those who could have been of the most help to him during the coming crises.

Going in simplicity and not knowing anything had nothing to do with their level of intelligence. It informs the reader they were not told they were being used by Absalom to help in overturning David's rule.

**2 Sam. 15:12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.**

Absalom even sent for Ahithophel to join him. This was like taking a prime minister or a secretary of state. In rapid fashion Absalom was shifting the advantage from David to himself. His goal was becoming a reality. Nor did his conscience bother him in the slightest. He could care less about the safety of his father, or the emotional distress he was causing him.

**2 Sam. 15:13 And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.**

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David was then informed of what he should have discerned long before. Large numbers of the people no longer trusted him. They were ready to accept the leadership of his son. It was very possible that he would be unable to maintain control.

2 Sam. 15:14 And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

Several reasons have been given for David's decision to flee from the city of Jerusalem. First, he seems to have felt that Absalom's support was strong enough to accomplish his purpose. Second, he may have wished to avoid making Jerusalem a battleground between Israelites. Third, he may have felt this was just punishment for the serious sins he had committed against the Lord.

He felt they needed to make haste in leaving. Otherwise the city would be filled with blood.

2 Sam. 15:15 And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

Those who were David's close servants promised to be faithful to him. They trusted him and were ready to do whatever he asked them. They are to be given much credit. They had refused to enter into the rebellion and if it succeeded, they could lose their lives.

2 Sam. 15:16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house.

The palace was left desolate except for ten of the concubines who were left to keep the palace in order until the king returned, if he did.

Yes, David had concubines. These women shared the king's bedroom, but they had no claim on his estate or inheritance. God did not approve of such an arrangement, but He did permit it.

2 Sam. 15:17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

2 Sam. 15:18 And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

Large numbers of the people were still loyal to David. The Pelethites and the Cherethites had served as his personal bodyguard. Six hundred Gittite men from the city of Gath went with him. He would have some degree of personal security. When and if he decided to return to Jerusalem, he would have a sizable force at his side.

2 Sam. 15:19 Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.



Ittai was among the Gittites. He had experienced some of the same things as David had. He was banished by his own nation. David wished to know why he had come with him and not returned to his own people. After all, he had only recently entered the land where David ruled. What was his reasoning?

2 Sam. 15:20 Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

David had difficulty understanding why Attai would come with him when even David did not know just where he would be settling in the near future. Would it not be better for Attai and his fellow Gittites to go back and be with their own?

2 Sam. 15:21 And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

Ittai's answer leaves us feeling that he had been converted to the worship of the Only True and Living God. He does not speak of "lords." He speaks of "the Lord." He appreciated life under the leadership of David and was ready to go with him, even if cost him his life. His reply to David almost sounds like that of Ruth to Naomi when she said, "Whithersoever thou goest I will go." One can hardly express a greater degree of loyalty than Attai offered.

2 Sam. 15:22 And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

David was convinced. He gladly welcomed Attai to join his men as they exited the city. Along with Attai went his men and their families. David would certainly not be alone in his flight.

2 Sam. 15:23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

The entire country had good reason to weep. The king was being forced out of his capitol city. The country was deeply divided in their loyalties. Much bloodshed could be foreseen. Some of the people stood behind David. The rest backed Absalom and all of his fine promises of a new and better system of justice. It looked as if Absalom and his forces were about to take complete control of the city of God. David and his supporters passed over the brook Kidron toward more deserted regions.

The brook Kidron was to be mentioned several times in the events of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

2 Sam. 15:24 And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

The priests and Levites were accompanying the ark
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of the covenant. David had concluded that it was best for the ark to be with him. It represented the presence of Jehovah. The ark was set down while all of the people were passing from the city.

Abiathar had been a source of strength to David. He had acted as David's chief priest for a number of years. He was supervising the transport of the ark.

**2 Sam. 15:25 And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation:**

David may have had a change of plans here as he commanded that the ark be returned into the city. He could have felt that Jerusalem was where the ark belonged, and that it would be wrong to remove it.

But, his statement here indicates that he was placing all in the hands of the Lord. If the Lord chose to bring him back into the city, he would see both it and the place where it was supposed to rest.

**2 Sam. 15:26 But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.**

David was not certain the Lord was with him. He had sinned to the extent that the Lord could have deserted him. In that case David was ready to accept whatever God determined to do with him. David's attitude is commendable. All men sin and come short of God's complete will. It is best that He does what he knows is appropriate for the sinner, and for His own

Kingdom. We can trust Him to do just that.

**2 Sam. 15:27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.**

Zadok is considered the father of the Sadducees. At this time David has strong confidence in him. He asked Zadok to go back into the city of Jerusalem along with Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. They were to act as runners to inform David as to what was taking place in Jerusalem as Absalom took over.

**2 Sam. 15:28 See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.**

**2 Sam. 15:29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.**

David would plan his future actions on the basis of what the priests told him concerning the events inside the city. After these instructions, Zadok and Abiathar did take the ark back into the city. It was a time of great grief for David. His house had certainly confirmed the prophecy that it would rise against him.

**2 Sam. 15:30 And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.**

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Rather than walking proudly among his subjects, David wept as he moved along. He had covered his head and walked barefoot. Most kings do not weep, cover their heads in shame, or walk around barefooted. Those who went with David also wept and covered their heads.

2 Sam. 15:31 And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

Then the sad news came to David that Ahithophel, the wise man and counselor for David had defected from him and was ready to support Absalom.

David reacted to the news by going to the Lord in prayer. If Absalom had the advantage of the wisdom of Ahithophel, it would make it much more difficult to bring the crises to a desirable end. David prayed that God would intervene and turn Ahithophel's wisdom into foolishness.

God is able to turn men's wisdom into foolishness. In His providence He can arrange for matters to work out in such way that the wisest of men are shown to be unable to see the consequences of their choices.

2 Sam. 15:32 And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

The Mount of Olives was a favorite place of prayer. Just before leaving the city, David went to the top of that mountain to worship. Almost clearly as an answer

to his prayer, Hushai appeared with signs of sorrow evident. He wished to go along with David.

2 Sam. 15:33 Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me:

David's answer to Hushai was that Hushai would be a burden to him if he went with him. We do not know why David thought this. The most common suggestion is that Hushai was elderly and would need help from others. Another possibility is that it was going to be difficult to find food for everyone, and that this would add to the shortage.

2 Sam. 15:34 But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

There was a way in which Hushai could be of more help than to go with David. That was to remain in the city and tell Absalom he would be his servant in the future. He had served David. Now he would change loyalty and serve Absalom. If Hushai would do that, he could help to overcome the advantage Absalom had in the presence of Ahithophel, the wise man.

It seems that spying and relaying information was an accepted way of life during the days of Saul, David and Solomon. God does not approve of deceit. Yet, He did not intervene in David's suggestion to Hushai. That does not mean He approved. He simply allowed the plan to proceed.



2 Sam. 15:35 And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

David now had three very useful persons in the very center of Absalom's activities. Hushai would join Zadok and Abiathar, in passing information along to David. It is interesting that David refers to Absalom as the king. However, when it mentions the king's house, it may mean the palace where kings would normally live.

2 Sam. 15:36 Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.

2 Sam. 15:37 So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan would act as messengers to carry the details of any actions to the ears of David.

There is reason to believe that the exit of David and the entrance of Absalom were so close together timewise that the incoming group could almost see the latter part of the exiting group.

The next few chapters will continue to follow the relationships between David and Absalom as David is exiled from Jerusalem and Absalom revels in his new prestige.

Chapter 16

As we left the last chapter David and his followers were exiting Jerusalem. Absalom and his recruits were about to enter the city. In this sixteenth chapter we find a merry go round of deceit and promises of support from several different persons.

2 Sam. 16:1 And when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

Mephibosheth was Jonathan's lame son. When, after beginning his reign, David wished to do something kind toward a member of Saul's house, Ziba suggested Mephibosheth. David granted Meshibosheth the estate of Saul and told Ziba to be responsible for the operation of the fields, etc.

Now Ziba meets David as he is departing from Jerusalem. He has a generous gift for the king. There are two asses with saddles. These would provide ease and dignity for the royal family. There were two hundred loaves of bread, which would provide at least temporary food for the group. There were also summer fruits, raisins and a bottle of wine. The bottle of wine was more than a few ounces. It would have been a goatskin, filled with the refreshing liquid.

Ziba left the impression that he was a devoted friend to David. This was deception. We find later that he was only attempting to gain favor with David in the hope of becoming possessor of the estate he had been supervising for Mephibosheth.

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**2 Sam. 16:2 And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.**

David asked Ziba the reason for all of the gifts and was told they were kindnesses toward the king and his people.

**2 Sam. 16:3 And the king said, And where is thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.**

David wished to know the whereabouts of Mephibosheth. Although it might have been difficult for the crippled son of Jonathan to make the trip with Ziba, David still wanted to hear of his welfare and where he was.

Ziba then proved himself no friend to either David or Mephibosheth. He tried to portray Mephibosheth as a traitor who was waiting at home for David to be deposed and the house of Saul to be reestablished. This would have made Mephibosheth king in place of David.

**2 Sam. 16:4 Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.**

The gifts had mellowed the heart of David toward Ziba. He acted impulsively after Ziba's lie and awarded

the entire estate of Saul to Ziba. The latter acted as if he was highly pleased and was ready to humble himself before David that he might be pleasing to him. What he was really pleased about was coming into possession of much property.

**2 Sam. 16:5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came.**

As David's group moved further, they were plagued by a man named Shemei. Shemei was from the house of Saul. He was determined to insult or even to injure David and his servants. The man followed along with them cursing them continuously

**2 Sam. 16:6 And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.**

It would be impossible for a single man such as Shemei to prevail over several hundred, but it was not impossible for him to let his hatred be known. He threw stones at David and the others, indicating that he would like to have seen David stoned to death.

**2 Sam. 16:7 And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:**

Shimei called David a man of bloodshed, a murderer and a follower of the Devil. Belial is used as a name for Satan in 2 Cor. 6:15. He is calling David a scoundrel.

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2Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

2 Sam. 16:8 The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.

Shemei claimed David's troubles had come upon him as a result of his viciousness toward the family and household of Saul. This was unfounded. David had done his very best to get along with Saul. It was certainly not David's fault that the contention happened. It is true that a number of Saul's household lost their lives, but David was not to be blamed.

It is also true that God had called David a man of blood at the time the temple was to be built and awarded the honor of building the temple to Solomon, even though it was David that amassed the money and materials for the construction. God did not accuse David of being a murderer. He only indicated that David had been involved in the deaths.

2 Sam. 16:9 Then said Abishai the son of Zeruah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

Abishai reminds of us the attitude of Peter when Christ's enemies had come to take him to the cross. Peter was ready to use the sword to defend his Master. Abishai was ready to do the same. If David gave permission, he would remove Shemei's head and silence him.

2 Sam. 16:10 And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

David stated that Abishai was acting like Zeruiah, who was of very impulsive nature. They needed to think things over. It was very possible God had allowed Shemei to curse him because of his past. If that was the case, no one had the right to scold Shemei or punish him for his cursing. Let the matter rest in the hand of Jehovah.

2 Sam. 16:11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him.

Also David called to mind the fact that his own son Absalom was doing even worse than Shemei. If his own son was seeking to kill him, why was it so hideous that Shemei was throwing stones at him? The Lord would see that all worked out according to His will.

2 Sam. 16:12 It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.

David suggested that if he did not retaliate, God would certainly see what he was suffering and would bless him to make up for the cursing.

We must admire David for his faith at this time. He had most certainly sinned grievously in his adultery

with Bathsheba and with the murder of Uriah. Yet he was penitent over those sins and was closer to being the man God wanted him to be. He was willing to take the blunt of Shemei's words if that was God's will.

2 Sam. 16:13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

2 Sam. 16:14 And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

So Shemei was allowed to continue his offensive actions. He followed along cursing, throwing stones and dust at them and in general acting like a fool.

David and his followers were now out of the city of Jerusalem. David had lost control of the kingdom. Absalom was in charge of the capitol city.

2 Sam. 16:15 And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

Absalom wasted no time in leading his men into the city. He had a massive following, and also was able to boast of having Ahithophel the wise man on his side as a counselor. Ahithophel was the kind of man who knows on which side his bread is buttered. He was willing to serve whoever was in power.

2 Sam. 16:16 And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.

Hushai had been sent back into the city by David to counteract the counsel of Ahithophel. He began his efforts immediately. As Absalom entered the city, Hushai met him eagerly. He cried out to Absalom, “God save the king. God save the king.”

He did not say which king God should save. He was David’s servant not Absalom’s. Privately he was saying, God save David!

2 Sam. 16:17 And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?

Absalom was suspicious. He knew Hushai and David had been close friends. Perhaps he could find out if Hushai was still friendly toward David. He asked why Hushai had not departed with his friend.

2 Sam. 16:18 And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

Hushai had probably already concocted his answer before Absalom even asked it. He told Absalom he would always be with the people’s choice. He could easily see that the people, and also the Lord Himself favored Absalom. Therefore Hushai would be on the side of Absalom. At least that is what Absalom took to be the meaning of Hushai’s statement. Again, Hushai’s statement can be taken two ways. It could just as easily be said that the people of Israel, as well as the Lord, were still with David, even though it was not evident.

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**2 Sam. 16:19 And again, whom should I serve? should I not serve in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.**

If Hushai had served David, why was it not reasonable that he would serve David's son, Absalom. He had served David. He would now serve Absalom. Thus, David had an ally right in the central headquarters of Absalom.

**2 Sam. 16:20 Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.**

**2 Sam. 16:21 And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong.**

Respecting the wisdom of Ahithophel, Absalom asked him for guidance. What should he do next to more firmly establish his reign? Note that Absalom did not appeal to Jehovah for guidance. He looked for human wisdom. Men only see a small distance ahead. God sees to the end!

Ahithophel's advice to Absalom was straight from the Devil. He advised him to have sexual relations with his father's concubines who had been left to keep the palace. This would cause him to be hated by his own father and would insure that the people would see he was able to do as he pleased. If he could claim his father's concubines, he could do anything he pleased.

This was a deadly mistake. A man who went into his father's wife had committed a sin worthy of death according to the law. See Lev. 20:11.

*Lev 20:11 And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*

**2 Sam. 16:22 So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.**

There are conflicting explanations of just what happened on the roof of the palace. Some try to avoid the lucid details of a king having intercourse with a number of women in plain sight of a multitude of people nearby. They believe the tent was a special bridal tent which would verify that Absalom had taken a portion of David's harem for his own possession, and that the action took place inside the tent. Others see the sin being enacted in the open, under the light of the sun where all who were passing by could witness it.

Perhaps it is not just happenstance that the palace roof was the same location as that of David when he first saw Bathsheba taking her bath and sent for her.

**2 Sam. 16:23 And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.**

Following the counsel of Ahithophel had proven extremely satisfactory for David when he was in control. Now Absalom was finding it promoting to his own power and sexual appetite. This was to change!



## Chapter 17

David and his followers had fled from Jerusalem rather than make the city the site of a civil war. They had gone to the fjords of the Jordan river. Ahithophel and Hushai were both in the camp of Absalom within the city. Absalom was wondering what he needed to do next to insure keeping control of the nation. He had asked Ahithophel, the wise man what his counsel was.

**2 Sam. 17:1 Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night:**

Ahithophel advised Absalom to pick out twelve thousand of his choice men and put them under Ahithophel's command. He would lead these men that very night and attack David.

**2 Sam. 17:2 And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only:**

Ahithophel wished to take advantage of David while his men were weak and still unorganized. If he could do that, he felt he could kill David. Then all the people who were with him would flee in fear. They would have no leadership and would go into a state of panic. He promised to concentrate his efforts toward the elimination of David.



**2 Sam. 17:3 And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace.**

He promised that he would bring back all of David's followers. Then Ahithophel would have averted a civil war and Absalom would reign over a nation at peace.

**2 Sam. 17:4 And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.**

Neither Absalom nor the senior advisors of Ahithophel found any fault with the advice of the wise man. His logic seemed to be without fault.

In this writer's view, Ahithophel had no intention of turning the power over to Absalom after David was killed. He would have kept the twelve thousand men under his own command and killed Absalom. Ahithophel would then have been the new king.

**2 Sam. 17:5 Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.**

Why did Absalom not move immediately forward with the plan of Ahithophel if he and the elders all found it acceptable? Perhaps we can see the providence of God in what took place next. David had sent Hushai to the court of Absalom to counteract the advice of Ahithophel. For some reason Absalom decided to compare the advice of Hushai with that of Ahithophel. We can anticipate that there will be a sharp contrast in the advice of the two men.

Can God plant ideas in the minds of men? Just how does God's providence work? Could this be done without  
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taking away man's freedom of choice? The questions may be beyond our reasoning ability.

2 Sam. 17:6 And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do after his saying? if not; speak thou.

When Hushai arrived Absalom presented the problem to him. He informed him as to what Ahithophel had advised. Then he asked if Hushai agreed with that advice. If he did not, he was to present an alternative. We know the alternative will work against Absalom and in favor of David even before Hushai begins his presentation.

2 Sam. 17:7 And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time.

Hushai showed remarkable insight into human nature. He did not sharply rebuff Ahithophel. He only said his advice was not the best possible at the time. He was implying that he had a better plan.

2 Sam. 17:8 For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

Then Hushai began to dismantle the plan of Ahithophel. First, David's men were seasoned warriors. When cornered they would fight viciously as a mother bear would fight when her cubs were taken from her.

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Furthermore, David was a master leader. He would not have stayed with his troops. He would have preserved his own life by hiding in some secret place. Absalom's men would not find him when they attacked.

**2 Sam. 17:9 Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.**

He pointed out that an attack would result in the loss of a number of Absalom's men at the very first contact. When that happened, the rest of David's forces would take heart and fight with even more confidence.

**2 Sam. 17:10 And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men.**

As a result of the confidence in the ranks of David's men, even the hearts of Absalom's most courageous men would melt with fear. David's smaller army would cause the larger forces of Absalom to retreat in defeat. Everyone knew David was a mighty man and those who followed him were the very best and most efficient.

**2 Sam. 17:11 Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person.**



Hushai then put forward his own plan. He would definitely not attack David that night. He would take the time to call for the entire army of Israel which had not followed David. The number of men would be like trying to count the grains of sand on the seashore. He also insisted that Ahithophel enter into the battle in person.

Hushai thought it very possible that Absalom could be killed in the midst of the battle and his own troops would become confused and retreat, just as Ahithophel had suggest David's troops would do when they attacked that very night.

**2 Sam. 17:12 So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one.**

Dew covers everything during the course of the night. It comes without notice and falls suddenly. That is precisely what Hushai was telling Absalom. They could overcome David and his men by sheer force of numbers. When they won the battle they should not leave a single one of David's forces alive.

**2 Sam. 17:13 Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there.**

But what was to be done if David and his men barricaded themselves inside a walled city? Hushai persuaded Absalom the power which he would have at hand was sufficient to remove the entire city. It was not

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that they could actually tie ropes around the walls and drag the city into the Jordan river. This was a figure of speech emphasizing the great advantage in numbers which Absalom would have.

2 Sam. 17:14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

The arguments of Hushai won out over those of Ahithophel. Absalom and also the elders of Israel were convinced Hushai had the better strategy.

It is not too difficult to see why Hushai's advice appealed to Absalom. He could envision himself leading twelve thousand men against the perhaps two thousand who were with David. That much advantage would almost certainly mean victory and David would no longer be a threat to his newly gained power.

Of course, Hushai knew very well, God would have a finger in the cookie jar. He would support David. When man is on the same side as God, the outcome of the battle can be predicted with certainty. Everything which Hushai had said was intended to preserve the life of David and cause the defeat of Absalom.

The evil which the Lord would bring on Absalom was not wickedness. God is not the author of cruelty. The evil mentioned here was punishment for Absalom's greed and hunger for power.

2 Sam. 17:15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did

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**Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled.**

Both Zadok and Abiathar were priests who favored David. Hushai went to the two and explained what had taken place. He compared the advice he had given with that which Ahithophel had given and felt that in case either of them prevailed, it was best for David and his men to cross the river right away.

**2 Sam. 17:16 Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.**

David had asked Zadok and Abiathar to cooperate with Hushai and send any information they gathered to him through the sons of the two priests. Thus, Hushai urged that the priests send their sons to David with a warning that his safety depended on crossing the river.

**2 Sam. 17:17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went and told them; and they went and told king David.**

The two sons of the priests who were to carry the information to David had stayed outside the city for fear their actions might be seen and their plans demolished. Rather than them having to enter the city, it had been planned that a woman from the city would go out to where they were. It was common practice for women

to draw water and take it into the city. She would not be suspected.

The word “wench” is one which would indicate a trashy character in these latter days. It did not imply that at the time of the translation of the King James Version. A wench was just a maid or servant.

**2 Sam. 17:18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man’s house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down.**

Even though the plan had been carefully thought out ahead of time, a lad saw the transfer of the information taking place. He then went and told Absalom what he had seen. This could have disastrous consequences. The two messengers must leave quickly. Though they may not have known the lad went to Absalom, they still would have found it wise to move farther away from Jerusalem.

They went to Bahurim where a man owned property with a well in the court surrounding his house. He was sympathetic with David and the men received permission to hide in the well. This was probably a cistern with was not filled with water at the time. Or it could have been a place where grain was trodden out by walking on it. The word “well” does not have to mean a depository for water.

**2 Sam. 17:19 And the woman took and spread a covering over the well’s mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known.**



The owner's wife cooperated by putting a covering over the top of the well and spreading grain which had been recently ground on the covering. This would have removed all suspicion of the presence of the two messenger.

You see, Absalom had not captured the hearts of all of the people of Israel. The nation was sharply divided in it's choice of leaders. David was still the king in the hearts of a large number of them.

**2 Sam. 17:20 And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.**

When the servants of Absalom came inquiring as to the whereabouts of the two messengers, she told them a lie and said they had gone on across a brook. This does not mean they had crossed the Jordan. The people of Israel would not have called the Jordan a brook.

Apparently the message which was taken to Absalom by the lad gave him enough information to identify the two men. Otherwise they would not have been called by name here.

**2 Sam. 17:21 And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.**

When the servants of Absalom left, they went directly to David and told him the things which had occurred in

Jerusalem and how the two men had advised Absalom to deal with him and his troops. If Absalom took the counsel of Ahithophel, David would need to take steps very soon. That night might very well see an attack by the forces of Absalom.

**2 Sam. 17:22 Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.**

In the darkness of the night David and those who were with him set out to cross the Jordan river. They succeeded, and not a single one was left on the west side of the river. His chances of survival were stronger with the river separating the two forces.

**2 Sam. 17:23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.**

Ahithophel was devastated. His advice had been cast aside and that of Hushai had been taken. For a man who had earned his reputation by the effectiveness of his wisdom, this was the ultimate insult. He knew very well that Absalom would be defeated and David would reenter Jerusalem at some later time. Ahithophel would then be executed as a traitor to his nation.

He rode his donkey to his own house in his own city. There he made arrangements for his household to get along without him and proceeded to hang himself.

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Though this was a disgraceful death, he was buried in the family sepulchre.

2 Sam. 17:24 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

After crossing the Jordan, David led his followers to the city of Mahanaim. This was strategically located for defensive purposes.

2 Sam. 17:25 And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was a man's son, whose name was Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother.

Absalom chose Amasa to be the general in charge of his army. Amasa was a nephew of David and a cousin of Joab. What a horrible jumble of family adversaries! David is fighting against his own son. Now other relatives are found on opposite sides.

2 Sam. 17:26 So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

Absalom and his forces crossed the river and were on the same side as were David and his men. The battle between the two sides was just ahead.

2 Sam. 17:27 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

A very pleasant surprise arrived for David. Shobi of Rabbah, Machir of Lodebar and Barzallai of Rogelim wished to encourage and strengthen him and his men.

2 Sam. 17:28 Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse,

They brought all sorts of aid to David. It is likely that the rapid departure from Jerusalem had left the group without much in the way of either furniture or food. They were provided with both. The variety and quantity of the food was most pleasing.

2 Sam. 17:29 And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

We are reminded of the providence of God again. This sounds very much like the manna which fell from heaven during the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses.

This time the provisions did not come down from heaven during the night, but they were a godsend to David and his followers. It is difficult to put ourselves in the place of these persecuted people. They were in the right and their foes were wrong. They were few and their foes were many. Still, God was using them in his eternal plan. Let us never forget that what seem to be formidable odds to our human minds may be only a step in the pathway to the land of endless day.

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## Chapter 18

The battle was just ahead. David was commanding one side and his son Absalom was the commander on the other. This situation lay heavy on David's heart. He did not wish to see his own son slain. It had no such effect on Absalom. He could care less if his father lost his life. His aim was power.

**2 Sam. 18:1 And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds over them.**

Since Hushai's advice had been taken rather than that of Ahithophel, David had time to organize his troops. Since he set captains over thousands there must have been at least two thousand men. Josephus said David's army amounted to around four thousand. There were also lesser leaders who commanded bands of one hundred.

**2 Sam. 18:2 And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.**

The entire force was divided into three portions. Joab led one third. Abishai led one third, and Ittai led one third. We see then, five layers of order.

1. The lowest level.
2. The groups of one hundred.
3. The groups of one thousand.

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4. The three major divisions.
5. David as the supreme commander.

David volunteered to go into the battle and encourage his troops with his presence.

2 Sam. 18:3 But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now thou art worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city.

The troops discouraged David from joining them in the field. They realized that if David exposed himself in this manner, the enemy would concentrate on killing him. If that were to happen, the effect upon the rest would be severe. They insisted that David was worth large numbers of others. It would be better for all if he would remain behind the walls of the city and assist them from that vantage point.

2 Sam. 18:4 And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.

David agreed to do as they had asked him. We can rest assured that his decision was not due to cowardice. David did not have a cowardly bone in his body. He proved that as a lad when he faced Goliath the giant.

David did survey the troops as they passed out of the city to enter the fray. They came out in orderly fashion which would not have been possible if the advice of Ahithophel had been taken and Absalom's soldiers

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had attacked them before they had the opportunity to organize.

**2 Sam. 18:5 And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.**

David then gave orders to the three major leaders which they would have found almost impossible to obey. He pleaded with them not to hurt his son Absalom. It would not be an easy task to defeat an army and be gentle with their leader. David made it appear that the safety of his son was more important than the winning of the battle.

**2 Sam. 18:6 So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;**

This wood of Ephraim where the battle was to be fought was not a grassy green cow pasture. It was a thickly wooded area with swamps and marshes.

**2 Sam. 18:7 Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men.**

As the battle progressed, David's forces were far superior in effectiveness, even though they were vastly outnumbered. Those under the command of Absalom lost a total of twenty thousand men. This means there must have been many more than that when the fighting broke out.

**2 Sam. 18:8 For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.**

David's forces had been divided into three groups. These three groups apparently separated from one another and caused the opponents to scatter over a large area to enter into combat with them. When this happened, they were easier for David's men to destroy.

Also the scattering meant more danger to them from being swallowed up by the pits and swamp holes. Wild beasts also prowled the area and some no doubt lost their lives to the animals. It is not clear whether we should add another twenty thousand or more to the twenty thousand who were mentioned previously as having been slaughtered. If so the total number of Absalom's men who died would have been more than forty thousand.

**2 Sam. 18:9 And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away.**

Absalom had taken the advice of Hushai and gone out into the battlefield. While his men were retreating through the wooded swamp land, Absalom was riding on a mule. As the mule ran under a large oak tree Absalom was caught by his head in the branches of the tree. Many Bible students think it was a result of his long hair. This may or may not be the case. Whichever

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was true, he ended up being suspended and helpless as the mule went on and left him dangling.

2 Sam. 18:10 And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

2 Sam. 18:11 And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle.

One of Joab's men reported that he had seen Absalom in the helpless condition. Joab was impatient with him. Why did he not kill Absalom while he had the opportunity? If he had done so, Joab would have rewarded him handsomely. He would have been given money and also a girdle representing prestige.

2 Sam. 18:12 And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom.

The soldier gave Joab two very good reasons why it was best that he had not killed Absalom. First, David had ordered that they be gentle with his son. If David's forces won, the man might have been killed by David's order.

2 Sam. 18:13 Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is

no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.

Second, It would have been impossible to hide what he had done from king David. Joab would have stood by and done nothing to prevent his death. The soldier felt that he had acted for his own best interests in simply reporting what he had seen to Joab.

2 Sam. 18:14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.

Joab told the soldier he did not have time to stop and argue with him. Joab took three darts and drove them into the heart of Absalom. Absalom was still alive but was probably weak from struggling to free himself.

When we today think of darts we see in our mind some three or four inch projectiles with a sharp point on one end and feathers on the other such as those used in games with dart boards. The darts which Joab thrust into Absalom were far more deadly. They may have been staves of sharpened wood. They may have been metal javelins.

When it says they were thrust into Absalom's heart it does not mean they were thrust into the heart which pumps blood through the body. If that had been the case, he would have died immediately. The word "heart" means the midst of his body.

2 Sam. 18:15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

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Following Absalom's attack, ten of his armor bearers finished the job by beating Absalom to death. Joab then was responsible for the death of Absalom whether he did it directly, or with the aid of his armor bearers.

**2 Sam. 18:16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.**

The battle was decided. David's men had defeated their opponents. Absalom, their leader was dead. Joab blew the trumpet to signal the end of the conflict. This was a common method of both initiating fighting and also indicating it was over.

**2 Sam. 18:17 And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.**

Absalom's body was not buried at the pillar he had erected before this when his three sons died. It was taken out to a large pit in the woods where the battle took place and was dumped into the pit. A large heap of stones was placed on top of the body and his men fled back to their homes.

**2 Sam. 18:18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.**

What a comedown! Instead of being buried under his beautiful tower where his name would be memorialized for centuries to come, His body was dumped into a pit in a woody swamp and covered with stones. He would be remembered for many centuries, but not for his glory.

**2 Sam. 18:19 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.**

Ahimaaz, who had been chosen as a messenger was so elated by what had happened that he wanted to be the one to report the victory to king David. He would point out to the king that the Lord had given his men the victory. There would now be peace.

**2 Sam. 18:20 And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.**

Joab told him not to go at that time. There would be another day, and he could report the victory after the excitement had subsided. The reason for the hesitation was that David's son had been killed.

David had caused the messengers who told him of the death of Saul and Ishbosheth to be killed. Joab was fearful that he would do the same to Ahimaaz.

**2 Sam. 18:21 Then said Joab to Cush, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cush bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.**

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We are not told just how long it was after Joab told Ahimaaz to wait, before he told Cushie to go tell David the results of the battle. Nor are we told the reason why Cushie was selected rather than Ahimaaz. Cushie obeyed the command of Joab and started running.

2 Sam. 18:22 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushie. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?

Ahimaaz was disappointed. He wanted to be the one to take the message of victory to David. If he could not be first, then let him at least go along after Cushie and share in the delivery of the news.

Joab saw no reason for Ahimaaz to run after Cushie. He would have no new message to add to what Cushie had already given to David.

2 Sam. 18:23 But howsoever, said he, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushie.

Ahimaaz was very persistent. He begged Joab to send him anyway. Joab agreed for him to go.

Ahimaaz very likely knew he was a better runner than Cushie and that he could arrive and deliver the news before Cushie was able to get there. He chose to run along the level plain at the edge of the Jordan river. This was longer, but did not have the hills over which Cushie had chosen to run. Ahimaaz overtook Cushie and passed him.

2 Sam. 18:24 And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

The scene then shifts to the city gates where David was seated waiting for the outcome of the war. The wall would have been several feet thick with a gate on the outer side and another on the inside. David would have been seated between the two gates. A watchman went up to the top of the wall over the gates. He looked into the distance and saw a man running by himself. The man was Ahimaaz.

2 Sam. 18:25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

David already knew the news was pleasant concerning the outcome of the battle. If his men were retreating there would have been many of them. One man alone would mean victory!

2 Sam. 18:26 And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

The watchman then reported that another man was running behind the first one. David still was confident the news would tell of victory for his men. Two men still did not mean retreat of the entire force.

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**2 Sam. 18:27 And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.**

The watchman recognized the style of Ahimaaz' running. He reported to David. The king then predicted good news a third time.

**2 Sam. 18:28 And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.**

Ahimaaz arrived with great excitement in his voice. He was the first to tell the king of the victory. He cried out that all is well. Then he gave the glory to the God of heaven for the defeat of those who had tried to depose David from the throne. He did not expect that which was to come next.

**2 Sam. 18:29 And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.**

David had one question foremost in his mind. He desperately wished to know whether his son Absalom was safe. In the face of all the anguish his son had caused him, he still demonstrated the love of a father toward his children.

Ahimaaz realized he might be in danger. He lied  
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and told David he really did not know. He had seen a great tumult but had no idea what caused it. He did know. Joab had told him Absalom was dead.

2 Sam. 18:30 And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

Ahimaaz was told to wait at the side of the king until the second runner arrived.

2 Sam. 18:31 And, behold, Cushie came; and Cushie said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

It was not long before Cushie arrived. He gave David the same news Ahimaaz had delivered to him. God had given David's men a victory over all of those who had rebelled against him.

2 Sam. 18:32 And the king said unto Cushie, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushie answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

David then knew for certain the battle had gone in his favor. He still did not know whether Absalom was dead or alive. He asked the same question again. "Is the young man Absalom safe?" David referred to his son as if he were an adolescent who had gone out on a fling. He could not accept the truth that his own son deserved to die.

The answer this time was more to the point. Although



Cushi did not come right out and state that Absalom was dead, he did imply that this was the case. David's son was in the same condition as were the others who had rebelled.

2 Sam. 18:33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

The words of the king, after hearing of the death of his son, are some of the most pitiful in all the Bible. He isolated himself from others who would have witnessed his grief and sorrow. Then he wept and cried out that he wished he could have died in the place of his son.

David was not unaware that much of the sorrow he was experiencing was due to his sins of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah. His son had died in his place. Dear reader, which would be the easiest; to die oneself as punishment for one's sins, or to see a beloved child die, and then live on to feel the lashes of conscience?

Chapter 19

A tremendous division of loyalties had been developed between those who followed Absalom and those who followed David. The northern portion with the ten tribes, and the one tribe of Judah in the south, had reached a point of civil war.

The division did not begin with David and Absalom. It had existed from the time of Jacob's two wives, Leah and Rachel. But the present war had left scars which were going to be very, very difficult to deal with. The conflict was over. David and his forces had prevailed. This chapter relates some of the efforts David made to bring the nation back toward unity.

As the reader well knows, David's efforts did not completely succeed. Later, we have the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom ruled by different monarchs. But David did make a valiant effort, and we will read the details in this chapter nineteen.

2 Sam. 19:1 And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

Joab had served valiantly as the commander in chief of David's men. But he had ignored David's command to deal with Absalom gently. He had participated in the slaying of this beloved son of David. Now Joab is returning to where David waits in grief and mourning over the news he has received that his son is dead. It will be extremely difficult for Joab and David to work together after Joab has killed Absalom.

2 Sam. 19:2 And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people

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**heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son.**

Those who would be expected to be relieved and encouraged by the victory were instead mourning as they saw their king in such agony.

**2 Sam. 19:3 And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.**

Instead of cheering with joy over the end of the bloodshed, the people were moving about as though they had just been defeated and were coming back from a disastrous climax. All was gloom and doom.

**2 Sam. 19:4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!**

The covering of the face was a sign of despair. Several commentators have pointed out that the widow's veil of later times was a remnant of the custom of covering the head and the face in biblical times.

David could not contain his emotions. They were out in the open where the public could view and hear his tears and his cries. They were having a demoralizing effect upon all who saw and heard him, and even among those who only heard of his state of mind.

**2 Sam. 19:5 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of**

**thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;**

Joab was angry. He moved into action by going into the palace and confronting David. He told David he had caused his people to be ashamed of what they had done rather than to be proud the war was over and the enemy had been defeated.

He added that these servants of David had saved many lives by their valor. Those lives included those of his own children, his wives and his concubines. Joab could have added that the lives of David's high level officers and leaders would also have been in the number slain if the battle had been lost. And most certainly Absalom would have had his own father David killed.

**2 Sam. 19:6 In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.**

Joab then began to get even more bold. He accused David of placing the value of his Son Absalom's life higher than all of the lives of his friends added together. He would have sacrificed the lives of all of his allies if only Absalom could have been saved.

**2 Sam. 19:7 Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.**

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Joab declared that David was obligated to go out and speak in comforting terms to his people. If he did not change his attitude Joab predicted that he would lose every one of them, and his personal situation would be worse than everything he had suffered through all of his life before this.

He did not add that he would be ready to lead David's friends in rebellion if they decided to turn against him. Still, the reader can read between the lines of Joab's words and guess that Joab was hinting at just that.

2 Sam. 19:8 Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

David still had wisdom enough to heed the warning Joab had given him. He gathered himself together and went out to meet the people at the gate of the city. This was the place where court cases were decided and major announcements were made. When the people heard David was sitting at the gate, they came forth from their houses, to which they had fled. They were encouraged by his courage in the face of the loss of his son.

We must recall that this son was not the first he had lost. God had stricken the son born to Bathsheba and so David had now wept over the deaths of two sons. "Be sure your sins will find you out."

2 Sam. 19:9 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

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There was much anxiety among all of the people over what was now to happen with regard to leadership. David had gone into exile and allowed Absalom to claim power over the nation. Absalom was now dead and they were floundering about without either of these two men in a position to rule.

**2 Sam. 19:10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?**

The obvious thing to do was to call David to return and assume the throne of the entire nation. Why not do that?

**2 Sam. 19:11 And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house.**

David was thinking along the same lines, and wondering how he could get all of the people to want him back on the throne. The only way such unity could come would be for his subjects to have turned their hearts back to him from Absalom. It would be useless to try if the people did not desire to have him back in power.

Thus David sent to the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, and also to the elders of Judah asking why they lingered without inviting his return. It seemed to David from what he was hearing that the people both in the north and in the south wanted him to come back.

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2 Sam. 19:12 Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

David made it clear that he felt especially close to those in the tribe of Judah. They were even more closely related to him than the northern tribes.

2 Sam. 19:13 And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.

Amasa had been the commander of the men who had followed Absalom. He also was a kinsman to David. As sure as Jehovah was alive, David promised to appoint Amasa his chief of the army if he would accept the position in place of Joab.

This decision to replace Joab with Amasa over the military affairs is difficult to follow. After Amasa had served against David's men, having lost at least twenty thousand men and perhaps as many as forty thousand, he was now to be chief military officer to protect David. We can look forward to more confusion.

We can only speculate that the reason for David taking the action was that irritation at the boldness of Joab in condemning him for grieving over Absalom and the need to enfold the people of Judah once more with those of the north as a unit.

2 Sam. 19:14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man; so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants.

David was successful in his efforts to win the hearts of the men of Judah. They sent a message to David that they wished for his return as their king. He should bring his aids with him.

2 Sam. 19:15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

David did as they asked. He came from the east of the Jordan river to meet those of Judah who were happy to meet him. They were ready to help him back to the west side of the river and into the territory of Judah.

2 Sam. 19:16 And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which was of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

Some serious questions then arose. What would happen when David met those who had insulted him when he left Jerusalem? Would he have them executed? The first one who had reason to wonder was Shemei, the man who had blasphemed him and thrown stones at him as he left. Shemei had a very different attitude now that David had won the battle and was ready to reenter the land. His life was at stake, and he would have been powerless to defend himself.

2 Sam. 19:17 And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king.

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It seems that Shemei was the commander of one thousand men whom he had brought to help David and his household cross back into Judah.

Ziba had even brought his sons and servants to assist David's re-entry. Old enemies were fast becoming friends when it was safer that way.

**2 Sam. 19:18 And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;**

As the ferry boat carried the possessions of David back from the east to the west side of the Jordan, Shemei prostrated himself before David and was ready to see David's wishes carried out.

**2 Sam. 19:19 And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.**

Shemei begged that David not remember how Shemei had mistreated him so abominably when he found it wise to leave Jerusalem. He hoped David would be merciful and gracious to him and not take his life for what he had done.

**2 Sam. 19:20 For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.**

Shemei confessed that what he had done was a terrible sin. Because he admitted that sin, he wished to let David know he no longer felt as he did then and would do all he could to serve him. That was why he was the very first one to meet and greet him.

**2 Sam. 19:21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S anointed?**

Abishai had been hard to keep back from taking off Shemei's head when he was insulting David before. Now he was fearful that David would completely forgive Shemei and visit no punishment whatsoever on him. He wanted Shemei dead.

**2 Sam. 19:22 And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?**

Zeruiah was a sister to David and the mother of both Joab and Abishai. She was a strong willed woman who acted impulsively. This is what David was trying to prevent on the part of Abishai on the present occasion. He did not wish to see Shemei killed when he was presenting himself as penitent of his sins. As king of the land, David would make the decision, not Abishai.

**2 Sam. 19:23 Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.**

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David then turned to Shemei and assured him that his life would not be taken from him. We can suppose Abishai would not be any happier this time than he was on the previous occasion when David prevented him from beheading Shemei.

2 Sam. 19:24 And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

Ziba had told David that Mephibosheth had remained in Jerusalem because he thought the dynasty of Saul would be reinstated and he was waiting for that to happen. As Mephibosheth met David he had all the signs of one who was grieving and waiting for his friend David to reappear. Could Ziba have been misrepresenting him and slandering him? His clothing was disheveled. He had not trimmed his beard or dressed his feet.

2 Sam. 19:25 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

When David saw Mephibosheth he asked him why he had not gone with him when he left Jerusalem. That question had borne on David's mind throughout the time he had been gone from the city.

2 Sam. 19:26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame.

Mephibosheth replied that he had been deceived by his servant Ziba. Ziba had promised to saddle an ass for him to ride and follow his king. He needed the ass because he was lame and could not go afoot.

2 Sam. 19:27 And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes.

Then, according to Mephibosheth, Ziba had given David a false report about him and made him appear as a foe to David.

Mephibosheth wanted David to know that in his own eyes, David was as good and as wise as one of God's angels. He was willing to trust David's decision. David should do what he thought to be right.

2 Sam. 19:28 For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

In time past David could have killed every man of the household of Saul. He did not kill Meshibosheth. He had let him live and had even gone so far as to make a place for him at David's own table. As a result of David's kindness, he would certainly not complain about any judgment he made.

2 Sam. 19:29 And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

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When Ziba had told the falsehood about Mephibosheth, David had impulsively believed what he said and had awarded the estate of Saul to Ziba. Now he was ready to return things as they were before. Ziba was to work the estate and Mephibosheth was to receive half of the proceeds.

**2 Sam. 19:30 And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.**

Mephibosheth then made a statement which sounds very much like that of Abraham when he offered Lot the better part of the land and Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom.

**2 Sam. 19:31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.**

Now David had dealt with both Shemei and Ziba. He was not yet finished. Barzillai the Gileadite met him. Barzillai was the wealthy man who had provided for David and his men while they were driven out into the land of Gilead. David felt that he owed Barzillai a favor in return for what he had received from him.

**2 Sam. 19:32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man.**

Barzillai was a man of eighty years of age. He was at the point where David might well provide for him as he had provided for David.

**2 Sam. 19:33 And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.**

We can see how carefully David reacted toward every friend or foe he met upon his return to the west side of the Jordan. This time he was eager to befriend one who had befriended him. He would take Barzillai to Jerusalem and provide for all his needs.

**2 Sam. 19:34 And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?**

**2 Sam. 19:35 I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?**

Barzillai was appreciative of David's invitation, but he explained that he was a very old man and did not have long to live. He could not taste his food. He could not hear the voices of those around him. He had lost his power to choose which of two paths was best. He would only be a burden to David.

**2 Sam. 19:36 Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?**

**2 Sam. 19:37 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him**



**go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.**

Barzillai was willing to go a little ways with David, even so far as to cross the Jordan with him. That was as far as he felt he should continue. It was his wish that he die in his own city and be buried near the graves of his mother and father.

He did, however, have a faithful servant named Chimham. If David desired to do so he might bless the life of Chimham instead of his own.

**2 Sam. 19:38 And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.**

David was delighted to do as Barzillai had suggested. He would care for Chimham just as he would have cared for Barzillai. Furthermore, if he needed anything in the future David would be happy to meet his wishes.

**2 Sam. 19:39 And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.**

After crossing the river, the two men parted with a kiss of friendship and Barzillai returned to his own city and David went on in the direction of Jerusalem.

**2 Sam. 19:40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.**

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There is an important contrast in this verse.

All the people of Judah conducted the king on his way after he crossed the Jordan. **Half** the people of Israel did so. This would lead to friction.

2 Sam. 19:41 And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?

The men of Israel wished to know why the people of Judah had been favored in bringing David back. They had slipped one over on the people of Israel by not letting them know, so they could share in the return of the king. It looked to the people of Israel as if the people of Judah were claiming David was their king, but not the king of the northern tribes.

2 Sam. 19:42 And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath he given us any gift?

The men of Judah answered back that they had a right to a closer relationship with David because they were related more closely to him through their bloodlines. And also, they had not received any special favors from him. He had not fed them, nor had he given them some gift which he had not given those in Israel.

2 Sam. 19:43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the



king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

The men of Israel answered back that they had just as much right to claim the king as Judah did. They had ten tribes while Judah was but one. They should have been consulted before bringing David back.

We are told that the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than those of the men of Israel. But it is extremely clear that David's efforts at unifying the kingdom had still fallen short of what he wished.

Chapter 20

There has been a major attempt to bring the entire nation of Israel to some degree of unity. The rebellion of Absalom failed and David is now accepted as king by the majority of those in both the ten tribes of the north and the tribe of Judah in the south. But all is still not well. The sword has not yet disappeared from the house of David. Nor will it!

2 Sam. 20:1 And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

A man of Belial is a son of wickedness. He is a no good rabblouser. Sheba was just such a man. He saw the dissatisfaction and division which still remained as a crack in the door where he could put his foot and take a place in the throne room.

He blew a trumpet to sound the beginning of a new rebellion against David. Every man of Israel was to go to his tent where he could get weapons to use in the fight.

2 Sam. 20:2 So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

Sheba had an impressive response to his trumpet blowing. Large numbers of the men of Israel ceased

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from following David and began to follow Sheba.

It was not the same in the territory of Judah. Most of those in that area remained true to David.

**2 Sam. 20:3 And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.**

David was ready to bring order. The first thing he did was to deal with the ten concubines who had been defiled by his son Absalom. If David had limited himself to one true wife, he would have avoided the problem which now faced him. Instead, he planted seed which grew into the massive polygamy of his son Solomon with his one thousand women.

David did not wish to turn the concubines out in the cold to starve. He did not feel that he could take them back for his own sexual satisfaction. He did what he considered fair. He isolated them from society and kept them fed, but had no intimate relationship with them. The result was that they lived as widows would live, without the companionship of any man.

**2 Sam. 20:4 Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present.**

David knew something must be done about the rebellion Sheba was trying to lead. He told Amasa to gather an army from the men of Judah. The army was to be ready within three days. There was no time to be lost. Sheba needed to be taken by surprise. You may

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recall that Amasa was the one whom David placed in charge of his military when Joab had his son Absalom killed.

2 Sam. 20:5 So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

Amasa set out to obey David's command and gather troops from the men of Judah. At the end of the three days David had specified, Amasa was not ready.

David might have anticipated incompetency. Amasa had been the man in charge of Absalom's forces who were soundly defeated by those under the command of Joab. We do not know just what the reason for the delay. It could have been that men who had just returned to their families from the previous fighting did not wish to leave for a new battle. It could have been that the men of Judah did not trust Amasa as a leader.

2 Sam. 20:6 And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us.

David did not wait. He turned to Abishai and informed him that Sheba was about to cause more trouble than Absalom had caused. David commanded Abishai to take a smaller number of men and go after Sheba quickly before he was able to take shelter in walled cities.

2 Sam. 20:7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and
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**all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.**

Joab's men were assigned to serve under Abishai. Also David's personal bodyguard, the Cherethites and the Pelethites was drafted for the effort.

**2 Sam. 20:8 When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out.**

While they were on the way to attack Sheba and his men, Amasa chose to lead the group. He faced two adversaries in addition to Sheba. Abishai had been assigned the leadership by David. Joab was smarting from being demoted for his bold challenge to David.

Joab did not like followership. He developed a plan to retake the lead. He put on a garment that was bound around him by a girdle. There was a sheath fastened to the girdle and a sword was in the sheath.. As Joab marched along with the rest of the men, he was close to Amasa. As he marched, the sword fell out of the sheath. We are not told if this was accidental or deliberate. We can make a fairly good guess that it was deliberate.

**2 Sam. 20:9 And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.**

At this time Joab asked Amasa how he was feeling. Was he in good health? If so he would not be in that condition long!

Joab took Amasa by the beard as if he wished to give him a kiss of friendship. He used his right hand to grasp Amasa's beard. This left his left hand for the rest of his purpose.

**2 Sam. 20:10 But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.**

Amasa had no suspicion that Joab had his murder in mind. He thought the grasping of the beard was only a preliminary to the friendship kiss.

Were there two swords, or just one? Some see two and say the one that dropped to the ground was still there but there was another in Joab's left hand. Other think the one in Joab's left hand was the one which had dropped and that the dropping of the sword was a means of getting close to Amasa without him detecting the coming assassination.

**2 Sam. 20:11 And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab.**

One of Joab's men cried out for all those who were in favor of David for king to follow Joab. He would be their leader, not Amasa.

**2 Sam. 20:12 And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth**  
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upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

As the troops passed by Amasa to follow Joab, the man who had called out for them to do so saw that they were halting their forward progress to view Amasa wallowing in his own blood in the midst of the highway. He dragged the body out of the highway and into a field nearby, casting a cloth over it to hide it from sight.

2 Sam. 20:13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

2 Sam. 20:14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Bethmaachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him.

Abishai seems to have concluded it was best to allow Joab to act as leader. We find Abishai fading from the scene.

As the army commanded by Joab marched along, other volunteers who were displeased with the rebellion of Sheba joined the march. They had gone through the various tribes and had been moving toward the walled city of Abel. Sheba had secured himself and his men in that city.

2 Sam. 20:15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Bethmaachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.

One of the ways a walled city could be attacked was by building a ramp which allowed them to look down upon the inside of the city. From the ramp they could hurl projectiles down upon the defenders, and also could possibly use it to scale the wall.

2 Sam. 20:16 Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.

Among the citizens of the city of Abel was a woman who was known for her wisdom. She could have been a sorceress or a witch, but she had established herself as a dependable counsellor. She called out to Joab that he should hear what she had to say to him and his men. She wished to speak to him in particular.

2 Sam. 20:17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.

After establishing the fact that it was Joab to whom she was speaking, she urged him to listen to her. She humbled herself by called herself his handmaid. She knew there was a need for gaining his sympathy. Her city of Abel was in serious danger.

2 Sam. 20:18 Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter.

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She first made it clear to Joab that the city was not a warlike city. It had served just the opposite purpose over the years. Those who had differences had come to the city to find ways to bring peace, not destruction.

**2 Sam. 20:19 I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?**

This woman felt that Joab and his army were about to wreak destruction upon a people who did not deserve this treatment. If Joab demolished the city he would be damaging that which Jehovah held precious.

**2 Sam. 20:20 And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.**

Joab heard her! He declared that it was not his purpose to destroy or swallow up the city of Abel. It only appeared that this was so.

**2 Sam. 20:21 The matter is not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.**

Joab explained that the reason he and his men were there was to capture a man named Sheba who was leading a revolt against king David. If Sheba were to be delivered to them, the city would be absolutely safe.

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There was not reason for fear if the rebellious man was cast out of the city where they could destroy him.

2 Sam. 20:22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

The wise woman was very influential in the city. She appealed to the people and told them what must be done to protect their city. They agreed to behead Sheba and throw his head over the wall. When that was done, Joab blew a trumpet to signal the close of the crisis. The army of Joab left the city of Abel and returned to their homes. Joab reported to David the king in Jerusalem.

2 Sam. 20:23 Now Joab was over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites:

We are now given a list of the chief men under David. Joab was still not forgiven of his murder of Absalom, but he was too strong for David to successfully demote him at the time. Later, David requested that Solomon slay Joab.

Benaiah was the commander of David's personal bodyguard, the Cherethites and Pelethites.

2 Sam. 20:24 And Adoram was over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder:

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Adoram supervised the tribute which came from the people to support the government. Adoram is known by another name in the books of Chronicles.

Jehoshaphat acted as recorder of the history of the nation.

**2 Sam. 20:25 And Sheva was scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests:**

Sheva was a scribe who probably acted as a personal secretary for David, and may have served somewhat the same purpose as did the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar.

**2 Sam. 20:26 And Ira also the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.**

Ira served in what we might today refer to as Secretary of State, or Vice President.

The reader might wish to compare the list given in 2 Samuel 8:15-18 and also in I Chronicles 18;14-17.

## Chapter 21

The last four chapters of this book of Second Samuel have often been called an interlude or an appendix. There are many questions concerning variations in names of persons, times of occurrence and other items. It has been suggested that a different writer penned these four chapters than the one who wrote the first twenty.

The present chapter discusses Jehovah's punishment upon Israel for Saul's breaking of the covenant with the Gibeonites. Then it goes on to describe problems with the Philistines, with Goliath and his four giant sons.

**2 Sam. 21:1 Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David enquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.**

A three year famine is a matter for serious concern. Even a one year famine is a major concern, but when the famine continues for three years, the food supply is very nearly exhausted.

If David did not inquire of the Lord before the end of the third year, he should have. It is possible that he inquired before that but did not receive an answer until the three years was complete.

The Lord's answer was that it was punishment for the bloody house of Saul as a result of his breaking of the covenant which had been made with the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites had used deception in the past to obtain an agreement with Israel that they would become servants to Israel if they were allowed to escape annihilation with other inhabitants of the land. This covenant was

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not in agreement with God's command to drive out the inhabitants when they claimed the promised land.

However, Israel had made the covenant anyway. It seems that Saul decided to obey God's command to kill or drive out the people as God had said, and in order to do this he broke the oath which had been made before God. God wants his will obeyed, but He also expects his people to keep the oaths which they have made with Him as a witness.

2 Sam. 21:2 And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)

King David knew something had to be done to cover the guilt of the broken oath. He called the leaders of the Gibeonites and asked them what they required to make up for the abuse. This was another of the mistakes of David. He should have inquired of God rather than of the Gibeonites.

The Gibeonites were descendants of the Hivites, who were a part of the Amorites. "Amorites" is the general name given to all of the several clans living in the land at the time Israel moved in.

2 Sam. 21:3 Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?

If there was any blessing to be done, it was to be done by the Lord. The only thing the Gibeonites could do was

forgive the abuse which they had suffered. They could reveal what they felt was right for that purpose.

2 Sam. 21:4 And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you.

According to the Word of God, there is no amount of silver or gold which can pay for the murder of a man. A murderer is to pay with his own life. It is blood for blood. The Gibeonites did not wish to receive monetary awards. Neither did they wish to have just any persons killed to remove the guilt.

2 Sam. 21:5 And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel,

2 Sam. 21:6 Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give them.

The Gibeonites desired that seven men from the house of Saul be delivered to them for execution. It was Saul who had determined to exterminate them after a solemn covenant had been made. He had attempted to destroy all of them so that none remained within the boundaries of Israel's land.

When seven of Saul's house had been hung up before God in the part of the land most closely related to Saul, they would be satisfied. David agreed to their condition. He would deliver the seven. This was hardly a person

for person trade. Saul had probably killed far more than seven of the Gibeonites, but seven is representative of completeness.

2 Sam. 21:7 But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

The first thing David did was to eliminate Jonathan's son Mephibosheth from the selection process. He had promised to care for Mephibosheth and he was going to keep that promise.

2 Sam. 21:8 But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite:

In verse six, the Gibeonites had asked for seven "sons" of Saul. Two of these were sons of Saul. They were the sons of Rizpah, whom she bore to Saul. The other five were grandsons, who were the children of Michal, the daughter of Saul. This fit the request in that male descendants were also considered to be sons.

The Mephibosheth mentioned here is not the one David excluded from the selection because of his promise to Jonathan.

2 Sam. 21:9 And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days

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**of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest.**

David delivered these seven descendants of Saul to the Gibeonites in order that they might hang them up before the Lord. The “hill” was no doubt a high place where all could see the execution. To say they all seven fell together does not necessarily refer to falling from a place where they were hung. It could only mean that they lost their lives together.

The seven died in the beginning of the barley harvest, which would have been early in the summer. March 21 has been suggested as the approximate date. The reader must remember that the seasons in Palestine are not identical with those where he or she resides.

**2 Sam. 21:10 And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.**

Rizpah, the mother of Saul’s two sons provides us one of the most pathetic examples of the power of a mother’s love which we have in all of history. She took sackcloth and placed it on a rock as a place where she could act as a guardian to keep the vultures and meat eating beasts from feeding upon the bodies. She maintained her guard from the beginning of the barley harvest until the fall rains began. There is some question as to just how long this was, but it is generally agreed that it was a matter of weeks or months.

She was determined that her sons would not suffer a despicable funeral.

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2 Sam. 21:11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

Word came to David that Rizpah was maintaining her vigil over the seven bodies. David was sympathetic to her grief.

A note needs to be added here that the two sons whom Rizpah bore to Saul may have been grandsons also, Aiah is called the concubine of Saul, and Rizpah is Aiah's daughter. If Aiah bore Rizpah, and Rizpah bore the two male children, they would have been Saul's grandchildren.

If the reader is becoming dizzy, we can understand.

2 Sam. 21:12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabeshgilead, which had stolen them from the street of Bethshan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa:

David decided to give the seven a decent burial by moving their bones from the open air and placing them in a sepulchre. While doing this he also took the bones of Saul and Jonathan from those who had stolen them at the time the Philistines hung them at the battle of Gilboa.

This latter act could have been difficult, since the bones of Saul and Jonathan had been burned to ashes. However, the ashes could have been recovered.

2 Sam. 21:13 And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his

son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.

2 Sam. 21:14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land.

David had the remains of all nine of the men brought to the sepulchre of Kish, who was Saul's father. They were buried with dignity in that sepulchre.

After this was completed, we are told that the Lord was ready to remove the famine from the land. It seems strange that the grandsons of Saul should be executed for the sins of their grandfather. Still, God knows better than men do just what will be the most acceptable plan to harmonize with that which He is working out from the beginning until time changes into eternity.

2 Sam. 21:15 Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.

Now we move to the second main topic of the chapter; the battle with the Philistines. The Philistines had been a major enemy of Israel from their entry into the promised land until decades later. A question arises here. Did the events related in the rest of this chapter take place around the time David slew Goliath, or after the sons of Saul were executed? We will ponder this question as we proceed.

David did not remain at the palace during the battle with the Philistines. He went down with his men and fought along with them. By this time, David may have
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been getting along in age and became weary from his exertion.

**2 Sam. 21:16 And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.**

One of the sons of “the giant” was named Ishbibenob. He was also a giant and carried a brass spear which weighed about seven and one half pounds. He also wielded a new sword. Ishbibenob saw that David was weakening and thought he had the chance to kill the king of Israel.

All of this seems to point to a date long after David’s slaying of Goliath with his sling and four stones.

**2 Sam. 21:17 But Abishai the son of Zeruah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.**

David had been very critical of the sons of Zeruah, calling them impulsive and bloodthirsty. In spite of this, he owed his life to Abishai. The latter came to his assistance and killed the Philistine.

After this event, David’s soldiers called upon him to stay out of any future conflicts. He was needed much more as a guide than as a sword swinger. If he continued to fight personally, he would die and Israel would flounder in the darkness.

**2 Sam. 21:18 And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant.**

Another battle then was fought against the Philistines. This time it was fought at Gob. In this battle Sibbechai slew Saph, who was also among the sons of “the giant.”

Those who were heroes in the battle with the giants had their names preserved throughout the history of Israel, and even to the present time.

**2 Sam. 21:19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver’s beam.**

Another battle was fought with the Philistines at Gob. This time Elhanan was the hero. He slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite. It depends on how the sentence is to be read, whether it was Goliath the Gittite who spear was like a weaver’s beam, or whether it was the brother of Goliath who carried that spear. If it was Goliath the Gittite, it sounds very much like the Goliath whom David slew with his sling while he was but a lad.

The various manuscripts differ in their reading on this passage, some saying Elhanan slew Goliath. This is supposedly explained by saying David had two names, and that Elhanan was a second name. This present writer feels that the King James Version as given here is the translation which best fits the entire scenario.



**2 Sam. 21:20 And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of great stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant.**

A fourth battle is fought. This time at Gath, a major city of the Philistines. Another giant appears. This time he is said to have been born of “the giant.” Not only was he of tremendous size. He was abnormal in that he was a sexadigitarian. He had six fingers on each hand the six toes on each foot. He would have been a formidable opponent.

**2 Sam. 21:21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David slew him.**

When this giant challenged Israel, Jonathan, the son of Shimeah who was David’s brother, killed this giant.

**2 Sam. 21:22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.**

In all, there were four sons of “the giant” who died at the hand of David and his men.

It is of interest that the Hebrew word from which “the giant” is translated is “rapha.” It is possible that this is a general term referring to Philistines of great size. It would then be as if one were saying these four men were born to the race of giants among the Philistines.

## *Chapter 22*

This is an extremely interesting chapter. It very closely resembles the twenty-third psalm, which was written by David. But, there is a great difference also between the psalm and this present chapter. There is nothing in the twenty-third psalm which declares the writer to be sinless. There are several remarks in this chapter which indicate that they refer to a perfectly righteous and sinless individual.

The only person who perfectly fits the description in this chapter is the Son of God, Jesus Christ. It is the conviction of this present writer that David wrote the Psalm in the latter part of his life, and that much of it refers to his own trials and blessings, but that it is primarily messianic prophecy, foretelling the relationship between the Heavenly Father and His Only Begotten Son.

**2 Sam. 22:1 And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:**

Note that the writer speaks about David, rather than saying he is David. He tells us that David spoke the words of this chapter as a song, after David had been delivered from the hand of Saul, and of many other enemies. However, we find that Paul quoted from the words as if they applied to the Christ, under whose reign the Gentiles were to be invited to become God's people.

(See Romans 15:9 and Hebrews 2:13.)

*Rom 15:9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.*

*Heb 2:13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*

**2 Sam. 22:2 And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;**

God is spoken of as aiding David, and even more so the Christ, in many different ways. First, He is a rock or foundation which does not shift under one's feet as sand would do. He is a fortress in that there is safety from the enemy by hiding in his arms. He is a deliverer in that when the enemy has seemingly overpowered one, he breaks that power and allows his anointed to escape.

**2 Sam. 22:3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.**

God is a shield who wards off the fiery darts of the wicked. He is the horn of salvation in that His blessings flow abundantly into the life of His faithful servant.

**2 Sam. 22:4 I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.**

Both David and the Christ called upon the Father in heaven to rescue them from those who oppressed them.

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Christ called upon his Father while in the Garden of Gethsemane. David did so when he was being pursued by Saul.

2 Sam. 22:5 When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid;

Waves are capable of drowning those whom they overcome. The waves of death and the torrents of persecutors have struck fear into the hearts of many. Even the Lord must have wished there was some way other than the crucifixion to remove the sins of men.

2 Sam. 22:6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;

Death, hell and the grave are fearful thoughts when they lie just ahead, as they did for both David and Christ. The word “prevented” here means they went before, or were just ahead.

2 Sam. 22:7 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.

Do the words above apply to Christ. He was God. Yet on the cross, even he cried out “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.” And the Father did hear. From His temple in heaven His ear heard the cry of the Saviour and was ready to respond.

2 Sam. 22:8 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth.

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The next few verses contrast the helplessness of the flesh and the power of the Spirit of God. While the flesh can be overcome, the All Powerful God of heaven cannot be. When he speaks both heaven and earth tremble before Him. His wrath moves mountains.

**2 Sam. 22:9 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.**

Here we are reminded of the scene when the law was given on Mount Sinai. Sadly, we are also reminded that God is to bring this heaven and earth to an end one day, and replace it with a new creation. When that time comes, the elements will melt with the fervent heat. These verses speak in what is sometimes called the “prophetic past.” While they prophesy of the future, they are so certain, they are described as having already passed.

**2 Sam. 22:10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet.**

**2 Sam. 22:11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind.**

No enemy can stand before the Lord. At the time of the death of His Son, darkness covered the earth for a number of hours. He can move from place to place faster than the wind. He is omnipresent.

**2 Sam. 22:12 And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.**

**2 Sam. 22:13 Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled.**

**2 Sam. 22:14 The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice.**

The power of God can be seen in the frightening scenes of a severe thunderstorm. The sky becomes dark. The waves of the sea roll and toss. The clouds billow and shift about. Then through the darkness one sees the flash of lightning and the voice of God is heard as a clap of thunder.

All of this is the best David can do to picture the magnificence of the God he loves and serves. We can do no better.

**2 Sam. 22:15 And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them.**

**2 Sam. 22:16 And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.**

The power of God was sufficient to scatter the enemies of both David and the Son of David. The very foundations of the earth were affected as God came to their rescue.

**2 Sam. 22:17 He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters;**

The waters were the host of enemies which threatened to drown God's servants. They did not succeed. He pulled them out of the foaming deep and lifted them to heights where the enemy could not destroy them.





**2 Sam. 22:18 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.**

**2 Sam. 22:19 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.**

When the enemy was too strong for David to defend himself, the Creator offered His strength to prevent his destruction. Time after time this pattern of events can be seen.

**2 Sam. 22:20 He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.**

**2 Sam. 22:21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.**

Now we begin to come to the part of the chapter which can in no way be applied to David. It is true that David was called a “man after God’s own heart.” But it is also true that David’s hands were not clean. They had been responsible for both adultery and murder.

Such was not true of the Saviour. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. The one described here was clean, was righteous and was perfectly faithful.

In general the man who attempts to live the righteous life will be favored by the Father above. In general, the man who loves sin will feel the breath of His wrath.

**2 Sam. 22:22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.**

**2 Sam. 22:23 For all his judgments were before me: and as for his statutes, I did not depart from them.**

David could not make the above statements with respect to himself. He had not always kept the ways of the Lord. He had wickedly departed from God. He had broken God's statutes and disregarded His judgments.

Christ fits the description. David does not!

**2 Sam. 22:24 I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity.**

Many of the psalms of David prove that he considered himself a sinner in the eyes of Jehovah. He begged for forgiveness.

**2 Sam. 22:25 Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye sight.**

**2 Sam. 22:26 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.**

God will show grace and mercy to those who prove themselves hungry for the bread of life and the living water. Such men will have their sins forgiven through the blood of the Son.

**2 Sam. 22:27 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.**

**2 Sam. 22:28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down.**

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God's attitude toward the haughty will be just the opposite. They are His enemies. They will come to destruction in both this life and the endlessness of eternal punishment.

2 Sam. 22:29 For thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness.

At this point in the chapter the emphasis turns back to David and the blessings which came to him as he tried to do the will of the Lord. He is conscious of the importance of spiritual light to guide his path. The source of that light is the Word of God.

2 Sam. 22:30 For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall.

With God's help the faithful find it possible to break through an opposing army. By His help the faithful can leap over any barrier built by Satan and his angels.

2 Sam. 22:31 As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.

God is the ultimate example and instructor. His Word can be trusted completely. He girds every servant with His power.

2 Sam. 22:32 For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God?

2 Sam. 22:33 God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.

Beside Jehovah there is no God. The ways of men all fall short. His assistance can prevent man's steps from going to the right or the left. He can keep one in the straight and narrow way that leads to life.

2 Sam. 22:34 He maketh my feet like hinds' feet: and setteth me upon my high places.

Just as the mountain goat jumps from one rock to another, the Lord makes it possible for His own to reach the heights of the spiritual mountains.

2 Sam. 22:35 He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

2 Sam. 22:36 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great.

The armor of the man of God is sufficient for both offense and defense. Though there is strength such as would be needed to break a bow of steel, God's loving gentleness brings greatness.

2 Sam. 22:37 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip.

2 Sam. 22:38 I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them.

2 Sam. 22:39 And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet.

Not only does God defend the faithful from the onslaughts of the wicked. He causes His true servants

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to move on to victory. There is no force strong enough to separate a solid Christian from his God.

**2 Sam. 22:40 For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me.**

**2 Sam. 22:41 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.**

**2 Sam. 22:42 They looked, but there was none to save; even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.**

With the help of the hand of God, David had overcome every enemy who rose up against him. They had even called out for God to help them, but He would not hear them because they would not hear Him.

**2 Sam. 22:43 Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad.**

**2 Sam. 22:44 Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen: a people which I knew not shall serve me.**

Again we see a Messianic note creeping in. The Christ was to become the head of Gentiles from throughout the world. Those who were complete strangers to David would someday be ruled by the teachings of the Son of God.

**2 Sam. 22:45 Strangers shall submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.**

**2 Sam. 22:46 Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their close places.**

David was not talking about himself personally here. He was asserting that the Son of David would be served by those of far away lands and generations to come.

**2 Sam. 22:47 The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.**

**2 Sam. 22:48 It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me.**

The honor, the power and the glory do not belong to men. They belong to the Lord of the universe. Any exaltation men enjoy must be recognized as being possible only through divine aid.

**2 Sam. 22:49 And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.**

**2 Sam. 22:50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.**

Because Jehovah had lifted both David and the Christ from the jaws of death and hell, David was delighted to praise His Holy Name and thank Him for His loving protection.

**2 Sam. 22:51 He is the tower of salvation for his king: and sheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.**



Truly God provided a tower of salvation for David the king of Israel. He provided the same for His Son Jesus Christ, the King of Kings. And he will provide a tower of salvation to every faithful Christian who is a part of the Kingdom of Priests.

It is of interest to notice the various things God is said to be in the chapter.

1. A Fortress
2. A Rock
3. A Deliverer
4. A Shield
5. A Horn
6. A Tower
7. A Refuge
8. A Saviour
9. A Stay
10. A Buckler
11. An Avenger

## *Chapter 23*

This chapter covers two main topics. First, it tells of David's attempts to be the kind of king God desires, and lists the advantages of having such a king. This portion of the chapter is considered to be messianic in that Christ fulfilled those desirable characteristics.

The second portion of the chapter gives a list of David's mighty men. Impressive feats in warfare are related for a number of them. The reader should compare the eleventh chapter of I Chronicles with the present list. A similar list is given there, though the two lists differ considerably.

**2 Sam. 23:1 Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,**

Again the words are the words of David, although they are reported by someone else. David is identified as the son of Jesse, the one whom God raised up and exalted, the anointed of God and the sweet psalmist of Israel. It does not add that David was a type of the Son of God and King of Kings.

**2 Sam. 23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.**

David's words were not altogether his own. They were inspired by the Spirit of God. The praise is due the Lord, but it also was delivered by the Lord.





**2 Sam. 23:3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.**

The first point to be made is that any approved ruler is to be both just to the subjects and a respecter of Jehovah. No ruler can be what he ought to be without first submitting his own will to that of God, and then attempting to deal fairly with those over whom he rules.

**2 Sam. 23:4 And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.**

A just and God fearing ruler will bring freshness and health to his nation. As the light of the rising sun freshens the grass after a rain, the ruler will cause his nation to stand upright like the grass in springtime.

**2 Sam. 23:5 Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.**

David admitted that he and his house fell short of God's ideal, God had still made an everlasting covenant with him that his house would reign forever. Nathan the prophet had stated this promise of God. This was what David desired, and strove for, though he sinned grievously at times and brought great tribulation to the nation.

**2 Sam. 23:6 But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands:**

Rulers who attempt to take advantage of their subjects, and who have no respect for God's statutes are like thorns in a cultivated field. They will be punished because touching them leads to much pain.

**2 Sam. 23:7 But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.**

Any who are ruled by such men must try to protect themselves with the best defenses possible. Until these worthless thorny rulers are removed and cast into the fire. To whatever degree it is possible, nations should avoid choosing these sons of Belial for leaders.

**2 Sam. 23:8 These be the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite: he lift up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.**

This commentary will not allot a great amount of space to the list of David's mighty men. The list was not intended as an outline for running cross references. It was intended to give credit to those who stood with David, particularly during the war with the Philistines.

The information can be useful to the faithful in the days of the rulership of Christ in giving the Christian courage in standing up for His side in the war against  
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Satan and his demonic forces.

Adino was known for the fact that he is said to have slain eight hundred of the enemy in a single battle. He was made chief among the captains of the mighty men. If this is not a corrupted text, the only possible way one man could slay eight hundred would be for the Lord to have weakened the enemy and strengthened Adino.

2 Sam. 23:9 And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away:

Eleazar was also among the most prominent of this courageous band. This man was left alone and still continued to oppose the Philistines.

2 Sam. 23:10 He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil.

Eleazar swung his sword until his fingers cramped around the handle. Through his efforts a great victory was won. Other Israelites waited until the battle was over, and only rejoined him to take spoils from the dead Philistines.

2 Sam. 23:11 And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines.

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**2 Sam. 23:12 But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory.**

**Shammah** was also outstanding. The Philistines had gathered a band and were stealing lentils, which are similar to onions, from a field. This man, like Eleazar held his ground and led Israel to another great victory.

**2 Sam. 23:13 And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.**

The mention of the cave of Adullam leads some to think this event took place during the time David was fleeing from Saul.

**2 Sam. 23:14 And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem.**

David had secluded himself in the cave when three of his mighty men joined him. He had used the cave as a retreat and the Philistines were nearby in Bethlehem.

**2 Sam. 23:15 And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!**

David mentioned that he was thirsty, and how good it would be if only someone would give him a drink of the water from the well near the gate of the city of Bethlehem. He probably did not give a command for  
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someone to go. Yet, the three mighty men respected him so much they decided to grant his wish and bring a drink from the well. This was an extremely dangerous mission.

2 Sam. 23:16 And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD.

We are not informed as to how the three men managed to pass through the host of the Philistines. They did succeed, and brought water from the well to David.

David refused to drink the water when it was offered to him. He poured it out as a sacrifice to the Lord.

2 Sam. 23:17 And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men.

His reason for pouring out the water was that to him it represented the blood of those three men who had risked their lives to obtain it. Several writers have compared this act to that of the woman who used precious ointment to anoint the feet of Jesus. Some have also pointed out the contrast between this act and the completely opposite attitude toward Uriah when David sent him to his death to conceal his sin with Bathsheba.

2 Sam. 23:18 And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among three.

2 Sam. 23:19 Was he not most honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the first three.

Abishai was a captain of three. He was recognized for having slain three hundred of the enemy. He was the greatest of the three and was made captain.

2 Sam. 23:20 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow:

2 Sam. 23:21 And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

2 Sam. 23:22 These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men.

2 Sam. 23:23 He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the first three. And David set him over his guard.

Benaiah killed two lion like men of Moab. He also killed a lion which had fallen into a pit while snow was on the ground. Thirdly, he killed an Egyptian. All Benaiah had as a weapon was a staff for walking. The Egyptian had a spear. Benaiah succeeded in disarming the Egyptian by knocking the spear of the Egyptian from
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his hand and then killing him with the staff. David set him over his own personal bodyguard.

The above had distinguished themselves above and beyond the rest of the mighty men. The ones mentioned through the rest of the chapter were less prestigious.

Several have mentioned the fact that Joab is not mentioned in the list. This is probably because he was above the rest of the group and was seen as a separate leader.

**2 Sam. 23:24 Asahel the brother of Joab was one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem,**

**2 Sam. 23:25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite,**

**2 Sam. 23:26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,**

**2 Sam. 23:27 Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite,**

**2 Sam. 23:28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,**

**2 Sam. 23:29 Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin,**

**2 Sam. 23:30 Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash,**

**2 Sam. 23:31 Abialbon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,**

**2 Sam. 23:32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan,**

**2 Sam. 23:33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite,**

**2 Sam. 23:34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,**

**2 Sam. 23:35** Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,

**2 Sam. 23:36** Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,

**2 Sam. 23:37** Zelek the Ammonite, Nahari the Beerothite, armourbearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah,

**2 Sam. 23:38** Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite,

**2 Sam. 23:39** Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.

Since the Bible does not expand on the men from verse thirty-four to the end of the chapter, this commentary will follow suit. We should add that this band of men was not static. Some are listed at one time. Others are listed earlier or later. There were no doubt some who dropped out and others who were added over time.

Because of the close correlation between this present chapter and chapter eleven of First Chronicles. It may be wise to add the text of the chapter in First Chronicles to save the reader time in moving back and forth. Verses ten through forty-seven of the text of that chapter are given below.

*1Ch 11:10 These also are the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, and with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel.*

*1Ch 11:11 And this is the number of the mighty men whom David had; Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains: he lifted up his spear against three hundred slain by him at one time.*

*1Ch 11:12 And after him was Eleazar the son of*

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Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighties.

1Ch 11:13 He was with David at Pasdammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines.

1Ch 11:14 And they set themselves in the midst of that parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines; and the LORD saved them by a great deliverance.

1Ch 11:15 Now three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim.

1Ch 11:16 And David was then in the hold, and the Philistines' garrison was then at Bethlehem.

1Ch 11:17 And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate!

1Ch 11:18 And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the LORD.

1Ch 11:19 And said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest.

1Ch 11:20 And Abishai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three: for lifting up his spear against three hundred, he slew them, and had a name among the three.

1Ch 11:21 Of the three, he was more honourable than the two; for he was their captain: howbeit he attained not to the first three.

1Ch 11:22 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of

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*a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done many acts; he slew two lionlike men of Moab: also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day.*

*1Ch 11:23 And he slew an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits high; and in the Egyptian's hand was a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.*

*1Ch 11:24 These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among the three mighties.*

*1Ch 11:25 Behold, he was honourable among the thirty, but attained not to the first three: and David set him over his guard.*

*1Ch 11:26 Also the valiant men of the armies were, Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem,*

*1Ch 11:27 Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite,*

*1Ch 11:28 Ira the son of Ikesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Antothite,*

*1Ch 11:29 Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite,*

*1Ch 11:30 Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite,*

*1Ch 11:31 Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah, that pertained to the children of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite,*

*1Ch 11:32 Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite,*

*1Ch 11:33 Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite,*

*1Ch 11:34 The sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shage the Hararite,*

*1Ch 11:35 Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite,*

*Eliphai the son of Ur,*

*1Ch 11:36 Hopher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite,*

*1Ch 11:37 Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai,*

*1Ch 11:38 Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Haggeri,*

*1Ch 11:39 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armourbearer of Joab the son of Zeruah,*

*1Ch 11:40 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite,*

*1Ch 11:41 Uriah the Hittite, Zabadi the son of Ahlai,*

*1Ch 11:42 Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him,*

*1Ch 11:43 Hanan the son of Maachah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite,*

*1Ch 11:44 Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jehiel the sons of Hothan the Aroerite,*

*1Ch 11:45 Jedaiel the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite,*

*1Ch 11:46 Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai, and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite,*

*1Ch 11:47 Eliel, and Obed, and Jasiel the Mesobaite.*

Neither the numbers of the twenty-third chapter of Second Samuel, nor the ones in the above chapter of First Chronicles amounts to either thirty or thirty-seven. But, we mention again that the list probably included more at one time than at another. It presumably remained in the neighborhood of thirty for some time.

## Chapter 24

This writer is delighted to be nearing the end of the commentary on First and Second Samuel. There are more problems in these two books than in any others on which we have commented. Surely there is a God who designed this universe. Just as surely He would have revealed his will to man who was made in His own image. But, we are forced to admit that some of the textual statements in the two books do not harmonize with each other, nor with those made in other portions of scripture, particularly in the book of First Chronicles.

These problems are not the fault of the Godhead. They are due to the frailties of the flesh. Let us do the best we can to seek out the original truths and incorporate them into our lives. God will judge as He sees best.

This last chapter of Second Samuel deals with the numbering of Israel and Judah. This was wrong and God chastised them. A second topic of the chapter is the purchase by David of the threshing floor of Araunah for offering sacrifices. This property later became the site of the temple built by Solomon.

**2 Sam. 24:1 And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.**

This very first verse is problematical. There is no problem in the statement that the Lord was **again** angry with Israel. He had been angry with them on more than one occasion before this time. The problem

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lies in the statement that God moved David against Israel by commanding that he cause a census to be taken. Later, God punishes the nation for having taken the census, and David admits that he sinned in doing it. Now if God commanded it, why was it a sin for David to do it?

The answer probably lies in the parallel passage in First Chronicles 21:1. (See below.)

1Ch 21:1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

The truth is that Satan was the one who initiated the sin. The statement in First Chronicles is perhaps clearer. God only allowed Satan to provoke David into taking the census. But, why did God allow it? Our present verse says God was angry at Israel. Israel must have done something that caused God to be displeased. It is possible that the nation as a whole was not satisfied with the territory which they had conquered and began hungering for further expansion. We are not told.

There are other possibilities. David may have become power hungry and wished to discover whether or not he had the manpower to take further territory.

Whatever the reason, God did not want the numbering to happen. He knew it was not best for His people.

2 Sam. 24:2 For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

David commanded Joab, who was the chief of military affairs to go through all the tribes and number the

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people. The census was to cover the nation from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south.

**2 Sam. 24:3 And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?**

Not everyone among the people was hungry for new territory. Joab stated clearly to David that if the Lord wished to multiply the people by one hundred times, it was wrong for David to take delight in finding out the number.

Joab may have had insight enough to know many of the people would interpret the census as a means of drafting the men for military action, or that it was a preparation for taxing them.

**2 Sam. 24:4 Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.**

Even though the lesser captains in the military supported Joab in his objections, David was king and his command stood firm. Joab and his men went out over the land to take the census.

**2 Sam. 24:5 And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that lieth in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer:**



We will not bother to attempt pinpointing each of the locations mentioned. Suffice it to say the entire land was covered.

**2 Sam. 24:6 Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtimhodshi; and they came to Danjaan, and about to Zidon,**

**2 Sam. 24:7 And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, even to Beersheba.**

**2 Sam. 24:8 So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.**

It required nearly ten months to complete the census. We must remember that the means of travel and of recording data were much less sophisticated than what we have today.

**2 Sam. 24:9 And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.**

Here we have another of the textual problems. The number Joab gave to David was:

Israel 800,000 men able to draw the sword.

Judah 500,000 men able to draw the sword.

These numbers do not coincide with those given in I Chronicles where the following figures are given.

Israel 1,100,000 men.

Judah 470,000 men.

Both of these sets of figures cannot be correct.

We are aware that some have tried to justify the variation, but obviously the scriptures intend in both places to give the totals for the entire census.

**2 Sam. 24:10 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.**

At this time David's conscience began to pain him. He frankly admitted to God that he had sinned greatly. He begged that God would forgive him for having acted foolishly. We can understand this if God allowed Satan to incite David to number the people. It does not make sense if God commanded him to do it and then condemned him.

**2 Sam. 24:11 For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,**

The next morning when David arose, God had told the prophet Gad to meet with him. David was a prophet, but sometimes God used one prophet to speak his word to another prophet. This was one of those times.

**2 Sam. 24:12 Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.**

Gad was told to offer three punishments to David. He could take his choice of the three. God would honor his choice.

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2 Sam. 24:13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

Here are the three.

1. *Seven years of famine in the land.*
 2. *Three months of fleeing before the enemies.*
 3. *Three days of pestilence in the land.*
- Gad was to return to Jehovah with David's choice.

2 Sam. 24:14 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

David did not make a specific choice. He only stated that he did not want to flee before men for three months. He very well knew how unmerciful men could be. He would leave it up to the Lord which of the other two was to fall upon him.

2 Sam. 24:15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men.

Jehovah decided upon the third of the three. He would bring a pestilence upon the land for three days. He did send the pestilence. It was monstrous. Seventy thousand men died throughout the whole land. This

number of deaths in a period of less than three days would bring many tears.

2 Sam. 24:16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

Before the destruction was complete the angel of destruction had raised his hand to injure Jerusalem itself. Before that happened, Jehovah changed his mind about continuing the plague. When that took place, the angel was at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

2 Sam. 24:17 And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

Angels are often said to be invisible. This one appeared to David. David then cried out to the Lord that any punishment should be upon him and not upon the entire people of Israel. It was he who had sinned. It was he who had acted foolishly. The sheep, or people, should not be punished for his sin.

This is interesting in that verse one of the chapter state God was angry with Israel. Did God make a mistake and blame the people for what David had done? Putting the two accounts together, this present writer believes many of the people had a hunger for new
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conquests and David allowed Satan to plant pride in his mind such that he chose to see if he had sufficient manpower to take more land. If that be the case we can understand why God was angry with the people, and why David was correct in saying he had sinned.

**2 Sam. 24:18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.**

David's plea for God to spare the people sounds a bit like the New Testament question, "What shall I do to be saved?" In this verse eighteen, God told David what he needed to do to remove the guilt. He was to build an altar to God on the site where David had seen the angel ready to smite Jerusalem.

**2 Sam. 24:19 And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.**

**2 Sam. 24:20 And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.**

Araunah saw David and his aids coming toward him and bowed in respect. He must have been somewhat surprised that the king of the land would pay him a visit.

**2 Sam. 24:21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.**

When Araunah asked David the nature of his visit, he was told that David wished to buy his threshing floor. This was so David could follow the command of the Lord and build an altar where sacrifices could be made. When the altar was constructed and the sacrifices were offered the plague could be taken away.

**2 Sam. 24:22 And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood.**

Araunah was more than happy to make his property available. In fact, he did not even want to receive anything in return for it. David could take the threshing floor, the instruments used for threshing, oxen for sacrifice and even the yokes of the oxen for wood to burn the sacrifices.

Araunah was far more committed to the service of the Lord than most wealthy persons. He may have gained the understanding that you cannot outgive God. Any sacrifice made for Him will not go unnoticed.

**2 Sam. 24:23 All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.**

Araunah was said earlier to be a Jebusite. It was a sincere mark of respect for the God of the Israelites for him to make such a generous offer. He went farther. He prayed that the Lord God would be pleased and accept the sacrifice David wished to offer.

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2 Sam. 24:24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

David would have nothing to do with receiving the threshing floor and other materials without paying for them. He insisted on buying the property at a fair price. It would not be a sacrifice on his part if what he offered had cost him nothing.

In such instances as this we see the noble side of David. If only he had shown this type of character when he allowed his eyes to linger on the beauty of Bathsheba, he might have been an even more impressive type of our Saviour.

2 Sam. 24:25 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

The altar was built. The sacrifices were offered. The Lord accepted them and the plague was removed.

Our discussion of First and Second Samuel is complete. The text has been suspect in a number of places. The scenes have been filled with blood. The moral level of even the people of God has been far too low. We must be cautious that what we call Christian nations today do not return to such revolting behavior. We must move forward, always keeping our eye on the One who became flesh and dwelt among men. It is He who is the True Shepherd and King, while David was only a forerunner.

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