The birth and call of Samuel

1 There was a man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill-country of Ephraim, named Elkanah son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph an Ephraimite; 2 and he had two wives named Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah was childless. 3 This man used to go up from his own town every year to worship and to offer sacrifice to the LORD of Hosts in Shiloh. There Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. 4 On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he gave several shares of the meat to his wife Peninnah with all her sons and daughters; 5 but, although he loved Hannah, he gave her only one share, because the LORD had not granted her children. 6 Further, Hannah’s rival used to torment her and humiliate her because she had no children. 7 Year after year this happened when they went up to the house of the LORD; her rival used to torment her. Once when she was in tears and would not eat, 8 her husband Elkanah said to her, ‘Hannah, why are you crying and eating nothing? Why are you so miserable? Am I not more to you than ten sons?’ 9-10 After they had finished eating and drinking at the sacrifice at Shiloh, Hannah rose in deep distress, and stood before the LORD and prayed to him, weeping bitterly. Meanwhile Eli the priest was sitting on his seat beside the door of the temple of the LORD. 11 Hannah made a vow in these words: ‘O LORD of Hosts, if thou wilt deign to take notice of my trouble and remember me, if thou wilt not forget me but grant me offspring, then I will give the child to the LORD for his whole life, and no razor shall ever touch his head.’ 12 For a long time she went on praying before the LORD, while Eli watched her lips. 13 Hannah was praying silently; but, although her voice could not be heard, her lips were moving and Eli took her for a drunken woman. 14 He said to her, ‘Enough of this drunken behaviour! Go away till the wine has worn off.’ 15 ‘No, sir,’ she answered, ‘I am a sober person, I have drunk no wine or strong drink, and I have been pouring out my heart before the LORD. 16 Do not think me so degraded, sir; all this time I have been speaking out of the fullness of my grief and misery.’ 17 ‘Go in peace,’ said Eli, ‘and may the God of Israel answer the prayer you have made to him.’ 18 Hannah said, ‘May I be worthy of your kindness.’ And she went away and took something to eat, no longer downcast. 19 Next morning they were up early and, after prostrating themselves before the LORD, returned to their own home at Ramah. Elkanah had intercourse with his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. 20 She conceived, and in due time bore a son, whom she named Samuel, ‘because’, she said, ‘I asked the LORD for him.’

21 Elkanah, with his whole household, went up to make the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to redeem his vow. 22 Hannah did not go with them, but said to her husband, ‘When the child is weaned I will come up with him to enter the presence of the LORD, and he shall [come up ... he shall: or bring him up, and he shall come into the presence of the LORD and] stay there always.’ 23 Her husband Elkanah said to her, ‘Do what you think best; stay at home until you have weaned him. Only, may the LORD indeed see your vow fulfilled.’ So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him;
and when she had weaned him, she took him up with her. She took also a bull three years old, an ephah of meal, and a flagon of wine, and she brought him, child as he was, into the house of the LORD at Shiloh. They slaughtered the bull, and brought the boy to Eli. Hannah said to him, 'Sir, as sure as you live, I am the woman who stood near you here praying to the LORD. It was this boy that I prayed for and the LORD has given me what I asked. What I asked I have received; and now I lend him to the LORD; for his whole life he is lent to the LORD.' And they prostrated themselves there before the LORD.

Then Hannah offered this prayer:

My heart rejoices in the LORD,
in the LORD I now hold my head high;
my mouth is full of derision of my foes,
exultant because thou hast saved me.

There is none except thee,
none so holy as the LORD,
no rock like our God.

Cease your proud boasting,
let no word of arrogance pass your lips;
for the LORD is a god of all knowledge:
he governs all that men do.

Strong men stand in mute but those who faltered put on new strength.
Those who had plenty sell themselves for a crust,
and the hungry grow strong again.
The barren woman has seven children,
and the mother of many sons is left to languish.

The LORD kills and he gives life,
he sends down to Sheol, he can bring the dead up again.
The LORD makes a man poor, he makes him rich,
he brings down and he raises up.
He lifts the weak out of the dust
and raises the poor from the dunghill;
to give them a place among the great,
to set them in seats of honour.

For the foundations of the earth are the LORD’s,
his has built the world upon them.
He will guard the footsteps of his saints,
while the wicked sink into silence and gloom;
not by mere strength shall a man prevail.

Those that stand against the LORD will be terrified
when the High God thunders out of heaven.
The LORD is judge even to the ends of the earth,
he will give strength to his king and raise high the head of his anointed prince.

11Then Elkanah went to Ramah with his household, but the boy remained behind in the service of the LORD under Eli the priest.

12Now Eli’s sons were scoundrels and had no regard for the LORD. 13The custom of the priests in their dealings with the people was this: when a man offered a sacrifice, the priest’s servant would come while the flesh was stewing 14and would thrust a three-pronged fork into the cauldron or pan or kettle or pot; and the priest would take whatever the fork brought out. This should have been their practice whenever Israelites came to sacrifice at Shiloh; but now under Eli’s sons, 15even before the fat was burnt, the priest’s servant came and said to the man who was sacrificing, ‘Give me meat to roast for the priest; he will not accept what has been already stewed, only raw meat.’ 16And if the man answered ‘Let them burn the fat first, and then take what you want’, he said, ‘No, give it to me now, or I will take it by force.’ 17The young men’s sin was very great in the LORD’s sight; for they brought the LORD’s sacrifice into general contempt.

18Samuel continued in the service of the LORD, a mere boy with a linen ephod fastened round him. 19Every year his mother made him a little cloak and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. 20Eli would give his blessing to Elkanah and his wife and say, ‘The LORD grant you children by this woman in place of the one for which you asked him [for which ... him: or which you lent him].’ Then they went home again.

21The LORD showed his care for Hannah, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters; meanwhile the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

22Eli, now a very old man, had heard how his sons were treating all the Israelites, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the Tent of the Presence. 23So he said to them, ‘Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people how wickedly you behave. 24Have done with it, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear spreading among the LORD’s people. 25If a man sins against another man, God will intervene; but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?’ For all this, they did not listen to their father’s rebuke, for the LORD meant that they should die. 26But the young Samuel, as he grew up, commended himself to the LORD and to men.

27Now a man of God came to Eli and said, ‘This is the word of the LORD: You know that I revealed myself to your forefather when he and his family were in Egypt in slavery in the house of Pharaoh. 28You know that I chose him from all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to mount the steps of my altar, to burn sacrifices and to carry [Or wear] the ephod before me; and that I assigned all the food-offerings of the Israelites to your family. 29Why then do you show disrespect for my sacrifices and the offerings which I have ordained? What makes you resent them? Why do you honour your sons more than me by letting them batten on the choicest offerings of my people Israel? 30The LORD’s word was, “I promise that your house and your father’s house shall serve before me for
all time”; but now his word is, “I will have no such thing: I will honour those who honour me, and those who despise me shall meet with contempt. 31The time is coming when I will lop off every limb of your own and of your father’s family, so that no man in your house shall come to old age. 32You will even resent [You ... resent: prob. rdg, Heb obscure] the prosperity I give to Israel; never again shall there be an old man in your house. 33If I allow any to survive to serve my altar, his eyes will grow dim and his appetite fail, his issue will be weaklings and die off. 34The fate of your two sons shall be a sign to you: Hophni and Phinehas shall both die on the same day. 35I will appoint for myself a priest who will be faithful, who will do what I have in my mind and in my heart. I will establish his family to serve in perpetual succession before my anointed king. 36Any of your family that still live will come and bow humbly before him to beg a fee, a piece of silver and a loaf, and will ask for a turn of priestly duty to earn a crust of bread.” ’

31So the child Samuel was in the LORD’s service under his master Eli. Now in those days the word of the LORD was seldom heard, and no vision was granted. 2But one night Eli, whose eyes were dim and his sight failing, was lying down in his usual place, 3while Samuel slept in the temple of the LORD where the Ark of God was. Before the lamp of God had gone out, 4the LORD called him, and Samuel answered, ‘Here I am’, 5and ran to Eli saying, ‘You called me: here I am.’ ‘No, I did not call you,’ said Eli; ‘lie down again.’ So he went and lay down. 6The LORD called Samuel again, and he got up and went to Eli. ‘Here I am,’ he said; ‘surely you called me.’ ‘I did not call, my son,’ he answered; ‘lie down again.’ 7Now Samuel had not yet come to know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not been disclosed to him. 8When the LORD called him for the third time, he again went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am; you did call me.’ Then Eli understood that it was the LORD calling the child; 9he told Samuel to go and lie down and said, ‘If he calls again, say, “Speak, LORD; thy servant hears thee.” ’ So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10The LORD came and stood there, and called, ‘Samuel, Samuel’, as before. Samuel answered, ‘Speak; thy servant hears thee.’ 11The LORD said, ‘Soon I shall do something in Israel which will ring in the ears of all who hear it. 12When that day comes I will make good every word I have spoken against Eli and his family from beginning to end. 13You are to [prob. rdg, Heb I will] tell him that my judgement on his house shall stand for ever because [because: prob. rdg, Heb in guilt] he knew of his sons’ blasphemies against God [against God: prob. original reading, altered in Heb to to them] and did not rebuke them. 14Therefore I have sworn to the family of Eli that their abuse of sacrifices and offerings shall never be expiated.’

15Samuel lay down till morning and then opened the doors of the house of the LORD, but he was afraid to tell Eli about the vision. 16Eli called Samuel: ‘Samuel, my son’, he said; and he answered, ‘Here I am.’ 17Eli asked, ‘What did the LORD say to you? Do not hide it from me. God forgive you if you hide one word of all that he said to you.’ 18Then Samuel told him everything and hid nothing. Eli said, ‘The LORD must do what is good in his eyes.’

19As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him, and none of his words went unfulfilled.
20 From Dan to Beersheba, all Israel recognized that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD. 21 So the LORD continued to appear in Shiloh, because he had revealed himself there to Samuel [prob. rdg, Heb adds according to the word of the LORD].

The struggle with the Philistines

4 1 So Samuel’s word had authority throughout Israel. And the time came when the Philistines mustered for battle against Israel, and the Israelites went out to meet them. The Israelites encamped at Ebenezer and the Philistines at Aphek. 2 The Philistines drew up their lines facing the Israelites, and when they joined battle the Israelites were routed by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field. 3 When the army got back to the camp, the elders of Israel asked, ‘Why did the LORD let us be routed today by the Philistines? Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD from Shiloh to go with us and deliver us from the power of our enemies.’ 4 So the people sent to Shiloh and fetched the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD of Hosts, who is enthroned upon the cherubim; Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the Ark. 5 When the Ark came into the camp all the Israelites greeted it with a great shout, and the earth rang with the shouting. 6 The Philistines heard the noise and asked, ‘What is this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews?’ When they knew that the Ark of the LORD had come into the camp, 7 they were afraid and cried, ‘A god has come into the camp. We are lost! No such thing has ever happened before. 8 We are utterly lost! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the very gods who broke the Egyptians and crushed them in the wilderness. 9 Courage, Philistines, and act like men, or you will become slaves to the Hebrews as they were yours. Be men, and fight!’ 10 The Philistines then gave battle, and the Israelites were defeated and fled to their homes. It was a great defeat, and thirty thousand Israelite foot-soldiers perished. 11 The Ark of God was taken, and Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed.

12 A Benjamite ran from the battlefield and reached Shiloh on the same day, his clothes rent and dust on his head. 13 When he arrived Eli was sitting on a seat by the road to Mitzpah, for he was deeply troubled about the Ark of God. The man entered the city with his news, and all the people cried out in horror. 14 When Eli heard it, he asked, ‘What does this uproar mean?’ the man hurried to Eli and told him. 15 Eli was ninety-eight years old and sat staring with sightless eyes; 16 so the man said to him, ‘I am the man who has just arrived from the battle; this very day I have escaped from the field.’ Eli asked, ‘What is the news, my son?’ 17 The runner answered, ‘The Israelites have fled from the Philistines; utter panic has struck the army; your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are killed, and the Ark of God is taken.’ 18 At the mention of the Ark of God, Eli fell backwards from his seat by the gate and broke his neck, for he was old and heavy. So he died; he had been judge over Israel for forty years. 19 His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was with child and near her time, and when she heard of the capture of the Ark and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband, her labour suddenly began and she crouched down and was delivered. 20 As she lay dying, the women who attended her said, ‘Do not be afraid; you have a son.’ But she did not answer or heed what they said. 21 Then they named the boy Ichabod [That is No-glory], saying, ‘Glory has departed from Israel’ (in allusion to the capture of the Ark of God and the death of
her father-in-law and her husband); 22 Glory has departed from Israel,’ they said, ‘because the Ark of God is taken.’

5 After the Philistines had captured the Ark of God, they brought it from Eben-ezer to Ashdod; 2 and there they carried it into the temple of Dagon and set it beside Dagon himself. 3 When the people of Ashdod rose next morning, there was Dagon fallen face downwards before the Ark of the LORD; so they took him and put him back in his place. 4 Next morning when they rose, Dagon had again fallen face downwards before the Ark of the LORD, with his head and his two hands lying broken off beside his platform; only Dagon’s body remained on it. 5 This is why from that day to this the priests of Dagon and all who enter the temple of Dagon at Ashdod do not set foot upon Dagon’s platform.

6 Then the LORD laid a heavy hand upon the people of Ashdod; he threw them into distress and plagued them with tumours, and their territory swarmed with rats [Or mice]. There was death and destruction all through the city. 7 When the men of Ashdod saw this, they said, ‘The Ark of the God of Israel shall not stay here, for he has laid a heavy hand upon us and upon Dagon our god.’ 8 So they sent and called all the Philistine princes together to ask what should be done with the Ark. They said, ‘Let the Ark of the God of Israel be taken across to Gath.’ They took it there, 9 and after its arrival the hand of the LORD caused great havoc in the city; he plagued everybody, high and low alike, with the tumours which broke out. 10 Then they sent the Ark of God on to Ekron. When the Ark reached Ekron, the people cried, ‘They have brought the Ark of the God of Israel over to us, to kill us and our families.’ 11 So they summoned all the Philistine princes and said, ‘Send the Ark of the God of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it will be the death of us all.’ There was death and destruction all through the city; for the hand of God lay heavy upon it. 12 Even those who did not die were plagued with tumours; the cry of the city went up to heaven.

6 When the Ark of the LORD had been in their territory for seven months, 2 the Philistines summoned the priests and soothsayers and asked, ‘What shall we do with the Ark of the LORD? Tell us how we ought to send it back to its own place.’ 3 They answered, ‘If you send the Ark of the God of Israel back, do not let it go without a gift, but send it back with a gift for him by way of indemnity; then you will be healed and restored to favour; there is no reason why his hand should not be lifted from you.’ 4 When they were asked, ‘What gift shall we send back to him?’ they answered, ‘Send five tumours modelled in gold and five gold rats, one for each of the Philistine princes, for the same plague afflicted all of you and your princes. 5 Make models of your tumours and of the rats which are ravaging the land, and give honour to the God of Israel; perhaps he will relax the pressure of his hand on you, on your god, and on your land. 6 Why should you be stubborn like Pharaoh and the Egyptians? Remember how this god made sport of them until they let Israel go. 7 Now make a new wagon ready with two milch-cows which have never been yoked; harness the cows to the wagon, and take their calves from them and drive them back to their stalls. 8 Then take the Ark of the LORD and put it on the wagon, place in a casket, beside it, the gold offerings that you are sending to him as an indemnity, and let it go where it will. 9 Watch it: if it goes up towards its own territory to Beth-shemesh, then it is the LORD who has done us this great injury; but if not, then we shall know that his hand has not touched us, but we
have been the victims of chance.’

10 The men did this. They took two milch-cows and harnessed them to a wagon, shutting up their calves in the stall, 11 and they placed the Ark of the LORD on the wagon together with the casket, the gold rats, and the models of their haemorrhoids. 12 Then the cows went straight in the direction of Beth-shemesh; they kept to the same road, lowing as they went and turning neither right nor left, while the Philistine princes followed them as far as the territory of Beth-shemesh. 13 Now the people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the Vale, and when they looked up and saw the Ark they rejoiced at the sight of it. 14 The wagon came to the farm of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and halted there. Close by stood a great stone; so they chopped up the wood of the wagon and offered the cows as a whole-offering to the LORD. 15 Then the Levites lifted down the Ark of the LORD and the casket containing the gold offerings, and laid them on the great stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh offered whole-offerings and shared-offerings that day to the LORD. 16 The five princes of the Philistines watched all this, and returned to Ekron the same day.

17 These golden haemorrhoids which the Philistines sent back as a gift of indemnity to the LORD were for Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron, one for each city. 18 The gold rats were for all the towns of the Philistines governed by the five princes, both fortified towns and open settlements. The great stone where they deposited the Ark of the LORD stands witness on the farm of Joshua of Beth-shemesh to this very day.

19 But the sons of Jeconiah did not rejoice with the rest of the men of Beth-shemesh when they welcomed the Ark of the LORD, and he struck down seventy of them. The people mourned because the LORD had struck them so heavy a blow, 20 and the men of Beth-shemesh said, ‘No one is safe in the presence of the LORD, this holy God. To whom can we send it, to be rid of him?’ 21 So they sent this message to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim: ‘The Philistines have returned the Ark of the LORD; come down and take charge of it.’ 7 Then the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took the Ark of the LORD away; they brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill and consecrated his son Eleazar as its custodian.

Samuel judge over Israel

2 SO FOR A LONG WHILE the Ark was housed in Kiriath-jearim; and after some time, twenty years later, there was a movement throughout Israel to follow the LORD. 3 So Samuel addressed these words to the whole nation: ‘If your return to the LORD is whole-hearted, banish the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from your shrines; turn to the LORD with heart and mind, and worship him alone, and he will deliver you from the Philistines.’ 4 The Israelites then banished the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and worshipped the LORD alone.

5 Samuel summoned all Israel to an assembly at Mizpah, so that he might intercede with the LORD for them. 6 When they had assembled there, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted all day, confessing that they had sinned against the LORD. It was at Mizpah that Samuel acted as judge over Israel.
When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had assembled at Mizpah, their princes marched against them. The Israelites heard that the Philistines were advancing, and they were afraid. They said to Samuel, ‘Do not cease to pray for us to the LORD our God to save us from the power of the Philistines.’ Thereupon Samuel took a sucking lamb, offered it up complete as a whole-offering and prayed aloud to the LORD on behalf of Israel; and the LORD answered his prayer. As Samuel was offering the sacrifice and the Philistines were advancing to battle with the Israelites, the LORD thundered loud and long over the Philistines and threw them into confusion. They fled in panic before the Israelites, who set out from Mizpah in pursuit and kept up the slaughter of the Philistines till they reached a point below Beth-car. There Samuel took a stone and set it up as a monument between Mizpah and En-shanah, naming it Eben-ezer [That is Stone of Help], ‘for to this point’, he said, ‘the LORD has helped us.’ Thus the Philistines were subdued and no longer encroached on the territory of Israel; and the hand of the LORD was against them as long as Samuel lived. The cities they had captured were restored to Israel, and from Ekron to Gath the borderland was freed from their control. Between Israel and the Amorites peace was maintained. Samuel acted as judge in Israel as long as he lived, and every year went on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah; he dispensed justice at all these places, returning always to Ramah. That was his home and the place from which he governed Israel, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

Saul anointed king

When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons to be judges in Israel. The eldest son was named Joel and the second Abiah; they acted as judges in Beersheba. His sons did not follow in their father’s footsteps but were intent on their own profit, taking bribes and perverting the course of justice. So all the elders of Israel met, and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, ‘You are now old and your sons do not follow in your footsteps; appoint us a king to govern us, like other nations.’ But their request for a king to govern them displeased Samuel, and he prayed to the LORD. The LORD answered Samuel, ‘Listen to the people and all that they are saying; they have not rejected you, it is I whom they have rejected, I whom they will not have to be their king. They are now doing to you just what they have done to me since I brought them up from Egypt: they have forsaken me and worshipped other gods. Hear what they have to say now, but give them a solemn warning and tell them what sort of king will govern them.’ Samuel told the people who were asking him for a king all that the LORD had said to him. ‘This will be the sort of king who will govern you’, he said. ‘He will take your sons and make them serve in his chariots and with his cavalry, and will make them run before his chariot. Some he will appoint officers over units of a thousand and units of fifty. Others will plough his fields and reap his harvest; others again will make weapons of war and equipment for mounted troops. Some he will appoint officers over units of a thousand and units of fifty. Others will plough his fields and reap his harvest; others again will make weapons of war and equipment for mounted troops. He will take your daughters for perfumers, cooks, and confectioners, and seize the best of your cornfields, vineyards, and olive-yards, and give them to his lackeys. He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage to give to his eunuchs and lackeys. Your slaves, both men and women, and the best of your cattle and your asses he will seize and put...
to his own use. 17 He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. 18 When that day comes, you will cry out against the king whom you have chosen; but it will be too late, the LORD will not answer you.' 19 The people refused to listen to Samuel; ‘No,’ they said, ‘we will have a king over us; 20 then we shall be like other nations, with a king to govern us, to lead us out to war and fight our battles.’ 21 So Samuel, when he had heard what the people said, told the LORD; 22 and he answered, ‘Take them at their word and appoint them a king.’ Samuel then dismissed all the men of Israel to their homes.

9 There was a man from the district of Benjamin, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Bechorath, son of Aphiah a Benjamite. He was a man of substance, 2 and had a son named Saul, a young man in his prime; there was no better man among the Israelites than he. He was a head taller than any of his fellows.

3 One day some asses belonging to Saul’s father Kish had strayed, so he said to his son Saul, ‘Take one of the servants with you, and go and look for the asses.’ 4 They crossed the hill-country of Ephraim and went through the district of Shalisha but did not find them; they passed through the district of Shaalim but they were not there; they passed through the district of Benjamin but again did not find them. 5 When they had entered the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant with him, ‘Come, we ought to turn back, or my father will stop thinking about the asses and begin to worry about us.’ 6 The servant answered, ‘There is a man of God in the city here, who has a great reputation, because everything he says comes true. Suppose we go there; he may tell us something about this errand of ours.’ 7 Saul said, ‘If we do go, what shall we offer him? There is no food left in our packs and we have no present for the man of God, nothing at all.’ 8 The servant answered him again, ‘Wait! I have here a quarter-shekel of silver. I can give that to the man, to tell us what we should do.’ 9 Saul said, ‘Good! Let us go to him.’ So they went to the city where the man of God was. 9 (In days gone by in Israel, when a man wished to consult God, he would say, ‘Let us go to the seer.’ For what is nowadays called a prophet used to be called a seer.) 11 As they were going up the hill to the city they met some girls coming out to draw water and asked, ‘Shall we find the seer there?’ 12 ‘Yes,’ they said, ‘the seer is ahead of you now; he has just arrived in the city because there is a feast at the hill-shrine today.’ 13 As you enter the city you will meet him before he goes up to the shrine to eat; the people will not start until he comes, for he has to bless the sacrifice before the company can eat. Go up now, and you will find him at once.’ 14 So they went up to the city, and just as they were going in, there was Samuel coming towards them on his way up to the shrine.

15 Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had disclosed his intention to Samuel in these words: 16 ‘At this same time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him prince over my people Israel, and then he shall deliver my people from the Philistines. I have seen the sufferings of my people and their cry has reached my ears.’ 17 The moment Saul appeared the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Here is the man of whom I spoke to you. This man shall rule my people.’ 18 Saul came up to Samuel in the gateway and said, ‘Would you tell me where the seer lives?’ 19 Samuel replied, ‘I am the seer. Go on ahead of me to the hill-shrine and you shall eat with me today; in the
morning I will set you on your way, after telling you what you have on your mind.  

20 Trouble yourself no more about the asses lost three days ago, for they have been found. But what is it that all Israel is wanting? It is you and your ancestral house.’  

21 ‘But I am a Benjamite,’ said Saul, ‘from the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family is the least important of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin. Why do you say this to me?’  

22 Samuel then brought Saul and his servant into the dining-hall and gave them a place at the head of the company, which numbered about thirty.  

23 Then he said to the cook, ‘Bring the portion that I gave you and told you to put on one side.’  

24 So the cook took up the whole haunch and leg and put it before Saul; and Samuel said, ‘Here is the portion of meat kept for you. Eat it: it has been reserved for you at this feast to which I have invited the people.’ So Saul dined with Samuel that day,  

25 and when they came down from the hill-shrine to the city a bed was spread on the roof for Saul, and he stayed there that night.  

26 At dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, ‘Get up, and I will set you on your way.’ When Saul rose, he and Samuel went out together into the street.  

27 As they came to the end of the town, Samuel said to Saul, ‘Tell the boy to go on.’ He did so, and then Samuel said, ‘Stay here a moment, and I will tell you the word of God.’  

10 Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it over Saul’s head, and he kissed him and said, ‘The LORD anoints you prince over his people Israel; you shall rule the people of the LORD and deliver them from the enemies round about them. You shall have a sign that the LORD has anointed you prince to govern his inheritance:  

2 when you leave me today, you will meet two men by the tomb of Rachel at Zelzah in the territory of Benjamin. They will tell you that the asses you are looking for have been found and that your father is concerned for them no longer; he is anxious about you and says again and again, “What shall I do about my son?”  

3 From there go across country as far as the terebinth of Tabor, where three men going up to Bethel to worship God will meet you. One of them will be carrying three kids, the second three loaves, and the third a flagon of wine.  

4 They will greet you and will offer you two loaves, which you will accept from them.  

5 Then when you reach the Hill of God, where the Philistine governor resides, you will meet a company of prophets coming down from the hill-shrine, led by lute, harp, fife, and drum, and filled with prophetic rapture.  

6 Then the spirit of the LORD will suddenly take possession of you, and you too will be rapt like a prophet and become another man.  

7 When these signs happen, do whatever the occasion demands; God will be with you.  

8 You shall go down to Gilgal ahead of me, and I will come to you to sacrifice whole-offerings and shared-offerings. Wait seven days until I join you; then I will tell you what to do.’  

9 As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God gave him a new heart. On that same day all these signs happened.  

10 When they reached the Hill there was a company of prophets coming to meet him, and the spirit of God suddenly took possession of him, so that he too was filled with prophetic rapture.  

11 When people who had known him previously saw that he was rapt like the prophets, they said to one another, ‘What can have happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?’  

12 One of the men of that place said, ‘And whose sons are they?’ Hence the proverb, ‘Is Saul also among the prophets?’  

13 When the prophetic rapture had passed, he went home to the hill-shrine.  

14 Saul’s uncle said to him and the boy, ‘Where have you been?’ Saul answered, ‘To look for the asses, and when we could not find them, we went to Samuel.’  

15 His uncle said, ‘Tell me what Samuel said.’  

16 He told
us that the asses had been found’, said Saul; but he did not repeat what Samuel had said about his being king.

Meanwhile Samuel summoned the Israelites to the LORD at Mizpah and said to the people, ‘This is the word of the LORD the God of Israel: I brought Israel up from Egypt; I delivered you from the Egyptians and from all the kingdoms that oppressed you; but today you have rejected your God who saved you from all your misery and distress; you have said, “No, set up a king over us.” Now therefore take up your positions before the LORD tribe by tribe and clan by clan.’ Samuel then presented all the tribes of Israel, and Benjamin was picked by lot. Then he presented the tribe of Benjamin, family by family, and the family of Matri was picked. Then he presented the family of Matri, man by man, and Saul son of Kish was picked; but when they looked for him he could not be found. They went on to ask the LORD, ‘Will the man be coming back?’ The LORD answered, ‘There he is, hiding among the baggage.’ So someone ran and fetched him out, and as he took his stand among the people, he was a head taller than anyone else. Samuel said to the people, ‘Look at the man whom the LORD has chosen; there is no one like him in this whole nation.’ They all acclaimed him, shouting, ‘Long live the king!’ Samuel then explained to the people the nature of a king, and made a written record of it on a scroll which he deposited before the LORD; he then dismissed them to their homes. Saul too went home to Gibeah, and with him went some fighting men whose hearts God had moved. But there were scoundrels who said, ‘How can this fellow deliver us?’ They thought nothing of him and brought him no gifts.

About a month later Nahash the Ammonite attacked and besieged Jabesh-gilead. The men of Jabesh said to Nahash, ‘Come to terms with us and we will be your subjects.’ Nahash answered them, ‘On one condition only will I come to terms with you: that I gouge out your right eyes and bring disgrace on Israel.’ The elders of Jabesh-gilead then said, ‘Give us seven days’ respite to send messengers throughout Israel and then, if no one relieves us, we will surrender to you.’ When the messengers came to Gibeah, where Saul lived, and delivered their message, all the people broke into lamentation. Saul was just coming from the field driving in the oxen, and asked why the people were lamenting; and they repeated what the men of Jabesh had said. When Saul heard this, the spirit of God suddenly seized him. In his anger he took a pair of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent messengers with the pieces all through Israel to proclaim that the same would be done to the oxen of any man who did not follow Saul and Samuel into battle. The fear of the LORD fell upon the people and they came out, to a man. Saul mustered them in Bezek; there were three hundred thousand men from Israel and thirty thousand from Judah. He said to the men who brought the message, ‘Tell the men of Jabesh-gilead, “Victory will be yours tomorrow by the time the sun is hot.”’ The men of Jabesh heard what the messengers reported and took heart; and they said to Nahash, ‘Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and then you may deal with us as you think fit.’ Next day Saul drew up his men in three columns; they forced their way right into the enemy camp during the morning watch and massacred the Ammonites while the day grew hot, after which the survivors scattered until no two men were left together.

Then the people said to Samuel, ‘Who said that Saul should not reign over us? Hand
the men over to us to be put to death.’ 13 But Saul said, ‘No man shall be put to death on a day when the LORD has won such a victory in Israel.’ 14 Samuel said to the people, ‘Let us now go to Gilgal and there renew our allegiance to the kingdom.’ 15 So they all went to Gilgal and invested Saul there as king in the presence of the LORD, sacrificing shared-offerings before the LORD; and Saul and all the Israelites celebrated the occasion with great joy.

12 THEN SAMUEL THUS ADDRESSED the assembled Israelites: ‘I have listened to your request and installed a king to rule over you. 2 And the king is now your leader, while I am old and white-haired and my sons are with you; but I have been your leader ever since I was a child. 3 Here I am. Lay your complaints against me in the presence of the LORD and of his anointed king. Whose ox have I taken, whose ass have I taken? Whom have I wronged, whom have I oppressed? From whom have I taken a bribe, to turn a blind eye? Tell me, and I will make restitution.’ 4 They answered, ‘You have not wronged us, you have not oppressed us,’ you have not taken anything from any man.’ 5 Samuel then said to them, ‘This day the LORD is witness among you, his anointed king is witness, that you have found my hands empty.’ They said, ‘He is witness.’ 6 Samuel said to the people, ‘Yes, the LORD is witness, the LORD who gave you Moses and Aaron and brought your fathers out of Egypt. 7 Now stand up, and here in the presence of the LORD I will put the case against you and recite all the victories which he has won for you and for your fathers. 8 After Jacob and his sons had come down to Egypt and the Egyptians had made them suffer, your fathers cried to the LORD for help, and he sent Moses and Aaron, who brought them out of Egypt and settled them in this place. 9 But they forgot the LORD their God, and he abandoned them to Sisera, commander-in-chief of Jabin king of Hazor, to the Philistines, and to the king of Moab, and they had to fight against them. 10 Then your fathers cried to the LORD for help: “We have sinned, we have forsaken the LORD and we have worshipped the Baalim and the Ashtaroth. But now, if thou wilt deliver us from our enemies, we will worship thee.” 11 So the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Barak, Jephthah and Samson, and delivered you from your enemies on every side; and you lived in peace and quiet.

12 Then, when you saw Nahash king of the Ammonites coming against you, although the LORD your God was your king, you said to me, “No, let us have a king to rule over us.” 13 Now, here is the king you asked for; you chose him, and the LORD has set a king over you. 14 If you will revere the LORD and give true and loyal service, if you do not rebel against his commands, and if you and the king who reigns over you are faithful to the LORD your God, well and good; 15 but if you do not obey the LORD, and if you rebel against his commands, then he will set his face against you and against your king.

16 Stand still, and see the great wonder which the LORD will do before your eyes. It is now wheat harvest; when I call upon the LORD and he sends thunder and rain, you will see and know how wicked it was in the LORD’s eyes for you to ask for a king.’ 18 So Samuel called upon the LORD and he sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people were in great fear of the LORD and of Samuel. 19 They said to Samuel, ‘Pray for us your servants to the LORD your God, to save us from death; for we have added to all our other sins the great wickedness of asking for a king.’ 20 Samuel said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid; although you have been so wicked, do not give up the worship of the
LORD, but serve him with all your heart. 21Give up the worship of false gods which can neither help nor save, because they are false. 22For his name’s sake the LORD will not cast you off, because he has resolved to make you his own people. 23As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD and cease to pray for you. I will show you what is right and good: 24to revere the LORD and worship him faithfully with all your heart. Consider what great things he has done for you; 25but if you persist in wickedness, you shall be swept away, you and your king.’

13Saul was fifty years [fifty years: prob. rdg, Heb a year] old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel for twenty-two [prob. rdg, Heb two] years. 2He picked three thousand men from Israel, two thousand to be with him in Michmash and the hill-country of Bethel and a thousand to be with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin; and he sent the rest of the people home.

3Jonathan killed the Philistine governor [Or garrison] in Geba, and the news spread among the Philistines that the Hebrews were in revolt [that ... revolt: prob. rdg, Heb has saying, Let the Hebrews hear after through the land]. Saul sounded the trumpet all through the land; 4and when the Israelites all heard that Saul had killed a Philistine governor and that the name of Israel stank among the Philistines, they answered the call to arms and came to join Saul at Gilgal [they answered ... Gilgal: or they were summoned to follow Saul to Gilgal]. 5The Philistines mustered to attack Israel; they had thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horse, with infantry as countless as sand on the sea-shore. They went up and camped at Michmash, to the east of Beth-aven. 6The Israelites found themselves in sore straits, for the army was hard pressed, so they hid themselves in caves and holes and among the rocks, in pits and cisterns. 7Some of them crossed the Jordan into the district of Gad and Gilead, but Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the people at his back were in alarm [but Saul ... in alarm: or but Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the army joined him there]. 8He waited seven days for his meeting with Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal; so the people began to drift away from Saul. 9He said therefore, ‘Bring me the whole-offering and the shared-offerings’, and he offered up the whole-offering. 10Saul had just finished the sacrifice, when Samuel arrived, and he went out to greet him. 11Samuel said, ‘What have you done?’, and Saul answered, ‘I saw that the people were drifting away from me, and you yourself had not come as you had promised, and the Philistines were assembling at Michmash; 12and I thought, “The Philistines will now move against me at Gilgal, and I have not placated the LORD”; so I felt compelled to make the whole-offering myself.’ 13Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have behaved foolishly. You have not kept the command laid on you by the LORD your God; if you had, he would have established your dynasty over Israel for all time. 14But now your line will not endure; the LORD will seek a man after his own heart, and will appoint him prince over his people, because you have not kept the LORD’s command.’

15Samuel left Gilgal without more ado and went on his way. The rest of the people followed Saul, as he moved from Gilgal towards the enemy. At Gibeath of Benjamin he mustered the people who were with him; they were about six hundred men. 16Saul and his son Jonathan and the men they had with them took up their quarters in Gibeath of Benjamin, while the Philistines were encamped in Michmash. 17Raiding parties went out
from the Philistine camp in three directions. One party turned towards Ophrah in the
district of Shual, another towards Beth-horon, and the third towards the range of hills
overlooking the valley of Zeboim and the wilderness beyond.

No blacksmith was to be found in the whole of Israel, for the Philistines were
determined to prevent the Hebrews from making swords and spears. The Israelites
had to go down to the Philistines for their ploughshares, mattocks, axes, and sickles to
be sharpened. The charge was two-thirds of a shekel for ploughshares and mattocks,
and one-third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and setting the goads. No blacksmith
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So when war broke out none of the followers of Saul and Jonathan had either sword or
spear; only Saul and Jonathan carried arms.

The Philistines had posted a force to hold the pass of Michmash; and one day
Saul’s son Jonathan said to his armour-bearer, ‘Come, let us go over to the Philistine
post beyond that ridge’; but he did not tell his father. Saul, at the time, had his tent
under the pomegranate-tree at Migron on the outskirts of Gibeah; and he had about six
hundred men with him. The ephod was carried by Ahijah son of Ahitub, Ichabod’s
brother, son of Phinehas son of Eli, the priest of the LORD at Shiloh. Nobody knew that
Jonathan had gone. Either side of the pass through which Jonathan tried to make
his way over to the Philistine post stood two sharp columns of rock, called Bozez [That
is Shining] and Seneh [That is Bramble-bush]; one of them was on the north towards
Michmash, and the other on the south towards Geba. Jonathan said to his armour-
bearer, ‘Now we will visit the post of those uncircumcised rascals. Perhaps the LORD
will take a hand in it, and if he will, nothing can stop him. He can bring us safe through,
whether we are few or many.’ The young man answered, ‘Do what you will, go
forward; I am with you whatever you do.’ Good! said Jonathan, ‘we will cross over and
let them see us.’ If they say, “Stay where you are till we come to you”, then we will
stay where we are and not go up to them. But if they say, “Come up to us”, we will go
up; this will be the sign that the LORD has put them into our power.’ So they showed
themselves to the Philistines, and the Philistines said, ‘Look! Hebrews coming out of the
holes where they have been hiding!’ And they called across to Jonathan and the young
man, ‘Come up to us; we have something to show you.’ Jonathan said to the young
man, ‘Come on, the LORD has put them into the power of Israel.’ Jonathan climbed up
on hands and feet, and the young man followed him. The Philistines fell in front of
Jonathan, and the young man, coming behind him, dispatched them. In that first
attack Jonathan and his armour-bearer killed about twenty of them, like men cutting a
furrow across a half-acre field. Terror spread through the army in the field and
through the whole people; the men at the post and the raiding parties were terrified;
the very earth quaked, and there was panic.

Saul’s men on the watch in Gibeah of Benjamin saw the mob of Philistines surging to
and fro in confusion; so he ordered the people to call the roll and find out who was
missing; and they called the roll and found that Jonathan and his armour-bearer were
absent. Saul said to Ahijah, ‘Bring forward the ephod’, for it was he who carried the
ephod at that time before Israel. But while Saul was still speaking, the confusion in
the Philistine camp was increasing more and more, and he said to the priest, ‘Hold your
hand.’ Then Saul and all his men with shouting made for the battlefield, where they
found the enemy fighting one another in complete disorder. 21The Hebrews who up to now had been under the Philistines, and had been with them in camp, changed sides and joined the Israelites under Saul and Jonathan. 22All the Israelites in hiding in the hill-country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were in flight, and they also joined in and set off in hot pursuit. 23The LORD delivered Israel that day, and the fighting passed on beyond Beth-aven.

24Now the Israelites on that day had been driven to exhaustion. Saul had adjured the people in these words: ‘A curse be on the man who eats any food before nightfall until I have taken vengeance on my enemies.’ So no one ate any food. 25Now there was honeycomb [Now ... honeycomb: prob. rdg, Heb All the land went into the forest, and there was honey] in the country-side; 26but when his men came upon it, dripping with honey though it was, not one of them put his hand to his mouth for fear of the oath. 27But Jonathan had not heard his father lay this solemn prohibition on the people, and he stretched out the stick that was in his hand, dipped the end of it in the honeycomb, put it to his mouth and was refreshed. 28One of the people said to him, ‘Your father solemnly forbade this; he said, “A curse on the man who eats food today!”’ Now the men were faint with hunger. 29Jonathan said, ‘My father has done the people nothing but harm; see how I am refreshed by this mere taste of honey. 30How much better if the people had eaten today whatever they took from their enemies by way of spoil! Then there would indeed have been a great slaughter of Philistines.’

31They defeated the Philistines that day, and pursued them from Michmash to Aijalon. But the people were so faint with hunger 32that they turned to plunder and seized sheep, cattle, and bullocks; they slaughtered them on the bare ground, and ate the meat with the blood in it. 33Someone told Saul that the people were sinning against the LORD by eating their meat with the blood in it. ‘This is treason!’ cried Saul. ‘Roll a great stone here at once.’ 34He then said, ‘Go about among the people and tell them to bring their oxen and sheep, and let each man slaughter his here and eat it; and so they will not sin against the LORD by eating meat with the blood in it.’ So as night fell each man came, driving his own ox, and slaughtered it there. 35Thus Saul came to build an altar to the LORD, and this was the first altar to the LORD that Saul built.

36Saul said, ‘Let us go down and make a night attack on the Philistines and harry them till daylight; we will not spare a man of them.’ The people answered, ‘Do what you think best’, but the priest said, ‘Let us first consult God.’ 37So Saul inquired of God, ‘Shall I pursue the Philistines? Wilt thou put them into Israel’s power?’, but this time he received no answer. 38So he said, ‘Let all the leaders of the people come forward and let us find out where the sin lies this day. 39As the LORD lives, the deliverer of Israel, even if it lies in my son Jonathan, he shall die.’ Not a soul answered him. 40Then he said to the Israelites, ‘All of you stand on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will stand on the other.’ The people answered, ‘Do what you think best.’ 41Saul said to the LORD the God of Israel, ‘Why hast thou not answered thy servant today? If this guilt lie in me, or in my son Jonathan, O LORD God of Israel, let the lot be Urim; if it lie in thy people Israel, let it be Thummim.’ Jonathan and Saul were taken, and the people were cleared. 42Then Saul said, ‘Cast lots between me and my son Jonathan’; and Jonathan was taken. 43Saul said to Jonathan, ‘Tell me what you have done.’ Jonathan told him, ‘True, I did taste a
little honey on the tip of my stick. Here I am; I am ready to die.’ 44Then Saul swore a
great oath that Jonathan should die. 45But the people said to Saul, ‘Shall Jonathan die,
Jonathan who has won this great victory in Israel? God forbid! As the LORD lives, not a
hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has been at work with God today.’ So the
people ransomed Jonathan and he did not die. 46Saul broke off the pursuit of the
Philistines because they had made their way home.

47When Saul had made his throne secure in Israel, he fought against his enemies on
every side, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the king of Zobah, and the
Philistines; and wherever he turned he was successful [Or he found ample provision].
48He displayed his strength by defeating the Amalekites and freeing Israel from hostile
raids.

49Saul’s sons were: Jonathan, Ishyo and Malchishua. These were the names of his two
daughters: Merab the elder and Michal the younger. 50His wife was Ahinoam daughter of
Ahimaaz, and his commander-in-chief was Abner son of his uncle Ner; 51Kish, Saul’s
father, and Ner, Abner’s father, were sons [prob. rdg, Heb son] of Abiel.

52There was bitter warfare with the Philistines throughout Saul’s lifetime; any strong
man and any brave man that he found he took into his own service.

151Samuel said to Saul, ‘The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel.
Now listen to the voice of the LORD. 2This is the very word of the LORD of Hosts: “I am
resolved to punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel, how they attacked them
on their way up from Egypt.” 3Go now and fall upon the Amalekites and destroy them,
and put their property under ban. Spare no one; put them all to death, men and
women, children and babes in arms, herds and flocks, camels and asses.’ 4Thereupon
Saul called out the levy and mustered them in Telaim. There were two hundred
thousand foot-soldiers and another ten thousand from Judah [prob. rdg, Heb ten
thousand with the men of Judah]. 5He came to the Amalekite city and halted for a time
in the gorge. 6Meanwhile he sent word to the Kenites to leave the Amalekites and come
down, ‘or’, he said, ‘I shall destroy you as well as them; but you were friendly to Israel
when they came up from Egypt.’ So the Kenites left the Amalekites. 7Then Saul cut the
Amalekites to pieces, all the way from Havilah to Shur on the borders of Egypt. 8Agag
the king of the Amalekites he took alive, but he destroyed all the people, putting them
to the sword. 9Saul and his army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the
fat beasts and the lambs and everything worth keeping; they were unwilling to destroy
them, but anything that was useless and of no value they destroyed.

10Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel: 11“I repent of having made Saul king, for
he has turned his back on me and has not obeyed my commands.’ Samuel was angry;
all night he cried aloud to the LORD. 12Early next morning he went to meet Saul, but
was told that he had gone to Carmel; Saul had set up a monument for himself there,
and had then turned and gone down to Gilgal. 13There Samuel found him, and Saul
greeted him with the words, ‘The LORD’s blessing upon you! I have obeyed the LORD’s
commands.’ 14But Samuel said, ‘What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? Why do I
hear the lowing of cattle?’ 15Saul answered, ‘The people have taken them from the
Amalekites. These are what they spared, the best of the sheep and cattle, to sacrifice to the LORD your God. The rest we completely destroyed.’ 16Samuel said to Saul, ‘Let be, and I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night.’ ‘Tell me’, said Saul. 17So Samuel went on, ‘Time was when you thought little of yourself, but now you are head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD has anointed you king over Israel. 18The LORD sent you with strict instructions to destroy that wicked nation, the Amalekites; you were to fight against them until you had wiped them out. 19Why then did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce upon the spoil and do what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD?’ 20Saul answered Samuel, ‘But I did obey the LORD; I went where the LORD sent me, and I have brought back Agag king of the Amalekites. The rest of them I destroyed. 21Out of the spoil the people took sheep and oxen, the choicest of the animals laid under ban, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal.’ 22Samuel then said:

Does the LORD desire offerings and sacrifices as he desires obedience?
Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to listen to him than the fat of rams.
23Defiance of him is sinful as witchcraft, yielding to men [yielding to men: or arrogance or obstinacy] as evil as [as evil as: prob. rdg, Heb evil and] idolatry [Or household gods; Heb teraphim] Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, the LORD has rejected you as king.

24Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned. I have ignored the LORD’s command and your orders: I was afraid of the people and deferred to them. 25But now forgive my sin, I implore you, and come back with me, and I will make my submission before the LORD.’ 26Samuel answered, ‘I will not come back with you; you have rejected the word of the LORD and therefore the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel.’ 27He turned to go, but Saul caught the edge of his cloak and it tore. 28And Samuel said to him, ‘The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from your hand today and will give it to another, a better man than you. 29God who is the Splendour of Israel does not deceive or change his mind; 30he is not a man that he should change his mind.’ Saul said, ‘I have sinned; but honour me this once before the elders of my people and before lsrael and come back with me, and I will make my submission to the LORD your God.’ 31So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul made his submission to the LORD. 32Then Samuel said, ‘Bring Agag king of the Amalekites.’ So Agag came to him with faltering step and said, ‘Surely the bitterness of death has passed.’ 33Samuel said, ‘Your sword has made women childless, and your mother of all women shall be childless too.’ Then Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

34Saul went to his own home at Gibeah, and Samuel went to Ramah; 35and he never saw Saul again to his dying day, but he mourned for him, because the LORD had repented of having made him king over Israel.

**Saul and David**

16 **THE LORD SAID TO SAMUEL, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul because I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and take it with you; I am**
sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem; for I have chosen myself a king among his sons.’

Samuel answered, ‘How can I go? Saul will hear of it and kill me.’ ‘Take a heifer with you,’ said the LORD; ‘say you have come to offer a sacrifice to the LORD, and invite Jesse to the sacrifice; then I will let you know what you must do. You shall anoint for me the man whom I show you.’ 4Samuel did as the LORD had told him, and went to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came in haste to meet him, saying, ‘Why have you come? Is all well?’ 5‘All is well,’ said Samuel; ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Hallow yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.’ He himself hallowed Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice also. 6They came, and when Samuel saw Eliab he thought, ‘Here, before the LORD, is his anointed king.’ 7But the LORD said to him, ‘Take no account of it if he is handsome and tall; I reject him. The LORD does not see as man sees; men judge by appearances but the LORD judges by the heart.’ 8Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel, but he said, ‘No, the LORD has not chosen this one.’ 9Then he presented Shammah, and Samuel said, ‘Nor has the LORD chosen him.’ 10Seven of his sons Jesse presented to Samuel, but he said, ‘The LORD has not chosen any of these.’ 11Then Samuel asked, ‘Are these all?’ Jesse answered, ‘There is still the youngest, but he is looking after the sheep.’ Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Send and fetch him; we will not sit down until he comes.’ 12So he sent and fetched him. He was handsome, with ruddy cheeks and bright eyes [and bright eyes: prob. rdg, Heb obscure]. The LORD said, ‘Rise and anoint him: this is the man.’ 13Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers. Then the spirit of the LORD came upon David and was with him from that day onwards. And Samuel set out on his way back to Ramah.

The spirit of the LORD had forsaken Saul, and at times an evil spirit from the LORD would seize him suddenly. 15His servants said to him, ‘You see, sir, how an evil spirit from God seizes you; why do you not command your servants here to go and find some man who can play the harp? – then, when an evil spirit from God comes on you, he can play and you will recover.’ 17Saul said to his servants, ‘Find me a man who can play well and bring him to me.’ 18One of his attendants said, ‘I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who can play; he is a brave man and a good fighter, wise in speech and handsome, and the LORD is with him.’ 19Saul therefore sent messengers to Jesse and asked him to send him his son David, who was with the sheep. 20Jesse took a homer of bread, a skin of wine, and a kid, and sent them to Saul by his son David. 21David came to Saul and entered his service; and Saul loved him dearly, and he became his armour-bearer. 22So Saul sent word to Jesse: ‘Let David stay in my service, for I am pleased with him.’ 23And whenever a spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play on it, so that Saul found relief; he recovered and the evil spirit left him alone.

The Philistines collected their forces for war and massed at Socoh in Judah; they camped between Socoh and Azekah at Ephes-dammim. 2Saul and the Israelites also massed, and camped in the Vale of Elah. They drew up their lines facing the Philistines, the Philistines occupying a position on one hill and the Israelites on another, with a valley between them. 4A champion came out from the Philistine camp, a man named Goliath, from Gath; he was over nine feet in height. 5He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he wore plate-armour of bronze, weighing five thousand shekels. 6On his legs
were bronze greaves, and one of his weapons was a dagger of bronze. 7 The shaft of his spear was like a weaver’s beam, and its head, which was of iron, weighed six hundred shekels; and his shield-bearer marched ahead of him. 8 The champion stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, ‘Why do you come out to do battle, you slaves of Saul? I am the Philistine champion; choose your man to meet me. 9 If he can kill me in fair fight, we will become your slaves; but if I prove too strong for him and kill him, you shall be our slaves and serve us. 10 Here and now I defy the ranks of Israel. Give me a man,’ said the Philistine, ‘and we will fight it out.’ 11 When Saul and the Israelites heard what the Philistine said, they were shaken and dismayed.

12 David was the son of an Ephrathite [prob. rdg, Heb adds Is this the man from Bethlehem in Judah?] called Jesse, who had eight sons. By Saul’s time he had become a feeble old man, 13 and his three eldest sons had followed Saul to the war. The eldest was called Eliab, the next Abinadab, and the third Shammah; 14 David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, 15 while David used to go to Saul’s camp and back to Bethlehem to mind his father’s flocks.

16 Morning and evening for forty days the Philistine came forward and took up his position. 17 Then one day Jesse said to his son David, ‘Take your brothers an ephah of this parched grain and these ten loaves of bread, and run with them to the camp. 18 These ten cream-cheeses are for you to take to the commanding officer. See if your brothers are well and bring back some token from them.’ 19 Saul and the brothers and all the Israelites were in the Vale of Elah, fighting the Philistines. 20 Early next morning David left someone in charge of the sheep, ran to the line and went up to his brothers to greet them.

21 While he was talking to them the Philistine champion, Goliath, came out from the Philistine ranks and issued his challenge in the same words as before; and David heard him.

22 When the Israelites saw the man they ran from him in fear.

23 ‘Look at this man who comes out day after day to defy Israel’, they said. ‘The king is to give a rich reward to the man who kills him; he will give him his daughter in marriage too and will exempt his family from service due in Israel.’ 24 Then David turned to his neighbours and said, ‘What is to be done for the man who kills this Philistine and wipes out our disgrace? And who is he, an uncircumcised Philistine, to defy the army of the living God?’ 25 The people told him how the matter stood and what was to be done for the man who killed him. 26 His elder brother Eliab overheard David talking with the men and grew angry. ‘What are you doing here?’ he asked. ‘And who have you left to look after those few sheep in the wilderness? I know you, you impudent young rascal; you have only come to see the fighting.’ 27 David answered, ‘What have I done now? I only asked a question.’ 28 And he turned away from him to someone else and repeated his question, but everybody gave him the same answer.

31 What David had said was overheard and reported to Saul, who sent for him. 32 David said to him, ‘Do not lose heart, sir. I will go and fight this Philistine.’ 33 Saul answered, ‘You cannot go and fight with this Philistine; you are only a lad, and he has been a
fighting man all his life.’ 34 David said to Saul, ‘Sir, I am my father’s shepherd; when a
lion or bear comes and carries off a sheep from the flock, 35 I go after it and attack it
and rescue the victim from its jaws. Then if it turns on me, I seize it by the beard and
batter it to death. 36 Lions I have killed and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistinewill
fare no better than they; he has defied the army of the living God. 37 The LORD who
saved me from the lion and the bear will save me from this Philistine.’ ‘Go then,’ said
Saul; ‘and the LORD will be with you.’ 38 He put his own tunic on David, placed a bronze
helmet on his head and gave him a coat of mail to wear; 39 he then fastened his sword
on David over his tunic. But David hesitated, because he had not tried them, and said to
Saul, ‘I cannot go with these, because I have not tried them.’ So he took them off.
40 Then he picked up his stick, chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in
a shepherd’s bag which served as his pouch. He walked out to meet the Philistine with
his sling in his hand.

41 The Philistine came on towards David, with his shield-bearer marching ahead; 42 and
he looked David up and down and had nothing but contempt for this handsome lad with
his ruddy cheeks and bright eyes [handsome ... bright eyes: prob. rdg, Heb obscure].
43 He said to David, ‘Am I a dog that you come out against me with sticks?’ And he
swore at him in the name of his god. 44 ‘Come on,’ he said, ‘and I will give your flesh to
the birds and the beasts.’ 45 David answered, ‘You have come against me with sword and
spear and dagger, but I have come against you in the name of the LORD of Hosts, the
God of the army of Israel which you have defied. 46 The LORD will put you into my power
this day; I will kill you and cut your head off and leave your carcass and the carcasses
of the Philistines to the birds and the wild beasts; all the world shall know that there is a
God in Israel. 47 All those who are gathered here shall see that the LORD saves neither
by sword nor spear; the battle is the LORD’s, and he will put you all into our power.’

48 When the Philistine began moving towards him again, David ran quickly to engage
him. 49 He put his hand into his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine
on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell flat on his face on the
ground. 50 So David proved the victor with his sling and stone; he struck Goliath down
and gave him a mortal wound, though he had no sword. 51 Then he ran to the Philistine
and stood over him, and grasping his sword, he drew it out of the scabbard, dispatched
him and cut off his head. The Philistines, when they saw that their hero was dead,
turned and ran. 52 The men of Israel and Judah at once raised the war-cry and hotly
pursued them all the way to Gath and even to the gates of Ekron. The road that runs to
Shaarim, Gath, and Ekron was strewn with their dead. 53 On their return from the
pursuit of the Philistines, the Israelites plundered their camp. 54 David took Goliath’s
head and carried it to Jerusalem, leaving his weapons in his tent.

55 Saul had said to Abner his commander-in-chief, when he saw David going out against
the Philistine, ‘That boy there, Abner, whose son is he?’ ‘By your life, your majesty,’ said
Abner, ‘I do not know.’ 56 The king said to Abner, ‘Go and find out whose son the lad is.’
57 When David came back after killing the Philistine, Abner took him and presented him
to Saul with the Philistine’s head still in his hand. 58 Saul asked him, ‘Whose son are you,
young man?’, and David answered, ‘I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem.’
18 That same day, when Saul had finished talking with David, he kept him and would not let him return any more to his father’s house, for he saw that Jonathan had given his heart to David and had grown to love him as himself. 3 So Jonathan and David made a solemn compact because each loved the other as dearly as himself. 4 And Jonathan stripped off the cloak he was wearing and his tunic, and gave them to David, together with his sword, his bow, and his belt. 5 David succeeded so well in every venture on which Saul sent him that he was given a command in the army, and his promotion pleased the ordinary people, and even pleased Saul’s officers.

6 At the home-coming of the army when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, the women came out from all the cities of Israel to look on, and the dancers came out to meet King Saul with tambourines, singing, and dancing. 7 The women as they made merry sang to one another:

Saul made havoc among thousands
but David among tens of thousands.

8 Saul was furious, and the words rankled. He said, ‘They have given David tens of thousands and me only thousands; what more can they do but make him king?’ 9 From that day forward Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

10 Next day an evil spirit from God seized upon Saul; he fell into a frenzy [Or fell into prophetic rapture] in the house, and David played the harp to him as he had before. Saul had his spear in his hand, 11 and he hurled it at David, meaning to pin him to the wall; but twice David swerved aside. 12 After this Saul was afraid of David, because he saw that the LORD had forsaken him and was with David. 13 He therefore removed David from his household and appointed him to the command of a thousand men. David led his men into action, 14 and succeeded in everything that he undertook, because the LORD was with him. 15 When Saul saw how successful he was, he was more afraid of him than ever; 16 all Israel and Judah loved him because he took the field at their head.

17 Saul said to David, ‘Here is my elder daughter Merab; I will give her to you in marriage, but in return you must serve me valiantly and fight the LORD’s battles.’ For Saul meant David to meet his end at the hands of the Philistines and not himself. 18 David answered Saul, ‘Who am I and what are my father’s people, my kinsfolk, in Israel, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?’ 19 However, when the time came for Saul’s daughter Merab to be married to David, she had already been given to Adriel of Meholah. 20 But Michal, Saul’s other daughter, fell in love with David, and when Saul was told of this, he saw that it suited his plans. 21 He said to himself, ‘I will give her to him; let her be the bait that lures him to his death at the hands of the Philistines.’ So Saul proposed a second time to make David his son-in-law, 22 and ordered his courtiers to say to David privately, ‘The king is well disposed to you and you are dear to us all; now is the time for you to marry into the king’s family.’ 23 When Saul’s people spoke in this way to David, he said to them, ‘Do you think that marrying the king’s daughter is a matter of so little consequence that a poor man of no consequence, like myself, can do it?’ 24 Saul’s courtiers reported what David had said, 25 and he replied, ‘Tell David this: all the king wants as the bride-price is the foreskins of a hundred Philistines, by way of vengeance on his enemies.’ Saul was counting on David’s death at the hands of the Philistines. 26 The courtiers told David what Saul had said, and marriage with the king’s
daughter on these terms pleased him well. Before the appointed time, 27 David went out with his men and slew two hundred Philistines; he brought their foreskins and counted them out to the king in order to be accepted as his son-in-law. So Saul married his daughter Michal to David. 28 He saw clearly that the LORD was with David, and knew that Michal his daughter had fallen in love with him; 29 and so he grew more and more afraid of David and was his enemy for the rest of his life.

30 The Philistine officers used to come out to offer single combat; and whenever they did, David had more success against them than all the rest of Saul’s men, and he won a great name for himself.

19 1 Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and all his household about killing David. But Jonathan was devoted to David 2 and told him that his father Saul was looking for an opportunity to kill him. ‘Be on your guard tomorrow morning,’ he said; ‘conceal yourself, and remain in hiding. 3 Then I will come out and join my father in the open country where you are and speak to him about you, and if I discover anything I will tell you.’ 4 Jonathan spoke up for David to his father Saul and said to him, ‘Sir, do not wrong your servant David; he has not wronged you; his conduct towards you has been beyond reproach. 5 Did he not take his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine, and the LORD won a great victory for Israel? You saw it, you shared in the rejoicing; why should you wrong an innocent man and put David to death without cause?’ 6 Saul listened to Jonathan and swore solemnly by the LORD that David should not be put to death. 7 So Jonathan called David and told him all this; then he brought him to Saul, and he was in attendance on the king as before.

8 War broke out again, and David attacked the Philistines and dealt them such a blow that they ran before him.

9 An evil spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he was sitting in the house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing the harp. 10 Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he avoided the king’s thrust so that Saul drove the spear into the wall. David escaped and got safely away. 11 That night Saul sent servants to keep watch on David’s house, intending to kill him in the morning, but David’s wife Michal warned him to get away that night, ‘or tomorrow’, she said, ‘you will be a dead man.’ 12 She let David down through a window and he slipped away and escaped. 13 Michal took their household gods and put them on the bed; at its head she laid a goat’s-hair rug and covered it all with a cloak. 14 When the men arrived to arrest David she told them he was ill. 15 Saul sent them back to see David for themselves. ‘Bring him to me, bed and all,’ he said, ‘and I will kill him.’ 16 When they came, there were the household gods on the bed and the goat’s-hair rug at its head. 17 Then Saul said to Michal, ‘Why have you played this trick on me and let my enemy get safe away?’ And Michal answered, ‘He said to me, “Help me to escape or I will kill you.” ’

18 Meanwhile David made good his escape and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him how Saul had treated him. Then he and Samuel went to Nainoth and stayed there. 19 Saul was told that David was there, 20 and he sent a party of men to seize him. When they saw the company of prophets in rapture, with Samuel standing at their head, the spirit
of God came upon them and they fell into prophetic rapture. 21When this was reported to Saul he sent another party. These also fell into a rapture, and when he sent more men a third time, they did the same. 22Saul himself then set out for Ramah and came to the great cistern in Secu. He asked where Samuel and David were and was told that they were at Naioth in Ramah. 23On his way there the spirit of God came upon him too and he went on, in a rapture as he went, till he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24There he too stripped off his clothes and like the rest fell into a rapture before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night. That is why men say, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'

20Then David made his escape from Naioth in Ramah and came to Jonathan. 'What have I done?' he asked. 'What is my offence? What does your father think I have done wrong, that he seeks my life?' 21Jonathan answered him, 'God forbid! There is no thought of putting you to death. I am sure my father will not do anything whatever without telling me. Why should my father hide such a thing from me? I cannot believe it!' 22David said, 'I am ready to swear to it: your father has said to himself, “Jonathan must not know this or he will resent it”, because he knows that you have a high regard for me. As the LORD lives, your life upon it, there is only a step between me and death.’ 23Jonathan said to David, 'What do you want me to do for you?' 24David answered, 'It is new moon tomorrow, and I ought to dine with the king. Let me go and lie hidden in the fields until the third evening. 25If your father happens to miss me, then say, “David asked me for leave to pay a rapid visit to his home in Bethlehem, for it is the annual sacrifice there for the whole family.” 26If he says, “Well and good”, that will be a good sign for me; but if he flies into a rage, you will know that he is set on doing me wrong. 27My lord, keep faith with me; for you and I have entered into a solemn compact before the LORD. Kill me yourself if I am guilty. Why let me fall into your father’s hands? 28God forbid!’ cried Jonathan. 'If I find my father set on doing you wrong I will tell you.’ 29David answered Jonathan, 'How will you let me know if he answers harshly?’ 30Jonathan said, 'Come with me into the fields.’ So they went together into the fields, 31and Jonathan said to David, ‘I promise you, David, in the sight of the LORD the God of Israel, this time tomorrow I will sound my father for the third time and, if he is well disposed to you, I will send and let you know. 32If my father means mischief, the LORD do the same to me and more, if I do not let you know and get you safely away. The LORD be with you as he has been with my father! 33I know that as long as I live you will show me faithful friendship, as the LORD requires; and if I should die, 34you will continue loyal to my family for ever. When the LORD rids the earth of all David’s enemies, 35may the LORD call him to account if he and his house are no longer my friends.’ 36Jonathan pledged himself afresh to David because of his love for him, for he loved him as himself. 37Then he said to him, ‘Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed when your place is empty. 38So go down at nightfall for the third time to the place where you hid on the evening of the feast and stay by the mound there. 39Then I will shoot three arrows towards it, as though I were aiming at a mark. 40Then I will send my boy to find the arrows. If I say to him, “Look, the arrows are on this side of you, pick them up”, then you can come out of hiding. You will be quite safe, I swear it; for there will be nothing amiss. 41But if I say to the lad, “Look, the arrows are on the other side of you, further on”, then the LORD has said that you must go; 42the LORD stand witness between us
for ever to the pledges we have exchanged.’

24 So David hid in the fields. The new moon came, the dinner was prepared, and the king sat down to eat. 25 Saul took his customary seat by the wall, and Abner sat beside him; Jonathan too was present, but David’s place was empty. 26 That day Saul said nothing, for he thought that David was absent by some chance, perhaps because he was ritually unclean. 27 But on the second day, the day after the new moon, David’s place was still empty, and Saul said to his son Jonathan, ‘Why has not the son of Jesse come to the feast, either yesterday or today?’ 28 Jonathan answered Saul, ‘David asked permission to go to Bethlehem. He asked my leave and said, “Our family is holding a sacrifice in the town and my brother himself has ordered me to be there. Now, if you have any regard for me, let me slip away to see my brothers.” That is why he has not come to dine with the king.’ 30 Saul was angry with Jonathan, ‘You son of a crooked and unfaithful mother! You have made friends with the son of Jesse only to bring shame on yourself and dishonour on your mother; I see how it will be. 31 As long as Jesse’s son remains alive on earth, neither you nor your crown will be safe. Send at once and fetch him; he deserves to die.’ 32 Jonathan answered his father, ‘Deserves to die! Why? What has he done?’ 33 At that, Saul picked up his spear and threatened to kill him; and he knew that his father was bent on David’s death. 34 Jonathan left the table in a rage and ate nothing on the second day of the festival; for he was indignant on David’s behalf because his father had humiliated him.

35 Next morning, Jonathan went out into the fields to meet David at the appointed time, taking a young boy with him. 36 He said to the boy, ‘Run and find the arrows; I am going to shoot.’ The boy ran on, and he shot the arrows over his head. 37 When the boy reached the place where Jonathan’s arrows had fallen, Jonathan called out after him, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you. 38 Hurry! No time to lose! Make haste!’ The boy gathered up the arrows and brought them to his master; 39 but only Jonathan and David knew what this meant; the boy knew nothing. 40 Jonathan handed his weapons to the boy and told him to take them back to the city. 41 When the boy had gone, David got up from behind the mound and bowed humbly three times. Then they kissed one another and shed tears together, until David’s grief was even greater than Jonathan’s. 42 Jonathan said to David, ‘Go in safety; we have pledged each other in the name of the LORD who is witness for ever between you and me and between your descendants and mine.’

David went off at once, while Jonathan returned to the city. 21 David made his way to the priest Ahimelech at Nob, who hurried out to meet him and said, ‘Why have you come alone and no one with you?’ 2 David answered Ahimelech, ‘I am under orders from the king: I was to let no one know about the mission on which he was sending me or what these orders were. When I took leave of my men I told them to meet me in such and such a place. 3 Now, what have you got by you? Let me have five loaves, or as many as you can find.’ 4 The priest answered David, ‘I have no ordinary bread available. There is only the sacred bread; but have the young men kept themselves from women?’ 5 David answered the priest, ‘Women have been denied us hitherto, when I have been on campaign, even an ordinary campaign, and the young men’s bodies have remained holy; and how much more will they be holy today?’ 6 So, as there was no other bread
there, the priest gave him the sacred bread, the Bread of the Presence, which had just 
been taken from the presence of the LORD to be replaced by freshly baked bread on the 
day that the old was removed. 7 One of Saul’s servants happened to be there that day, 
detained before the LORD; his name was Doeg the Edomite, and he was the strongest of 
all Saul’s herdsmen. 8 David said to Ahimelech, ‘Have you a spear or sword here at 
hand? I have no sword or other weapon with me, because the king’s business was 
urgent.’ 9 The priest answered, ‘There is the sword of Goliath the Philistine whom you 
slew in the Vale of Elah; it is wrapped up in a cloak behind the ephod. If you wish to 
take that, take it; there is no other weapon here.’ David said, ‘There is no sword like it, 
give it to me.’

10 That day, David went on his way, eluding Saul, and came to Achish king of Gath. 
11 The servants of Achish said to him, ‘Surely this is David, the king of his country, the 
man of whom they sang as they danced:

’Saul made havoc among thousands

but David among tens of thousands.’

12 These words were not lost on David, and he became very much afraid of Achish king 
of Gath. 13 So he altered his behaviour in public and acted like a lunatic in front of them 
all, scrabbling on the double doors of the city gate and dribbling down his beard. 
14 Achish said to his servants, ‘The man is mad! Why bring him to me? 15 Am I short of 
madmen that you bring this one to plague me? Must I have this fellow in my house?’

22 DAVID MADE HIS ESCAPE and went from there to the cave of Adullam. When his 
brothers and all his family heard that he was there, they joined him. 2 Men in any kind of 
distress or in debt or with a grievance gathered round him, about four hundred in 
number, and he became their chief. 3 From there David went to Mizpeh in Moab and said 
to the king of Moab, ‘Let my father and mother come and take shelter with you until I 
know what God will do for me.’ 4 So he left them at the court of the king of Moab, and 
they stayed there as long as David was in his stronghold.

5 The prophet Gad said to David, ‘You must not stay in your stronghold; go at once into 
Judah.’ So David went as far as the forest of Hareth. 6 News that David and his men had 
been seen reached Saul while he was in Gibeah, sitting under the tamarisk-tree on the 
hill-top with his spear in his hand and all his retainers standing about him. 7 He said to 
them, ‘Listen to me, you Benjamites: do you expect the son of Jesse to give you all 
fields and vineyards, or make you all officers over units of a thousand and a hundred? 
8 Is that why you have all conspired against me? Not one of you told me when my son 
made a compact with the son of Jesse; none of you spared a thought for me or told me 
that my son had set my own servant against me, who is lying in wait for me now.’

9 Then Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with the servants of Saul, spoke: ‘I saw the 
son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech son of Ahitub. 10 Ahimelech consulted the 
LORD on his behalf, then gave him food and handed over to him the sword of Goliath 
the Philistine.’ 11 The king sent for Ahimelech the priest and his family, who were priests 
at Nob, and they all came into his presence. 12 Saul said, ‘Now listen, you son of Ahitub’, 
and the man answered, ‘Yes, my lord?’ 13 Then Saul said to him, ‘Why have you and the 
son of Jesse plotted against me? You gave him food and the sword too, and consulted
God on his behalf; and now he has risen against me and is at this moment lying in wait for me.' 14 'And who among all your servants', answered Ahimelech, 'is like David, a man to be trusted, the king’s son-in-law, appointed to your staff and holding an honourable place in your household? 15 Have I on this occasion done something profane in consulting God on his behalf? God forbid! I trust that my lord the king will not accuse me or my family; for I know nothing whatever about it.' 16 But the king said, 'Ahimelech, you must die, you and all your family.' 17 He then turned to the bodyguard attending him and said, 'Go and kill the priests of the LORD; for they are in league with David, and, though they knew that he was a fugitive, they did not tell me.' 18 The king therefore said to Doeg the Edomite, 'You, Doeg, go and fall upon the priests'; so Doeg went and fell upon the priests, killing that day with his own hand eighty-five men who could carry the ephod. 19 He put to the sword every living thing in Nob, the city of priests: men and women, children and babes in arms, oxen, asses, and sheep. 20 One son of Ahimelech named Abiathar made his escape and joined David. 21 He told David how Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. 22 Then David said to him, 'When Doeg the Edomite was there that day, I knew that he would inform Saul. I have gambled with the lives of all your father's family. 23 Stay here with me, have no fear; he who seeks your life seeks mine, and you will be safe with me.'

The Philistines were fighting against Keilah and plundering the threshing-floors; and when David heard this, 2 he consulted the LORD and asked whether he should go and attack the Philistines. The LORD answered, 'Go, attack them, and relieve Keilah.' 3 But David’s men said to him, 'As we are now, we have enough to fear from Judah. How much worse if we challenge the Philistine forces at Keilah!' 4 David consulted the LORD once again and the LORD answered him, 'Go to Keilah; I will give the Philistines into your hands.' 5 So David and his men went to Keilah and fought the Philistines; they carried off their cattle, inflicted a heavy defeat on them and relieved the inhabitants. 6 Abiathar son of Ahimelech made good his escape and joined David at Keilah, bringing the ephod with him. 7 Saul was told that David had entered Keilah, and he said, 'God has put him into my hands; for he has walked into a trap by entering a walled town with gates and bars.' 8 He called out the levy to march on Keilah and besiege David and his men. 9 When David learnt how Saul planned his undoing, he told Abiathar the priest to bring the ephod, 10 and then he prayed, 'O LORD God of Israel, I thy servant have heard news that Saul intends to come to Keilah and destroy the city because of me. 11 Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come as I have heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray thee, tell thy servant.' The LORD answered, 'He will come.' 12 Then David asked, 'Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?’, and the LORD answered, ‘They will.’ 13 Then David left Keilah at once with his men, who numbered about six hundred, and moved about from place to place. When the news reached Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he made no further move.

14 While David was living in the fastnesses of the wilderness of Ziph, in the hill-country, Saul searched for him day after day, but God did not put him into his power. 15 David well knew that Saul had come out to seek his life; and while he was at Horesh in the wilderness of Ziph, 16 Saul’s son Jonathan came to him there and gave him fresh
courage in God’s name: ‘Do not be afraid,’ he said; ‘my father’s hand shall not touch you. You will become king of Israel and I shall hold rank after you; and my father knows it.’ The two of them made a solemn compact before the LORD; then David remained in Horesh and Jonathan went home. While Saul was at Gibeah the Ziphites brought him this news: ‘David, we hear, is in hiding among us in the fastnesses of Horesh on the hill of Hachilah, south of Jeshimon. Come down, your majesty, come whenever you will, and we are able to surrender him to you.’ Saul said, ‘The LORD has indeed blessed you; you have saved me a world of trouble. Go now and make further inquiry, and find out exactly where he is and who saw him there. They tell me that he by himself is crafty enough to outwit me. Find out which of his hiding-places he is using; then come back to me at such and such a place, and I will go along with you. So long as he stays in this country, I will hunt him down, if I have to go through all the clans of Judah one by one.’ They set out for Ziph without delay, ahead of Saul; David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon. Saul set off with his men to look for him; but David got wind of it and went down to a refuge in the rocks, and there he stayed in the wilderness of Maon. Hearing of this, Saul went into the wilderness after him; he was on one side of the hill, David and his men on the other. While David and his men were trying desperately to get away and Saul and his followers were closing in for the capture, a runner brought a message to Saul: ‘Come at once! the Philistines are harrying the land.’ So Saul called off the pursuit and turned back to face the Philistines. This is why that place is called the Dividing Rock. David went up from there and lived in the fastnesses of En-gedi.

1When Saul returned from the pursuit of the Philistines, he learnt that David was in the wilderness of En-gedi. So he took three thousand men picked from the whole of Israel and went in search of David and his men to the east of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. There beside the road were some sheepfolds, and near by was a cave, at the far end of which David and his men were sitting concealed. Saul came to the cave and went in to relieve himself. His men said to David, ‘The day has come: the LORD has put your enemy into your hands, as he promised he would, and you may do what you please with him.’ David said to his men, ‘God forbid that I should harm my master, the LORD’s anointed, or lift a finger against him; he is the LORD’s anointed.’ So David reproved his men severely and would not let them attack Saul. He himself got up stealthily and cut off a piece of Saul’s cloak; but when he had cut it off, his conscience smote him. Saul rose, left the cave and went on his way; whereupon David also came out of the cave and called after Saul, ‘My lord the king!’ When Saul looked round, David prostrated himself in obeisance and said to him, ‘Why do you listen when they say that David is out to do you harm? Today you can see for yourself that the LORD put you into my power in the cave; I had a mind to kill you, but no, I spared your life and said, “I cannot lift a finger against my master, for he is the LORD’s anointed.”’ So David reproved his men severely and would not let them attack Saul. He himself got up stealthily and cut off a piece of Saul’s cloak; but when he had cut it off, his conscience smote him. Saul rose, left the cave and went on his way; whereupon David also came out of the cave and called after Saul, ‘My lord the king!’ When Saul looked round, David prostrated himself in obeisance and said to him, ‘Why do you listen when they say that David is out to do you harm? Today you can see for yourself that the LORD put you into my power in the cave; I had a mind to kill you, but no, I spared your life and said, “I cannot lift a finger against my master, for he is the LORD’s anointed.”’ Look, my dear lord, look at this piece of your cloak in my hand. I cut it off, but I did not kill you; this will show you that I have no thought of violence or treachery against you, and that I have done you no wrong; yet you are resolved to take my life. May the LORD judge between us! but though he may take vengeance on you for my sake, I will never lift my hand against you; One wrong begets another”, as the old saying goes, yet I will never lift my hand against you. Who has the king of Israel come out against? What are you pursuing? A dead dog, a mere flea. The LORD will be
When David had finished speaking, Saul said, ‘Is that you, David my son?’ and he wept. 17 Then he said, ‘The right is on your side, not mine, you have treated me so well, I have treated you so badly. 18 Your goodness to me this day has passed all bounds: the LORD put me at your mercy but you did not kill me. 19 Not often does a man find his enemy and let him go safely on his way; so may the LORD reward you well for what you have done for me today! 20 I know now for certain that you will become king, and that the kingdom of Israel will flourish under your rule. 21 Swear to me by the LORD then that you will not exterminate my descendants and blot out my name from my father’s house.’ 22 David swore an oath to Saul; and Saul went back to his home, while David and his men went up to their fastness.

25 1 SAMUEL DIED, and all Israel came together to mourn for him, and he was buried in his house in Ramah. Afterwards David went down to the wilderness of Paran.

There was a man at Carmel in Maon, who had great influence and owned three thousand sheep and a thousand goats; and he was shearing his flocks in Carmel. 3 His name was Nabal and his wife’s name Abigail; she was a beautiful and intelligent woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean. 4 David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his flocks, 5 and sent ten of his men, saying to them, ‘Go up to Carmel, find Nabal and give him my greetings. 6 You are to say, “All good wishes for the year ahead! Prosperity to yourself, your household, and all that is yours! 7 I hear that you are shearing. Your shepherds have been with us lately and we did not molest them; nothing of theirs was missing all the time they were in Carmel. 8 Ask your own people and they will tell you. Receive my men kindly, for this is an auspicious day with us, and give what you can to David your son and your servant.”’ 9 David’s servants came and delivered this message to Nabal in David’s name. When they paused, 10 Nabal answered, ‘Who is David? Who is this son of Jesse? In these days every slave who breaks away from his master sets himself up as a chief [Or In these days there are many slaves who break away from their master]. 11 Am I to take my food and my wine and the meat I have provided for my shearers and give it to men who come from I know not where?’ 12 David’s men turned and made their way back to him and told him all this. 13 He said to his men, ‘Buckle on your swords, all of you.’ So they buckled on their swords and followed David, four hundred of them, while two hundred stayed behind with the baggage.

14 One of the young men said to Abigail, Nabal’s wife, ‘David sent messengers from the wilderness to ask our master politely for a present, and he flew out [flew out: or screamed] at them. 15 The men have been very good to us and have not molested us, nor did we miss anything all the time we were going about with them in the open country. 16 They were as good as a wall round us, night and day, while we were minding the flocks. 17 Think carefully what you had better do, for it is certain ruin for our master and his whole family; he is such a good-for-nothing that it is no good talking to him.’ 18 So Abigail hastily collected two hundred loaves and two skins of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched grain, a hundred bunches of raisins, and two
hundred cakes of dried figs, and loaded them on asses, \(^{19}\)but told her husband nothing about it. Then she said to her servants, ‘Go on ahead, I will follow you.’ \(^{20}\)As she made her way on her ass, hidden by the hill, there were David and his men coming down towards her, and she met them. \(^{21}\)David had said, ‘It was a waste of time to protect this fellow’s property in the wilderness so well that nothing of his was missing. He has repaid me evil for good.’ \(^{22}\)David swore a great oath: ‘God do the same to me and more if I leave him a single mother’s son alive by morning!’

\(^{23}\)When Abigail saw David she dismounted in haste and prostrated herself before him, \(^{24}\)bowing low to the ground at his feet, and said, ‘Let me take the blame, my lord, but allow me, your humble servant, to speak out and let my lord give me a hearing. \(^{25}\)How can you take any notice of this good-for-nothing? He is just what his name Nabal means: “Churl” is his name, and churlish his behaviour. I did not myself, sir, see the men you sent. \(^{26}\)And now, sir, the LORD has restrained you from bloodshed and from giving vent to your anger. As the LORD lives, your life upon it, your enemies and all who want to see you ruined will be like Nabal. \(^{27}\)Here is the present which I, your humble servant, have brought; give it to the young men under your command. \(^{28}\)Forgive me, my lord, if I am presuming; for the LORD will establish your family for ever, because you have fought his wars. No calamity shall overtake you as long as you live. \(^{29}\)If any man sets out to pursue you and take your life, the LORD your God will wrap your life up and put it with his own treasure, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away like stones from a sling. \(^{30}\)When the LORD has made good all his promises to you, and has made you ruler of Israel, \(^{31}\)there will be no reason why you should stumble or your courage falter because you have shed innocent blood or given way to your anger. Then when the LORD makes all you do prosper, you will remember me, your servant.’ \(^{32}\)David said to Abigail, ‘Blessed is the LORD the God of Israel who has sent you today to meet me. \(^{33}\)A blessing on your good sense, a blessing on you because you have saved me today from the guilt of bloodshed and from giving way to my anger. \(^{34}\)For I swear by the life of the LORD the God of Israel who has kept me from doing you wrong: if you had not come at once to meet me, not a man of Nabal’s household, not a single mother’s son, would have been left alive by morning.’ \(^{35}\)Then David took from her what she had brought him and said, ‘Go home in peace, I have listened to you and I grant your request.’

\(^{36}\)On her return she found Nabal holding a banquet in his house, a banquet fit for a king. He grew merry and became very drunk, so drunk that his wife said nothing to him, trivial or serious, till daybreak. \(^{37}\)In the morning, when the wine had worn off, she told him everything, and he had a seizure and lay there like a stone. \(^{38}\)Ten days later the LORD struck him again and he died. \(^{39}\)When David heard that Nabal was dead he said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, who has himself punished Nabal for his insult, and has kept me his servant from doing wrong. The LORD has made Nabal’s wrongdoing recoil on his own head.’ David then sent to make proposals that Abigail should become his wife. \(^{40}\)And his servants came to Abigail at Carmel and said to her, ‘David has sent us to fetch you to be his wife.’ \(^{41}\)She rose and prostrated herself with her face to the ground, and said, ‘I am his slave to command, I would wash the feet of my lord’s servants.’ \(^{42}\)So Abigail made her preparations with all speed and, with her five maids in attendance, accompanied by David’s messengers, rode away on an ass; and she became David’s wife. \(^{43}\)David had
also married Ahinoam of Jezreel; both these women became his wives. 44Saul meanwhile had given his daughter Michal, David’s wife, to Palti son of Laish from Gallim.

26 THE ZIPHITES CAME TO SAUL at Gibeah to report that David was in hiding on the hill of Hachilah overlooking Jeshimon. 2Saul went down at once to the wilderness of Ziph, taking with him three thousand picked men, to search for David there. 3He encamped beside the road on the hill of Hachilah overlooking Jeshimon, while David was still in the wilderness. As soon as David knew that Saul had come to the wilderness in pursuit of him, 4he sent out scouts and found that Saul had reached such and such a place. 5Without delay, he went to the place where Saul had pitched his camp and observed where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander-in-chief, were lying. Saul lay within the lines with his troops encamped in a circle round him. 6David turned to Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab’s brother, and said, ‘Who will venture with me into the camp, to go to Saul?’ Abishai answered, ‘I will.’ 7David and Abishai entered the camp at night and found Saul lying asleep within the lines with his spear thrust into the ground by his head. Abner and the army were lying all round him. 8Abishai said to David, ‘God has put your enemy into your power today; let me strike him and pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I shall not have to strike twice.’ 9David said to him, ‘Do him no harm; who has ever lifted a finger against the LORD’s anointed and gone unpunished? 10As the LORD lives,’ went on David, ‘the LORD will strike him down; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go down to battle and meet his end. 11God forbid that I should lift a finger against the LORD’s anointed! But now let us take the spear which is by his head, and the water-jar, and go.’ 12So David took the spear and the water-jar from beside Saul’s head and they went. The whole camp was asleep; no one saw him, no one knew anything, no one even woke up. A heavy sleep sent by the LORD had fallen on them.

13Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on the top of a hill a long way off; there was no little distance between them. 14David shouted across to the army and hailed Abner, ‘Answer me, Abner!’ He answered, ‘Who are you to shout to the king?’ 15David said to Abner, ‘Do you call yourself a man? Is there anyone like you in Israel? Why, then, did you not keep watch over your lord the king, when someone came to harm your lord the king? 16This was not well done. As the LORD lives, you deserve to die, all of you, because you have not kept watch over your master the LORD’s anointed. Look! Where are the king’s spear and the water-jar that were by his head?’

17Saul recognized David’s voice and said, ‘Is that you, David my son?’ ‘Yes, sir, it is’, said David. 18Why must your majesty pursue me? What have I done? What mischief am I plotting? 19Listen, my lord, to what I have to say. If it is the LORD who has set you against me, may an offering be acceptable to him; but if it is men, a curse on them in the LORD’s name; for they have ousted me today from my share in the LORD’s inheritance and have banished me to serve other gods! 20Do not let my blood be shed on foreign soil, far from the presence of the LORD, just because the king of Israel came out to look for a flea, as one might hunt a partridge over the hills.’ 21Saul answered, ‘I have done wrong; come back, David my son. You have held my life precious this day, and I will never harm you again. I have been a fool, I have been sadly in the wrong.’ 22David answered, ‘Here is the king’s spear; let one of your men come across and fetch
The LORD who rewards uprightness and loyalty will reward the man into whose power he put you today, when I refused to lift a finger against the LORD’s anointed. As I held your life precious today, so may the LORD hold mine precious and deliver me from every distress.’ Then Saul said to David, ‘A blessing is on you, David my son. You will do great things and be victorious.’ So David went on his way and Saul returned home.

David thought, ‘One of these days I shall be killed by Saul. The best thing for me to do will be to escape into Philistine territory; then Saul will lose all further hope of finding me anywhere in Israel, search as he may, and I shall escape his clutches.’ So David and his six hundred men crossed the frontier forthwith to Achish son of Maoch king of Gath. David settled in Gath with Achish, taking with him his men and their families and his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, Nabal’s widow. Saul was told that David had escaped to Gath, and he gave up the search. David said to Achish, ‘If I stand well in your opinion, grant me a place in one of your country towns where I may settle. Why should I remain in the royal city with your majesty?’ Achish granted him Ziklag on that day: that is why Ziklag still belongs to the kings of Judah.

David spent a year and four months in Philistine country. He and his men would sally out and raid the Geshurites, the Gizrites, and the Amalekites, for it was they who inhabited the country from Telaim [from Telaim: prob. rdg, Heb from of old] all the way to Shur and Egypt. When David raided the country he left no one alive, man or woman; he took flocks and herds, asses and camels, and clothes too, and then came back again to Achish. When Achish asked, ‘Where was your raid today?’, David would answer, ‘The Negeb of Judah’ or ‘The Negeb of the Jerahmeelites’ or ‘The Negeb of the Kenites’. Neither man nor woman did David bring back alive to Gath, for fear that they should denounce him and his men for what they had done. This was his practice as long as he remained with the Philistines. Achish trusted David, thinking that he had won such a bad name among his own people the Israelites that he would remain his subject all his life.

**Saul and his sons killed**

IN THOSE DAYS THE PHILISTINES MUSTERED their army for an attack on Israel. Achish said to David, ‘You know that you and your men must take the field with me.’ David answered Achish, ‘Good, you will learn what your servant can do.’ And Achish said to David, ‘I will make you my bodyguard for life.’

By this time Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city; and Saul had banished from the land all who trafficked with ghosts and spirits. The Philistines mustered and encamped at Shunem, and Saul gathered all the Israelites and encamped on Gilboa; and when Saul saw the Philistine force, fear struck him to the heart. He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him, whether by dreams or by Urim or by prophets. So he said to his servants, ‘Find me a woman who has a familiar spirit, and I will go and inquire through her.’ His servants told him that there was such a woman at En-dor. Saul put on different clothes and went in
disguise with two of his men. He came to the woman by night and said, ‘Tell me my fortunes by consulting the dead, and call up the man I name to you.’ 9But the woman answered, ‘Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has made away with those who call up ghosts and spirits; why do you press me to do what will lead to my death?’ 10Saul swore her an oath: ‘As the LORD lives, no harm shall come to you for this.’ 11The woman asked whom she should call up, and Saul answered, ‘Samuel.’ 12When the woman saw Samuel appear, she shrieked and said to Saul, ‘Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!’ 13The king said to her, ‘Do not be afraid. What do you see?’ The woman answered, ‘I see a ghostly form coming up from the earth.’ 14What is it like?’ he asked; she answered, ‘Like an old man coming up, wrapped in a cloak.’ Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed low with his face to the ground, and prostrated himself. 15Samuel said to Saul, ‘Why have you disturbed me and brought me up?’ Saul answered, ‘I am in great trouble; the Philistines are pressing me and God has turned away; he no longer answers me through prophets or through dreams, and I have summoned you to tell me what I should do.’ 16Samuel said, ‘Why do you ask me, now that the LORD has turned from you and become your adversary? 17He has done what he foretold through me. He has torn the kingdom from your hand and given it to another man, to David. 18You have not obeyed the LORD, or executed the judgement of his fury against the Amalekites; that is why he has done this to you today. 19For the same reason the LORD will let your people Israel fall into the hands of the Philistines and, what is more, tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me. Yes, indeed, the LORD will give the Israelite army into the hands of the Philistines.’ 20Saul was overcome and fell his full length to the ground, terrified by Samuel’s words. He had no strength left, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night.

21The woman went to Saul and saw that he was much disturbed, and she said to him, ‘I listened to what you said and I risked my life to obey you. 22Now listen to me: let me set before you a little food to give you strength for your journey.’ 23But he refused to eat anything. When his servants joined the woman in pressing him, he yielded, rose from the ground and sat on the couch. 24The woman had a fatted calf at home, which she quickly slaughtered. She took some meal, kneaded it and baked unleavened cakes, 25which she set before Saul and his servants. They ate the food and departed that same night.

29The Philistines mustered all their troops at Aphek, while the Israelites encamped at En-harod [prob. rdg, Heb at the spring] in Jezreel. 2The Philistine princes were advancing with their troops in units of a hundred and a thousand; David and his men were in the rear of the column with Achish. 3The Philistine commanders asked, ‘Why are those Hebrews there?’ Achish answered, ‘This is David, the servant of Saul king of Israel who has been with me now for a year or more. I have had no fault to find in him ever since he came over to me.’ 4The Philistine commanders were indignant and said to Achish, ‘Send the man back to the town which you allotted to him. He shall not fight side by side with us, or he may turn traitor in the battle. What better way to buy his master’s favour, than at the price of our lives? 5This is that David of whom they sang, as they danced:  

Saul made havoc among thousands  
but David among tens of thousands.’
Achish summoned David and said to him, ‘As the LORD lives, you are an upright man and your service with my troops has well satisfied me. I have had no fault to find with you ever since you joined me, but the other princes are not willing to accept you. 7 Now go home in peace, and you will then be doing nothing that they can regard as wrong.’ 8 David protested, ‘What have I done, or what fault have you found in me from the day I first entered your service till now, that I should not come and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?’ 9 Achish answered David, ‘I agree that you have been as true to me as an angel of God, but the Philistine commanders insist that you shall not fight alongside them. 10 Now rise early in the morning with those of your lord’s subjects who have followed you, and go to the town which I allotted to you; harbour no evil thoughts, for I am well satisfied with you. Rise early and start as soon as it is light.’ 11 So David and his men rose early to start that morning on their way back to the land of the Philistines, while the Philistines went on to Jezreel.

On the third day David and his men reached Ziklag. Now the Amalekites had made a raid into the Negeb, attacked Ziklag and set fire to it; 2 they had carried off all the women, high and low, without putting one of them to death. These they drove with them and continued their march. 3 When David and his men approached the town, they found it destroyed by fire, and their wives, their sons, and their daughters carried off. 4 David and the people with him wept aloud until they could weep no more. 5 David’s two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail widow of Nabal of Carmel, were among the captives. 6 David was in a desperate position because the people, embittered by the loss of their sons and daughters, threatened to stone him. So David sought strength in the LORD his God. 7 He told Abiathar the priest, son of Ahimelech, to bring the ephod. When Abiathar had brought the ephod, 8 David inquired of the LORD, ‘Shall I pursue these raiders? and shall I overtake them?’ The answer came, ‘Pursue them: you will overtake them and rescue everyone.’ 9 So David and his six hundred men set out and reached the ravine of Besor [prob. rdg, Heb adds those who were left over remained]. 10 Two hundred of them who were too weary to cross the ravine stayed behind, and David with four hundred pressed on in pursuit.

In the open country they came across an Egyptian and took him to David. They gave him food to eat and water to drink, 12 also a lump of dried figs and two bunches of raisins. When he had eaten these he revived; for he had had nothing to eat or drink for three days and nights. 13 David asked him, ‘Whose slave are you? and where have you come from?’ ‘I am an Egyptian boy,’ he answered, ‘the slave of an Amalekite, but my master left me behind because I fell ill three days ago. 14 We had raided the Negeb of the Kerethites, part of Judah, and the Negeb of Caleb; we also set fire to Ziklag.’ 15 David asked, ‘Can you guide me to this band?’ ‘Swear to me by God’, he answered, ‘that you will not put me to death or hand me back to my master, and I will guide you to them.’ 16 So he led him down, and there they were scattered everywhere, eating and drinking and celebrating the capture of the great mass of spoil taken from Philistine and Judaean territory.

17 David attacked from dawn till dusk and continued till next day; only four hundred young men mounted on camels made good their escape. 18 David rescued all those
whom the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. 19 No one was missing, high or low, sons or daughters, and none of the spoil, nor anything they had taken for themselves: David recovered everything. 20 They took all the flocks and herds, drove the cattle before him [They took ... before him: prob. rdg, Heb David took all the flocks and herds; they drove before that cattle] and said, ‘This is David’s spoil.’ 21 When David returned to the two hundred men who had been too weak to follow him and whom he had left behind at the ravine of Besor, they came forward to meet him and his men. David greeted them all, inquiring how things were with them. 22 But some of those who had gone with David, worthless men and, scoundrels, broke in and said, ‘These men did not go with us; we will not allot them any of the spoil that we have retrieved, except that each of them may take his own wife and children and then go.’ 23 ‘That you shall never do,’ said David, ‘considering what the LORD has given us, and how he has kept us safe and given the raiding party into our hands. 24 Who could agree with what you propose? Those who stayed with the stores shall have the same share as those who went into battle. They shall share and share alike.’ 25 From that time onwards, this has been the established custom in Israel down to this day.

When David reached Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah and to his friends, with this message: ‘This is a present for you out of the spoil taken from the LORD’s enemies.’ 27 He sent to those in Bethuel, in Ramoth-negeb, in Jattir, ÁÁ in Ararah [prob. rdg, Heb Aroer], in Siphmoth, in Eshtemoa, in Rachal, in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, in the cities of the Kenites, ÁÁ in Hormah, in Borashan, in Athak, ÁÁ in Hebron, and in all the places over which he and his men had ranged.

The Philistines fought a battle against Israel, and the men of Israel were routed, leaving their dead on Mount Gilboa. 2 The Philistines hotly pursued Saul and his sons and killed the three sons, Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua. 3 The battle went hard for Saul, for some archers came upon him and he was wounded in the belly by the archers. 4 So he said to his armour-bearer, ‘Draw your sword and run me through, so that these uncircumcised brutes may not come and taunt me and make sport of me.’ But the armour-bearer refused, he dared not; whereupon Saul took his own sword and fell on it. 5 When the armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him. 6 Thus they all died together on that day, Saul, his three sons, and his armour-bearer, as well as his men. 7 And all the Israelites in the district of the Vale and of the Jordan, when they saw that the other Israelites had fled and that Saul and his sons had perished, fled likewise, abandoning their cities, and the Philistines went in and occupied them.

Next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons lying dead on Mount Gilboa. 9 They cut off his head and stripped him of his weapons; then they sent messengers through the length and breadth of their land to take the good news to idols and people alike. 10 They deposited his armour in the temple of Ashtoreth and nailed his body on the wall of Beth-shan. 11 When the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, ÁÁ the bravest of them journeyed together all night long and recovered the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth-shan; they brought them back to Jabesh and anointed them there with spices. ÁÁ Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk-tree in
Jabesh, and fasted for seven days.