

The First Book of Samuel

**Teaching Series Conducted At
West Side Church of God in Christ
Rockford, Illinois
by
Pastor Maurice A. West
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*Blessings upon you, people of the most high God! As you prepare to read this study in the **First Book of Samuel**, it is my prayer that it will be a blessing to you. This study was conducted at West Side Church of God in Christ in our Friday evening teaching services. I hope this study is a blessing to you and gives you the encouragement you need to dig deeper into the Word of God. I speak blessings into your lives in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Pastor Maurice A. West – December 2008

THE LEGAL DISCLAIMERS

There will be various translations of the Scriptures used in our study. If we depart from the King James Version, which will be our standard, what follows are the typical translations used:

- Amplified Bible – The Amplified Bible. Copyright © 1965, Zondervan Publishing House.
- Net Bible – The Net Bible. Copyright © 1996-2003, Biblical Studies Press
- NIV – The New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.
- NKJV – The New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.
- NLT – The New Living Translation. Copyright © 1996.

At various times in this study, you may also find the following designations referring to reference material used to assist in putting together this study. Direct quotations will be shown in italicized text.

- {Adam Clarke} Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Whole Bible
- {David Guzik} Guzik, David. “Study Guide for 1 Samuel.” Enduring Word Ministries
- {JF&B} The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary
- {Josephus} The Works of Flavius Josephus – Translated by William Whiston
- {Matthew Henry} Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible in One Volume
- {Dake} Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible
- {MacArthur} The MacArthur Study Bible
- {Thompson} The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible.
- {McGee} Thru the Bible Commentary Series by Dr. J. Vernon McGee

If other references, commentators, or Bible translations are used they will be identified in the text.

INTRODUCTION

WRITER: There is no clear answer as to who wrote the books of First and Second Samuel. The easy answer would be that Samuel wrote them but he dies in First Samuel chapter 25. Therefore, who wrote the rest of it?

- {David Guzik} *“We don’t know who wrote the books; certainly, Samuel was a major contributor, but much of the book takes place after his death in 1 Samuel 25. They are called the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, not because he wrote all of them, but because they describe his great ministry in Israel and the legacy of it.”*
- {David E. Malick from www.Bible.org} *“It must be admitted that with the current evidence one cannot affirm without reservation who wrote the book. It is possible that Samuel was compiled from the writings of the prophets Samuel, Gad, and Nathan whose works were preserved within the nation. It is also possible that Samuel wrote chapters 1-25 and then Gad and/or Nathan completed the remainder of the book.”*
- {Dake} *“Samuel, David, Nathan, and Gad no doubt kept the original records from which Isaiah compiled the book about 743-683 B.C.”*
- {McGee} *“Our title identifies the name of Samuel with these first two historical books. This is not because he is the writer, although we do believe that he is the writer of a good portion of it. It is because*

his story occurs first, and he figures prominently as the one who poured the anointing oil on both Saul and David. Samuel, then, is considered the writer of 1 Samuel up to the twenty-fifth chapter, which records his death. Apparently, Nathan and Gad completed the writing of these books. We learn this from 1 Samuel 10:25 and 1 Chronicles 29:29.”

DATE: David Malick places the writing of this book sometime during the divided monarchy and yet before the fall of the northern kingdom. (If this is true, Samuel could not be the only author, nor could Gad or Nathan.) He uses the following Scriptures from within First and Second Samuel to establish his point.

- Israel and Judah are distinguished (11:8; 17:52; 18:16)
- Ziklag, the city of Philistia where David is sent by Achish, is described as belonging “to the kings of Judah to this day” (27:6). This not only speaks of a time after the divided monarchy, but of a time when there had been “kings” in Judah.
- However, there does not seem to be any indication in the text that the northern kingdom had fallen.
- Therefore, it seems best to place the writing of Samuel sometime after the divided monarchy (931 B.C.) but before the fall of Samaria (722/21 B.C.).

STATISTICS: {Dake} *The First Book of Samuel is the 9th book of the Bible. It contains 31 chapters and 810 verses.*

BACKGROUND AND WHY THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN: In older Bibles, especially the King James Version, the title of this book is “The First Book of Samuel otherwise called The First Book of the Kings”. The reason for this is because there was an evolution of the structure of the books of First Samuel through Second Kings. At one time, they were all one book. Then they were divided into two books. The first two, now known as First and Second Samuel, were one book of Kings and dealt with the establishment of the monarchy in Israel. The second book, now known as First and Second Kings, dealt with the “glory days” of the kingdom under Solomon, to the division of the kingdom, and, finally, to the destruction of the kingdom. According to *The Layman’s Bible Commentary*, the Greek version of the Old Testament, known as the *Septuagint*, changed the division of these two books into four books under a single name of First to Fourth Kings. At some later point in history, the titles were changed to what we have now.

As we’ll see from the commentators below, you cannot separate First Samuel from Second Samuel. Therefore, everything that is said will address both books as one.

- {Matthew Henry} *This book, and that which follows it, bear the name of Samuel in the title, not because he was the penman of them (except of so much of them as fell within his own time, to the twenty-fifth chapter of the first book, in which we have an account of his death), but because the first book begins with a large account of him, his birth and childhood, his life and government; and the rest of these two volumes that are denominated from him contains the history of the reigns of Saul and David, who were both anointed by him. And, because the history of these two kings takes up the greatest part of these books, the Vulgar Latin calls them the First and Second Books of the Kings, and the two that follow the Third and Fourth, which the titles in our English Bibles take notice of with an alias: otherwise called the First Book of the Kings, etc.*

- {F.B. Meyer} *“Samuel the Prophet” bridges the gulf between Samson the Judge and David the King: and there is deep significance in the fact that his name is identified with the two Books of Scripture which describe this great transitional period, every event of which was affected by his influence.*
- {The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia} *In the Hebrew Canon, the two Books of Samuel were reckoned as one, and formed the third division of the Earlier Prophets. The one book bore the title “Samuel” (shemu’el), not because Samuel was believed to be the author, but because his life and acts formed the main theme of the book, or at least of its earlier part. Nor was the Book of Samuel separated by any real division in subject matter or continuity of style from the Book of Kings, which in the original formed a single book, not two as in the English and other modern versions. The history was carried forward without interruption; and the record of the life of David, begun in Samuel, was completed in Kings. The division into four books, but not the Greek title, was then adopted in the Latin translation, where, however, the influence of Jerome secured the restoration of the Hebrew names, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. Jerome’s example was universally followed, and the fourfold division with the Hebrew titles found a place in all subsequent versions of the Old Testament Scriptures.*

The narrative of the two Books of Samuel covers a period of about a hundred years, from the close of the unsettled era of the Judges to the establishment and consolidation of the kingdom under David. It is therefore a record of the changes, national and constitutional, which accompanied this growth and development of the national life, at the close of which the Israelites found themselves a united people under the rule of a king to whom all owed allegiance, controlled and guided by more or less definitely established institutions and laws. This may be described as the general purpose and main theme of the books, to trace the advance of the people under divine guidance to a state of settled prosperity and union in the promised land, and to give prominence to theocratic rule which was the essential condition of Israel’s life as the people of God under all the changing forms of early government. The narrative therefore centers itself around the lives of the three men, Samuel, Saul and David, who were chiefly instrumental in the establishment of the monarchy, and to whom it was due more than to any others that Israel emerged from the depressed and disunited state in which the tribes had remained during the period of the rule of the Judges, and came into possession of a combined and effective national life. If the formal separation therefore into two books be disregarded, the history of Israel as it is narrated in “Samuel” is most naturally divided into three parts, which are followed by an appendix recording words and incidents which for some reason had not found a place in the general narrative:

- *The life and rule of Samuel (1 Samuel 1-15) (death 1 Samuel 25:1).*
- *The life, reign and death of Saul (1 Samuel 16-2Sa 1).*
- *The reign and acts of David to the suppression of the two rebellions of Absalom and Sheba (2 Samuel 2-20).*
- *Appendix; other incidents in the reign of David, the names of his chief warriors and his So or Psalm of Praise (2 Samuel 21-24).*

AUTHOR’S NOTE: Throughout the text, I have added what I call “**Saints’ Principles.**” The intention of these principles is to point out truths, as I see them, based on something that has occurred in the Scripture.

Chapter 1

In this chapter, we will learn of the faithfulness of God in answering prayer. We'll also see, though, that God does not compromise His Word. He would rather have something undone than His Word compromised. We'll see this in the prayer of Samuel's mother and the birth of Samuel the judge and priest.

1 Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite: As we open the First Book of Samuel, we're first introduced to his father, Elkanah, from whom we obtain Samuel's lineage. Easton's Bible Dictionary says this about Elkanah: “[He was a] Levite of the line of Heman the singer, although he does not seem to have performed any of the usual Levitical offices. He was father of Samuel the prophet (1 Chronicles 6:27,34). He was ‘an Ephrathite’ (1 Samuel 1:1,4,8), but lived at Ramah, a man of wealth and high position. He had two wives, Hannah, who was the mother of Samuel, and Peninnah.” The Scripture reference in First Chronicles is very important because it lets us know that Samuel was of the priestly tribe of Levi. The text makes it sound like he was from the tribe of Ephraim, one of Joseph's sons, but he was only a resident of that region. Why is this important? Samuel will be involved with many of the duties of the priest throughout this book. In spite of his availability and desire, God had made it clear regarding the functions of the Levites. We often say that God will use who is available but He will NOT bend His Word no matter the availability. Therefore, He had to raise up someone in obedience to His Word as He is about to do with Samuel.

2 And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. Elkanah was a good man but practiced polygamy. Multiple marriages were never in the original mind of God but probably grew up after the time of the judges when “every man did what was right in his own eyes.” The New Testament took us back to the original mind of God. {McGee} “*Elkanah had two wives. Perhaps you are thinking that God approved of this. No, my friend, as you read this record you will find that God did not approve of his having two wives. The fact that certain things are recorded in Scripture does not mean that God sanctions them. He is merely giving you the facts concerning history, persons, and events.*”

Hannah had no children so that the glory of God could be manifest through her. Does that mean that everything we go through is done for God's glory? Of course not! Many, and probably most, things are due to the deceitfulness of the enemy or our sins against our own bodies. (For example, if the doctor gives you instructions for your health and you don't follow them or if you know something will make you sick if you eat it and you eat it anyway, you have sinned against your body – you have defiled the temple of the Holy Ghost...and don't say that you believed God! Just don't do it.)

3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there. Within this one verse, the stage is set for many things that lie ahead.

First, the tabernacle is at Shiloh. Shiloh was a city of Ephraim on the north side of Bethel where the Ark of the Covenant resided until the Philistines stole it (we'll see that later in our study). According to the archeologists, “no spot in Central Palestine could be more secluded than this early sanctuary, nothing more featureless than the landscape around; so featureless, indeed, the landscape and so secluded the spot that from the time of Jerome till its re-discovery by Dr. Robinson in 1838 the very site was forgotten and unknown.”

So there is nothing special about Shiloh except the presence of God is there. It's interesting that they put it here so that God could be exalted and not the landscape or the location.

Second, we are introduced to the wicked priests of that time – Eli, the high priest, and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Eli loved the Lord but refused to keep his sons in check in spite of knowing of their great sins. They used that opportunity to run wild. {McGee} *“Going to worship God at the tabernacle was not all that you might suppose it to be. Actually it was a dangerous place to be, because these sons of Eli were “sons of Belial,” or sons of the devil, if you please.”*

Third, we see the piety of Elkanah. He's living all that he knows so he takes his family yearly to the Tabernacle probably during the Passover. We'll soon see quite a comparison of him to the sons of Eli.

4 And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: 5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. Amplified Bible **4 When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he would give to Peninnah his wife and all her sons and daughters portions [of the sacrificial meat]. 5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion, for he loved Hannah, but the Lord had given her no children.** Elkanah showed favoritism toward Hannah in giving her a double portion even though Peninnah and her children only received single portions because Hannah was the wife he really loved.

6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. NLT **So Peninnah would taunt Hannah and make fun of her because the Lord had kept her from having children.** It was typical at this time to “blame” everything that happened on the Lord. In this case, though, it may have been true because God had a season in mind to bring forth Samuel. Also, look at the attitude of the “blessed” wife (the one with children) in this situation. {JF&B} *“Domestic broils in the houses of polygamists are of frequent occurrence, and the most [frequent] cause of them has always been jealousy of the husband's superior affection, as in this case of Hannah.”* Peninnah was blessed with children but she was not blessed with the love of her husband and she responded in an ugly manner because of this.

7 And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. The first part of this verse deals with what happened year by year but the last part deals with the last incident.

8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons? Elkanah loved Hannah and did what he could to comfort her. After all, this was a feasting time and her mood probably brought everyone down.

9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. 10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. 11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. The last part of this prayer is very important – Hannah has not only vowed to give her child to the Lord but that he would be a Nazarite. The vow of the Nazarite is described in Numbers 6. The highest level of consecration to God in the Old Testament was the vow of the Nazarite. Let's remind ourselves of this vow (we studied this in prior studies) out of Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary:

“[A Nazarite was a] person who took a vow to separate from certain worldly things and to consecrate himself to God (Num. 6:1–8) [for a 30, 60, or 90 day period]. Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist were the only ‘Nazarites for life’ recorded in the Bible. Before they were born, their parents took their vows for them. Once a person decided to make himself ‘holy to the Lord’ (Num. 6:8) for some special service, he then agreed to abstain from wine. This prohibition was so strict that it included grapes, grape juice, and raisins. Perhaps this was to guard the Nazarite from being controlled by any spirit other than God’s (Prov. 20:1; Eph. 5:17–18). While under the Nazarite vow, a person also refused to cut his hair, including shaving (Num. 6:5). The purpose of this long hair was to serve as a visible sign of the Nazarite’s consecration to the Lord (Num. 6:7). A Nazarite also refused to touch or go near a dead body because this would make him ceremonially unclean. The Nazarite could not even help to bury his own relatives. The Nazarite vow was a part of the old law and is not imposed on modern Christians. But because it was personal and voluntary, we do have much to learn from this Old Testament practice. God wants us to live a separated, holy life and to abstain from things of the world. Christians must be dedicated to God’s service not just for 30 days or one year but for a lifetime.”

Only Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist were Nazarites all of their lives. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, *“the most prominent outward mark of the Nazarite was long, flowing hair, which was cut at the expiration of the vow and offered as a sacrifice.”*

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. 13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. 14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. Eli has lost all spiritual perception and gives an answer completely motivated by the flesh but he’s still trying to maintain the sanctity of the Tabernacle in spite of the feast that’s going on. {McGee} *“Eli was the high priest, and he saw this distraught woman come to the tabernacle and pray. Notice his reaction, which is an insight into the conditions of that day. The sons of Eli drank and caroused there. Eli knew it but had shut his eyes to it—he was an indulgent father. When Hannah prayed with such zeal in her heart, Eli thought she was drunk. Do you know why? Others who were drunk had come to the house of the Lord. This place of worship wasn’t really the best place to come in that day.”*

15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. 17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. {Matthew Henry} *“...being high priest, as one having authority he blessed her in the name of the Lord, and, though he knew not what the particular blessing was that she had been praying for, yet he puts his Amen to it.”* Eli may have not been in the will of God but he was in a position that God honored therefore his word carried weight. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: We have to learn to honor the position over the person.**

18 And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. 2 Chronicles 20:20b **Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.** Hannah believed the Lord’s servant, so she obtained the promise of this verse. Her actions show that she believes what he said.

19 And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. 20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name SAMUEL, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Hannah's tears and grief did not move God but when she believed God's servant, she received the answer to her prayers.

21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. 22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. 23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. No doubt Hannah had shared her prayer with her husband and, as a Levite, a servant of God, he agreed with it and saw that the vow must be performed. Not only does he agree with it but he encourages her so that she can fulfill her vow. The New Living Translation gives this translation of what he said, "**Stay here for now, and may the Lord help you keep your promise.**" Hannah probably also needed this time to be with her son before she fulfilled her promise to the Lord.

24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young. NIV *After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh.* {Dake} "...other versions read, a three year old bullock, and this seems to be the right idea for the next verse reads 'a bullock'." Along with the bull, or three bulls – the number is somewhat irrelevant, the family brought one ephah (e-fā) of flour (a little over a bushel) and a bottle of wine. How old was Samuel at this time? There are at least three different thoughts (per Matthew Henry) but no Scripture to support any of them: (1) he was about 3 years old because he was weaned from his mother's breast; (2) he was about 8-10 years old because he was weaned from childish things; (3) he was about 12 years old as the Lord Jesus was when He came to the Temple (per Dake). We know one thing of the Scripture, though, and that is that he was young. Therefore, he was probably somewhere between 3 - 10 years old but it would probably be more accurate to lean toward the younger age.

25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. The slaying of the bull was an offering. She did not count God as her debtor because she brought her only child to the Lord but she comes humbly asking His blessing and favor on her gift. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** No matter what we give, we can never repay the Lord for His goodness to us.

26 And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. 27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Samuel was asked of the Lord. He was the response to prayer.

28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there. Hannah was a woman of great integrity – a woman that God could use. She made a vow in verse 11 when she had no child. Now she has birthed the child, weaned the child, and had a chance to love the child but none of these things will discourage her from keeping her vow. Elkanah has also

proven to be a great husband because he has agreed with his wife in giving up the first-born son of the wife that he loves. {McGee} *“Lent is definitely a poor word to describe Hannah’s gift of Samuel to the Lord. Her decision to give him completely over to the service of the Lord is irrevocable.”*

It is unfortunate that the original editors chose to break this chapter at this point. We have a glimpse of the spirit of Hannah in the first ten verses of Chapter 2 as she offers a prayer of thanksgiving and praise in spite of giving her only son to the Lord. In 2:11, we see that Samuel immediately begins to work for the Lord in the tabernacle in spite of his very young age. 1 Samuel 2:11 – ***And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.***

Chapter 2

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: God has a way of doing something and we must follow His pattern or suffer the consequences. These consequences can extend to our entire family. This chapter should definitely be used as a warning engaged in the ministry. Finally, we'll also get one last glimpse into the wonderful spirit of Hannah and how the Lord blessed her for her sacrifice of her only son.

Hannah's Prayer of Thanksgiving

1 And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. 2 There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. 3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. 4 The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. 5 They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. 6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. 7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. 8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them. 9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. 10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed. Hannah has a wonderful spirit of giving in that she has given her ONLY son to the Lord and yet praises Him because He has given her the OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** We must view the opportunity to give as a privilege and not a burden.

11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest. {JF&B} “He must have been engaged in some occupation suited to his tender age, as in playing upon the cymbals, or other instruments of music; in lighting the lamps, or similar easy and interesting services.”

The Sons of Eli

12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. {JF&B} “[These men were] not only careless and irreligious, but men loose in their actions, and vicious and scandalous in their habits. Though professionally engaged in sacred duties, they were not only strangers to the power of religion in the heart, but they had thrown off its restraints.” The sons of Eli were “children of the devil” or “sons of worthlessness”. They had a number of sin problems, which set the stage for the remainder of this chapter. As we go through the chapter, I'll point out the sins that I noticed. **SIN #1: They didn't know the Lord.** How can you not have a relationship with the Lord and yet minister to the Lord in the Temple? (Don't be too surprised – this exists today. There are preachers, pastors, and religious leaders that don't know the Lord. They are caught up with the ego and glamour of their position.) These characteristics don't mesh and the Lord is about to judge them for their sins. They did whatever they wanted to do, whenever they wanted to do it without regard for the Law of God, as we'll see in the next few verses.

13 And the priest's custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh hook of three teeth in his hand; 14 And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh hook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. 15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant

came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden (boiled) flesh of thee, but raw. 16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force. Here are some of the actions of the sons of Eli. To understand the gravity of their sins, we need to go back to the Law of Moses to understand what should have been done.

- The Law provided a means for the priests that serve the Lord at the altar to be taken care of from the sacrifices of the people. Deuteronomy 18:3 Amplified Bible ***And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach.*** God made provision to take care of the priests but it was very specific. Remember, the sacrifice belonged to God and He chose to share it. The priests did not have the luxury of just reaching in and taking whatever they wanted but specific portions were given to them. **SIN #2: The sons of Eli did not appreciate their role as priests.** Compare their attitude to that of Paul's – 1 Timothy 1:12 ***And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.*** Every preacher and missionary ought to be praising God for the great opportunity to minister before Him. These men had no regard for the fact that the sacrifice (and that's the key word – it was a sacrifice in order to present it) represented the sins of the people or an offering of thanksgiving and it belonged to God.
- The fat of the sacrifice was a precious part of the sacrifice. Leviticus 4:31 NIV ***He shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.*** The fat was burned to the Lord as a pleasing aroma. However, the sons of Eli came to take the meat before the fat was burned for themselves. This particular offering was made as atonement for sin but while the people repented for their sins, these thugs came to steal their offering. One writer speculated that they wanted the raw meat to sell it to make more gain from the offerings. They had no regard for the Lord and they went so far as to hire servants who would not have a problem in forcing others to comply with their sin. **SIN #3: The sons of Eli were greedy for gain and intruded into a part of the ministry exclusively reserved for God.**

17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. The result of the actions of the sons of Eli was that the people looked down on the offering of the Lord. Even today, this attitude continues to exist because of the actions of many preachers when it comes to directing the people of God to give an offering. Some have taken more for themselves than was rightfully theirs, have coerced the people to give, and have taken of that part which should have been used in the Lord's work. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Preachers must be careful lest we fall into the same judgment that fell on the sons of Eli!** {McGee} *“Friends, we need to be careful about how we live our lives and how we run our churches. This idea of shutting our eyes to sin in the church and trying to cover it up just drives people away from God.”* **SIN #4: The sons of Eli caused people to HATE the Lord's offering.**

The Life of Young Samuel

18 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. NLT But Samuel, though he was only a boy, served the Lord. He wore a linen garment like that of a priest. We had an

idea from an earlier verse what Samuel was doing while ministering to the Lord. We also see he was clothed with a linen ephod (ěf'ōd'). According to www.JewishEncyclopedia.com, "...this word has two meanings; in one group of passages it signifies a garment; in another, very probably an image." We also see from www.newadvent.org, "...an ephod was worn by Samuel when serving in the time of Eli (1 Samuel 2:18), by the eighty-five priests slain by Doeg in the sanctuary of Nob (1 Samuel 22:18), and by David dancing before the Ark (2 Samuel 6:14). This garment is called the linen ephod; its general form may be supposed to have resembled the ephod of the high-priest, but its material was not the celebrated fine white linen, nor does it appear to have been adorned with the [various] colors of the high-priest's ephod." It seems to be the intent of the writer to express the importance of Samuel at that time even as a boy. His work was so important to the Lord that he is compared to David and adult priests later in the same book. **SAINTS'**

PRINCIPLE: Children should not be discouraged from working for the Lord in spite of their tender age.



High Priest Wearing the Ephod

19 Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Although Samuel was gone from home, he was not forgotten. He still had an ongoing relationship with his parents.

20 And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home. 21 And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD. For the faithfulness of Hannah and Elkanah, the Lord blessed them with five additional children. **SAINTS'**

PRINCIPLE: You can't beat God giving.

Eli's Pitiful Attempt to Control His Sons

22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Message Bible **By this time Eli was very old. He kept getting reports on how his sons were ripping off the people and sleeping with the women who helped out at the sanctuary.** This verse gives us insight into the other sins of the sons of Eli and the response of Eli to their actions. Eli was not only the high priest but also the 15th judge of Israel. He had the position and authority to handle this without any problem. His sons' actions were horrible but when we understand the role and position of these women, their sin was even more appalling. {JF&B} "*This was an institution of holy women of a strictly ascetic order, who had relinquished worldly cares and devoted themselves to the Lord; an institution which continued down to the time of Christ.*" These women were like Anna the prophetess in the time of Christ who lived in the Temple to serve the Lord all the time. No doubt

the sons of Eli used their position and influence to seduce these women to do horrible deeds. {Matthew Henry} *“To have gone to the harlots’ houses, the common prostitutes, would have been abominable wickedness, but to use the interest which as priests they had in those women that had devout dispositions and were religiously inclined, and to bring them to commit their wickedness, was such horrid impiety as one can scarcely think it possible that men who called themselves priests should ever be guilty of. No words can sufficiently express the villainy of such practices as these.”* **SIN #5: The sons of Eli used their influence and position to corrupt the lives of others.**

This verse starts with the words, *“Eli was very old”* but the horrible acts of his sons was beyond excusing by his age. He was still the high priest and a judge. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: If the institutions of God cannot be conducted in accordance with the direction of the Lord, they should not be conducted at all. In other words, if you can’t do it God’s way, don’t do it all.** He should have pulled his sons down and waited for God to send help. The power of God is well able to do this.

23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Eli admits that he knows there’s a problem. He knows of their sins but, for some unknown reason, does no more than talk about it. So what should he have done? He should have done whatever was necessary to preserve the sanctity of the sanctuary.

24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord’s people to transgress. This is why the sins of the sons of Eli were so horrible – the people looked at their actions and were emboldened to do the same thing. **SIN #6: The sons of Eli made others bold to follow their terrible example of sin.**

In 1983, I heard our then Presiding Bishop, Bishop J.O. Patterson, in his Official Day message rebuke the preachers of the Church of God in Christ for actions that gave encouragement for the people to sin in the same manner. However, nothing “official” was done about it (church constitution change, by-laws change, etc.) so the rebuke had no “teeth”. Eli’s rebuke had no “teeth” also because his sons knew he won’t do anything about their actions.

25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them. Message Bible **But they were far gone in disobedience and refused to listen to a thing their father said. So God, who was fed up with them, decreed their death.** In this verse and the next, we have a comparison of when grace runs out and when grace is extended. The sons of Eli had crossed the “grace line” and God had started the process in motion to destroy them. However, Eli must share the responsibility for this. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Just because we’re under grace, don’t think that God does not still start the process in motion to destroy (see Acts 5 – Ananias and Sapphira; Acts 11:23 – the death of Herod; and the entire Book of Revelation).** **SIN #7: The sons of Eli refused to obey their father.**

26 And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the LORD, and also with men. Message Bible **But the boy Samuel was very much alive, growing up, blessed by God and popular with the people.** In comparison to the sons of Eli who have crossed their “grace line”, Samuel has great favor with the Lord and with men. Even though he’s a child, he is helping to bring back the sanctity of the Sanctuary through his actions.

Bad News Comes to Eli

27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? God uses the man of God to go back to the time of Aaron when the people first came out of Egypt. Remember, Eli was the high priest and of the house of Aaron.

{Dake} MAN OF GOD – God always has His man when one is needed to go on some special mission for Him. He can and does move in every crisis of human history to warn, rebuke, judge, and otherwise intervene in the affairs of men. Moses was the first to be called man of God (Dt. 33:1). It was a term among the common people for a prophet who was a spokesman for God. The term is found 75 times in Scripture.

28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? The high priest had a special blessing of being able to minister before the Lord and to share in the Lord's offerings.

29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? NLT **So why do you scorn my sacrifices and offerings? Why do you give your sons more honor than you give me—for you and they have become fat from the best offerings of my people Israel!** **LEADERS' PRINCIPLE:** Beware of how you handle the gifts that come from the people of God!

30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Eli was a descendent of the youngest son of Aaron. There was an "entitlement" to the priesthood as a son of Aaron but God is about to cut that off. It was finally completed during the time of Solomon. 1 Kings 2:27 **So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfill the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.**

31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. 32 And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. The commentators say that tradition held that there was never a man over 18 years old in Eli's family after this time. Eli was now a very old man but he will be the last to be satisfied with such long life.

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

34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. If everything else was unclear, this Word was very clear – the two sons of Eli, the ones that he pampered so much, will both die in the same day.

35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. Ultimately, this Word is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer of Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 3:1 **Wherefore, holy**

brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and HIGH PRIEST of our profession, Christ Jesus. He goes on to say in Hebrews 7:17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest FOR EVER after the order of Melchisedec.

*36 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread. Message Bible **Survivors from your family will come to him begging for handouts, saying, 'Please, give me some priest work, just enough to put some food on the table.'** How ironic that Eli and his sons never appreciated the great privilege of the priesthood. In the future, his family members will come to the priest begging for any kind of work just to survive because they didn't appreciate what they already had.*

Chapter 3

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Understanding the voice of the Lord takes training and time spent with God. We need the wise counsel of mentors to make sure that we don't miss what God has to say. However, once He speaks, we are responsible for what He said.

The Lord Calls Samuel

1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision. {JF&B} “[The Word of the Lord] was very rarely known to the Israelites; and in point of fact only two prophets are mentioned as having appeared during the whole administration of the judges (Judges 4:4; 6:8).” In addition, there was “no open vision” or publicly recognized prophet to whom the people could resort for guidance and direction from the Lord. Because of this, any Word received was viewed as precious. What a different time we live in now where we take the Word of the Lord for granted!

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; 3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; The writer paints quite a setting leading up the call of Samuel: it's nighttime and Eli has gone to bed. He's older now than he was in the prior chapter (one writer speculates that Samuel is about 12 years old at this time) and his eyesight has begun to fade. {Matthew Henry} “*And he sought retirement the more because his eyes began to wax dim, an affliction which came justly upon him for winking at his sons' faults.*” It was very late in the evening (most speculate that it was after midnight) because the Temple candles have been put out and Samuel has gone to sleep having concluded his work for the day. It was at this time when everything was still and all minds were clear of the business of the day that the Lord spoke to Samuel. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Sometimes we're too busy and preoccupied to hear from God.

4 That THE LORD CALLED SAMUEL: and he answered, Here am I. 5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. What a marvelous spirit we see in young Samuel. The prior passages paint a picture of a tired boy but when Eli called (or so he thought) he RAN. There's no grumbling or murmuring – this is a spirit that God can (and is about to) bless.

6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Samuel repeats his actions from before, still without grumbling or murmuring.

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. Message Bible *This all happened before Samuel knew God for himself. It was before the revelation of God had been given to him personally.* This was not a criticism of Samuel as much as instruction for us. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** We need to become intimate with God through His Word so that when He speaks, we understand Who is speaking.

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Eli and Samuel had a history together so Eli knew that Samuel was not involved in some childish game.

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

hear the voice of the Lord and how to respond. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Young Christians cannot rely on chance and “trial and error” in understanding the voice of the Lord – they must be taught.

SAINTS' QUESTION: **So How Do I Know the Voice of the Lord?** To help with this question, I have included some notes from our study in the Gospel of St. John (John 10:3-5). The Lord’s statements in this chapter often bring up this same question even though His answer seems clear if you understand the background.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. {MacArthur} “The [porter] was a hired under shepherd who recognized the true shepherd of the flock, opened the gate for Him, assisted the shepherd in caring for the flock, and especially guarded them at night. **the sheep hear his voice.** Near Eastern shepherds stand at different locations outside the sheep pen, sounding out their own unique calls, which their sheep recognize. As a result, the sheep gather around the shepherd. **he calls his own sheep by name.** This shepherd goes even further by calling each sheep by its own special name.”

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. {MacArthur} “Unlike Western shepherds who drive the sheep from the side or behind, often using sheep dogs, Near Eastern shepherds LEAD their flocks, their voice calling them to move on. This draws a remarkable picture of the master/disciple relationship. New Testament spiritual leadership is always by example, i.e., a call to imitate conduct.”

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. The nature of the sheep is that it does not recognize the voice of strangers. This must be our nature also. Amplified Bible **They will never [on any account] follow a stranger, but will run away from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers or recognize their call.** These sheep not only do not listen to strange, bizarre or weird voices, they flee from these voices, because they don’t know (understand or recognize) the voice of these strangers. How can you tell if a voice is the voice of God? The same way the sheep found out how to do it. They spent time in the flock, learning the shepherd. Hebrews 3:10 **Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do always err in their heart; and THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN MY WAYS.** We must know His ways and we find His ways in His Word!

10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. Samuel obeys the voice of Eli, hears the call of God, and receives his first prophetic word from the Lord. God is about to set him up as His spokesperson and restore the Word to His people. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** God is not going to speak when He has no one to use.

11 And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. God is about to do something that will cause quite a “buzz” in Israel. It will restore the fear of God among the people as His judgment on Ananias and Sapphira did.

12 In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. Between this chapter and the previous chapter, some period had gone by where Eli had a chance to move the hand of God through repentance but did not do it. Now God promises that when He begins to work, He will not and cannot be stopped.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. {Matthew Henry} “In short, the iniquity was this: His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. Or, as it is in the Hebrew, he frowned not upon

them. If he did show his dislike of their wicked courses, yet not to that degree that he ought to have done: he did reprove them, but he did not punish them, for the mischief they did, nor deprive them of their power to do mischief, which as a father, high priest, and judge, he might have done.”

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever. Does this mean that Eli was never forgiven? No, the judgment came to the “house of Eli”. This did mean, though, that his family would bear the burden of his sin forever and would never have the opportunity to return to their former place of prominence. When you view the judgment in this manner, think of how unfair Eli’s actions have been to succeeding generations who may have wanted to really succeed in life. This is all because he refused to repent.

15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. Samuel’s first encounter with God has been troubling. He is not excited because God spoke to him. He does not feel ambitious to take over for Eli. He probably lost his night’s sleep thinking about what God said. {Matthew Henry} *“No good man can take pleasure in bringing evil tidings, especially not Samuel to Eli, the pupil to the tutor whom he loves and honors.”* It’s obvious from Samuel’s reaction that he is no longer a little boy but probably closer to being a teenager if not already at that age.

Samuel Begins His Ministry

16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. 17 And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. 18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good. 19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. NLT **As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him, and everything Samuel said proved to be reliable.** {Dake} *“[Samuel] spoke only as God inspired him so that every prediction was literally fulfilled. He also gave only sound and divine advice to Israel, so that all his counsels were received as coming from Jehovah.”*

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD. Dan was the tribe at the very top of the country and Beersheba was at the very bottom toward the Arabian Desert. The verse is trying to get across the fact that everyone knew of the call on Samuel’s life. This is an important point because Israel is not going to take advantage of that knowledge in the next chapter.

21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD. {David Guzik} *“God reveals Himself by His Word. Whenever God is moving, He will reveal Himself by the Word of the Lord.”*

Chapter 4

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: God means what He says. He may take time to execute His judgment but He will do exactly what He said.

A Battle with The Philistines

1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. {JF&B} “The character of Samuel as a prophet was now fully established. It is not improbable that the rising influence of the young prophet had alarmed the jealous fears of the Philistines. They had kept the Israelites in some degree of subjection ever since the death of Samson and were determined, by further crushing, to prevent the possibility of their being trained by the counsels, and under the leadership, of Samuel, to reassert their national independence.”

2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. It was a rare occurrence when the people of God lost so many in a battle. This was part of the Lord’s benefits toward them but the nation is under sin. Remember from chapter 2 that the sons of Eli have caused the people to sin.

SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Regardless of the source, sin must be judged.

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. Two things happened here that often happen today. First, a problem was recognized. They knew that such a horrible defeat was unheard of. Compare it today – could this country again handle a single battle like D-Day when over 4,000 soldiers were killed? Israel was used to losing NO ONE. It’s good they saw that there was a problem however another problem comes in the answer to the problem. Second, they answered the problem without consulting God. Instead of doing like Joshua did when the army was defeated at Ai and going to God, they came up with their own conclusion. Their conclusion was not based on God’s counsel or God’s prophet. It was based on superstition. {McGee} “This reveals the superstition and paganism of these people who thought there was some merit in the object. The merit was not in that box because God was not in that box. You cannot get God into a box! The merit was in the presence and person of God.” Just like these people, Christians today follow the methods of others not based on the direction of God but based on the superstitious notion that there was some type of “luck” in the method that was used.

4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. The people had one notion in mind but God intended to use this incident to start the judgment on the house of Eli. (Notice that the last chapter ends and this chapter begins by celebrating the ministry of Samuel but the Scripture does not say that he was consulted in this.)

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. 6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. 7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. 8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. This is a sad sight! We have two groups, one that is supposed to be religious,

that are both superstitious. The Israelites are excited about the Ark but they have no life to move God to do anything. The Philistines are already superstitious and they view the Ark as an idol. Everyone is excited but for the wrong reasons.

9 Be strong and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. 10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. This battle was even more severe than the first and now the total death toll is up to 34,000 soldiers!

Judgment Begins on the House of Eli

1 Peter 4:17 *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. This was the only time the Ark of the Covenant was ever captured. This is a significant turning point in the history of Israel. This is also a significant turning point in the judgment of Eli for the death of his two sons in the same day was the sign given by the man of God in chapter 2 – 1 Samuel 2:34 *And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.*

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. This man is bringing bad news. One can tell just by looking at his clothes being torn and dirt on his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. 14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. Eli sat in a prominent position as judge waiting for news. I believe that down in his heart he knows he made a great mistake. The Ark went into battle in the times of Moses but Eli wasn't living a Moses life. He didn't know what to expect and his evil sons had gone with it.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. God gave Eli ample time to repent. He is 98 years old with a clear mind even though he's now blind.

16 And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? 17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. 18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. As the priest of God, Eli was responsible for the Ark. The great slaughter of 30,000 that day was not what moved. Even the loss of his children did not move him. However, when he heard that the Ark of the Covenant of God was now in the hands of those that didn't know God, it was all he could stand. He fell backward and broke his neck and died.

Eli had positive points along with his negatives. Every writer agrees that God's judgment on him was so great because he was God's man for the time and he didn't appreciate his position. He was responsible for the tutelage of Samuel, which he undertook, it appears, with a mission to not allow him to be like his own sons.

He spoke into the life of Hannah TWICE and his word brought forth children. He was a blessed man who came into the ministry late in life (he was 98 at his death and judged Israel for 40 years) and a great example of God using older people. However, he did not appreciate the ministry the Lord had given him. He made his sons wealthy and himself obese but did not help the people to live right. {Matthew Henry} “*Yet we must observe, to Eli’s praise, that it was the loss of the ark that was his death, not the slaughter of his sons.*”

Judgment Extends Into Eli’s Family

19 *And his daughter in law, Phinehas’ wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.* This woman was the wife of a wicked man. Perhaps she had endured his “trysts” with the women of the Sanctuary in silence for it appears that she had some heart for God. {Matthew Henry} “*Her concern for the death of her husband and father-in-law was an evidence of her natural affection; but her much greater concern for the loss of the ark was an evidence of her pious and devout affection to God and sacred things.*” This awful news has triggered her labor and she will not survive what is about to occur.

20 *And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it.* How could she be happy under these circumstances? The army is decimated, her husband and father-in-law are dead, and the Ark of the Covenant is in the hands of such vile people as the Philistines. The women around her are trying to cheer her up but she has given up on life and is about to join her husband and father-in-law.

21 *And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. 22* *And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.* The name “Ichabod” meant “inglorious” or “the glory had departed”. This woman appeared to have a heart for God but she married into a curse. {Matthew Henry} “*If God go, the glory goes, and all good goes. Woe unto us if He depart!*”

Chapter 5

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The Philistines have returned from their victory over Israel with the Ark of the Covenant. They don't understand what a terrible mistake they have made. Don't get caught up with messing with spiritual things that you really don't understand. The end result could be devastating.

The Philistines Put the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple of Dagon

1 And the Philistines took the Ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. 2 When the Philistines took the Ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. 3 And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the



*Ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. {JF&B} “Stately temples were erected in honor of this idol, which was the principal deity of the Philistines. It was represented under a monstrous combination of a human head, breast, and arms, joined to the belly and tail of a fish.” The Philistines could not see that God was speaking to them of His pre-eminence over this feeble god of stone. **EVERYONE’S PRINCIPLE: A telling sign of the powerlessness of the object of your worship is when YOU have to put it back in its place.** (If you want to recognize the awesome power of Jehovah God over every other “god”, just*

read His response to the complaints of Job in Job 38-41. Then you’ll see the reality of God.)

*4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the Ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him. 5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon’s house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day. The Philistines are still missing the point. God is saying that Dagon has eyes and cannot see, a mouth and cannot talk, and hands and cannot feel. If he wanted to come to a match against God, he could not. Therefore, what good are these things ... so He cut them off and had the statue give glory to God. Isaiah 42:8 **I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.***

*6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof. Amplified Bible **But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the people of Ashdod, and He caused [mice to spring up and there was] very deadly destruction and He smote the people with [very painful] tumors or boils, both Ashdod and its territory.** {JF&B} “[Emerods were] bleeding piles, hemorrhoids in a very aggravated form. As the heathens generally regarded diseases affecting the secret parts of the body as punishments from the gods for trespasses committed against themselves, the Ashdodites would be the more ready to look upon the prevailing epidemic as demonstrating the anger of God, already shown against their idol.” Psalm 78:66 **And He smote His enemies in the hinder parts: He put them to a perpetual reproach.***

The Ark Is Moved to Gath

7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The Ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. 8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the Ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the Ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the Ark of the God of Israel about thither. “Let’s not solve our problem but let’s just transfer it to someone else.” What a stupid solution! They came up with this because they were intent on holding on to their spoil of battle. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Sometimes you have to let things go in order to be blessed. What are you holding on to that’s keeping you bound?

9 And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts. NIV *But after they had moved it, the Lord’s hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumors.* The Philistines could see that God was speaking to them through this plague but when they refused to listen, the plague increased tremendously. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** God will use whatever method necessary to get our attention when we refuse to listen to Him.

The Philistines Try to Move the Ark to Ekron

10 Therefore they sent the Ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the Ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the Ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. 11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the Ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. 12 And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven. Message Bible *Those who didn’t die were hit with tumors. All over the city cries of pain and lament filled the air.* We end this chapter with great destruction in the land of the Philistines but they refuse to accept the simple answer. Too often people in general are the same way – the answer is in Christ but that answer may cause us to make personal sacrifices that we are not willing to make so we reject the right answer and try to find an alternative that won’t be as costly.

Chapter 6

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: After being tormented by the Ark of the Covenant, their stolen prize from the battle in chapter 4, the Philistines have had enough. We must learn to humble ourselves before God when He speaks to us through circumstances.

The Philistines Prepare to Return the Ark

1 And the Ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. It's amazing that the Philistines CHOSE to go through SEVEN MONTHS of this agony before they decided that they had enough.

SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: {Matthew Henry} "Sinners lengthen out their own miseries by obstinately refusing to part with their sins." How long will you go through before you wise up?

2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the Ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. 3 And they said, If ye send away the Ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. 4 Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords.

There were five major cities in the land of the Philistines with a Philistine lord over each one. The plagues caused by the presence of the Ark of the Covenant in a heathen land were on all of the cities over that seven-month period. In returning the Ark, the Philistine priests recommended that golden emerods (representative of the tumors) and golden mice be returned with the Ark as an offering for their trespass against God. According to Dake, the emerods marred their bodies and the mice marred their land. The country was swarmed with mice during this plague of emerods upon the people.

5 Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. God is using this situation, which started with the sins of His own people, for His own glory. He could not receive glory from His own but He will have His glory.

6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? {Matthew Henry} "It seems they were well acquainted with the Mosaic history, and could cite precedents out of it. This good use we should make of the remaining records of God's judgments upon obstinate sinners, we should by them be warned not to harden our hearts as they did. It is much cheaper to learn by other people's experience than by our own."

7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: NLT **Now build a new cart, and find two cows that have just given birth to calves. Make sure the cows have never been yoked to a cart. Hitch the cows to the cart, but shut their calves away from them in a pen.** The Philistines were still not convinced that God was behind their plagues so they devised this test with the intention that they might somehow keep their precious prize. They're not as concerned about the suffering (and deaths!) of the people as they are about keeping this prize of war. If they could somehow prove that the Ark was not responsible for their predicament, they could keep it.

Therefore, they devised this scheme – find two cows that have never been used as harness animals and that have just given birth. (The idea here was that the cows would rebel against the harness or refuse to take the

Ark back as they tried to get to their young – if they did this, they would know it was not the Ark and they could keep it.) In their ignorance of God’s Law, they also built a new cart. This was a move that God later punished Israel for, because they knew better. {McGee} “*God is not going to hold them responsible for this act. But Israel knew better, and we will see that God judged the Israelites because of the way they handled the ark. Why the difference? They knew better, friend.*” **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** There are some things that others can do and seem to “get away with” that you cannot. You know better and God is holding you to a higher standard for what He has blessed you to know. Know what God has for you.

8 And take the Ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. 9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us. {JF&B} “*Josephus says they were set a-going near a place where the road divided into two--the one leading back to Ekron, where were their calves, and the other to Beth-shemesh.*” Their intent was to be sure. If this test did not work, they would be convinced that they had been plagued for some other reason.

Why was the Ark so important to the Philistines that they were willing to risk suffering and death to keep it? I believe that, through demonic influence, they viewed this as a symbol of the powerlessness of God and the failure of God to deliver His people. The Ark of God had a great history and, if you recall from chapter 4, the Philistines had resigned themselves to die with dignity because of the presence of the Ark. For this reason, the plagues of the Philistines by God were also important because they had challenged His power.

10 And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: 11 And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emeralds. 12 And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh. {JF&B} “*Their frequent lowings attested their ardent longing for their young, and at the same time the supernatural influence that controlled their movements in a contrary direction.*” God was at hand in the direction of the cows and He was at hand in the humiliation of the Philistines.



The five lords of the Philistines (the leaders over Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath) went with the cows to make sure that this was not an accident and saw that their actions

caused the great suffering on the people.

The Ark Returns to Israel

13 And they of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the Ark, and rejoiced to see it. To understand the importance of what is written in the verses to come, we have to understand this town of Bethshemesh. {Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} “[Bethshemesh was] a town in the Valley of Sorek, 15 miles west of Jerusalem. It was situated northwest of

Judah's territory near the Philistine border (Josh. 15:10). It was probably the same city as Ir Shemesh (Josh. 19:41), which was allotted to the tribe of Dan. Later, Judah gave Beth Shemesh to the Levites (Josh. 21:16)."

The key point about Bethshemesh, it was a town of the Levites, the priests. Of course, when the Ark appeared, they knew what it was and they knew its importance and, of course, they were happy.

14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD. NLT **The cart came into the field of a man named Joshua and stopped beside a large rock. So the people broke up the wood of the cart for a fire and killed the cows and sacrificed them to the Lord as a burnt offering.** The priests knew what to do to honor the Lord for returning the Ark...but they'll soon act like they don't know what to do.

15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. **16 And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.** **17 And these are the golden emerods which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;** **18 And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite.**

19 And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter. NLT **But the Lord killed seventy men from Beth-shemesh because they looked into the Ark of the Lord. And the people mourned greatly because of what the Lord had done.** As you can see from the text, the King James Version says 50,070 men were killed but the New Living Translation says it was 70 men. The commentators explain that this was an obvious translation error because Bethshemesh was only a small village. Dake quotes the Septuagint (see box below) as saying "*He smote among them seventy men, including fifty of the men's thousand.*" Somehow this was translated incorrectly but it is still a matter of confusion when you compare various Bible versions for some say 70 and some say 50,070. However, for the family of each one that was killed, the total was irrelevant.

NOTE: The Septuagint is the oldest Bible translation in the world dating back to 200 B.C. It was made in Alexandria, Egypt, where the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek for the benefit of the Greek-speaking Jews of that city. This version is called the **Septuagint**, from *septuaginta*, the Latin word for 70 (LXX). This name was selected because of a tradition that the Pentateuch was translated into Greek by about 70 elders of Israel who were brought to Alexandria especially for this purpose. Other fragments of the Septuagint have been identified among the texts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947. {Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary}

But let's focus on the other issue in this passage. We have a village of priests that refused to handle the important things of God correctly. The Word of God is crystal clear on this – the Word that they were responsible for – but they either ignored it or just disobeyed it in their excitement. {McGee} "*The men of Beth-shemesh do that which God had strictly forbidden. That ark belonged in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. It was to be seen only by the high priest—even he was permitted to enter before it only once a*

year. When the ark was transported, as it was on the wilderness march, it was carefully and reverently covered. The Philistines did not know these things, but the Israelites did know.” Luke 12:47-48 **And that servant, which KNEW his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.** By comparison, the Philistines were beaten with “few stripes” because they didn’t know the Lord’s will. However, these priests knew what God expected.

20 And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us? The answer to this question is simple and it’s also in the Word of God – see Psalm 15.

21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the Ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you. {JF&B} “This was the nearest town to Beth-shemesh; and being a place of strength, it was a more fitting place for the residence of the ark. Beth-shemesh being in a low plain, and Kirjath-jearim on a hill, explains the message, ‘Come ye down, and fetch it up to you.’”

Chapter 7

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The Ark of the Covenant has returned to Israel and the people, over time, begin to yearn for the things of God. Let us never forget to remember where all our blessings come from.

The Ark Resides in a Residence for Many Years

1 And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the Ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the Ark of the LORD. At this time the Ark was not far from Shiloh and could have been taken back but for some reason, they chose to take it to the nearest town. There was no godly fervor among the people at this time so they viewed the Ark with less excitement than the Philistines. Perhaps they viewed the tragic defeat of seven months earlier as God's responsibility and didn't view the Ark with as much reverence. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **When you're not living right before God, it's difficult to get excited about the things of God. They just remind you of your personal shortcomings.**

2 And it came to pass, while the Ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD. Amplified Bible *And the ark remained in Kiriath-jearim a very long time [nearly 100 years, through Samuel's entire judgeship, Saul's reign, and well into David's, when it was brought to Jerusalem]. For it was twenty years before all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.* The Amplified Bible gives a better translation of this verse. The Ark was at Kirjath-jearim longer than 20 years. This is where David came (2 Samuel 6) to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. This occurred in at least the eighth year of David's reign (after the 40-year reign of Saul) and after the many years of Samuel's period as judge. {McGee} *"Israel was deep in idolatry. They had turned from the living and true God. They had been defeated in so many battles that it had become old hat to them, and they were extremely discouraged. They were beginning to lament after the Lord."*

Revival at the Encouragement of Samuel

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Ashtaroth was an old "god" that went back as far as the book of Genesis and the religion of Nimrod (see box below). The "worship" was sensual and obscene so the people were continually drawn back to it. I personally don't believe that they felt anything toward this ugly stone idol – no more than one would feel toward a "lucky charm". They loved it because the "worship" fed the basest, sensual nature of their flesh. In fact, when searching for a picture of Ashtoreth, those that did not use the ancient statue used bare breasted women in a seductive pose. This was a "religion" of filth and rebellion against God. {Matthew Henry} *"When [Samuel] perceived that they began to lament after the Lord he struck while the iron was hot."*



{Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} *"Ashtoreth - First Samuel 31:10 connects her with the Philistines, and 1 Kings 11:5 connects her with the Sidonians. She was often considered the companion or partner of the male god Baal (Judges 2:13). Along with the Baalim (the plural of Baal), Ashtoreth was thought by the Philistines to be responsible for fertility and the growth of crops and herds. Ashtoreth was worshiped by other peoples under such names as Astarte (Phoenicians), Inanna (Sumerians), Ishtar (Babylonians), Aphrodite (Greeks), and Venus (Romans). All these were goddesses of sensual love and fertility."* Note that "Astarte" was the source of the name "Easter", originally a celebration to this false "goddess". This is why I refer to "Easter" Sunday to what it really is – Resurrection Sunday.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only. A saint living in carnality ought to come to the same place that Israel did and begin to want God again. They were a weakened nation under control by another weak nation and they wanted their blessings back.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. 6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. {JF&B} “The character and importance of the national convention at Mizpeh were fully appreciated by the Philistines. They discerned in it the rising spirit of religious patriotism among the Israelites that was prepared to throw off the yoke of their domination. Anxious to crush it at the first, they made a sudden incursion while the Israelites were in the midst of their solemn celebration.” **SAINTS’**

PRINCIPLE: When the sinner or backslider makes up their mind to return to God, they should expect there to be opposition from the enemy. Israel was worshipping God but in great terror. They had lost many people in terrible defeats by the Philistines. But, on a positive note, they knew that God was their only hope.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. 9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. It’s hard to believe in God’s mercy and favor when you have been living in open rebellion but Samuel had a legacy of right living and they knew that God would hear him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car. {JF&B} “Unprepared for resistance, they besought Samuel to supplicate the divine interposition to save them from their enemies. The prophet’s prayers and sacrifice were answered by such a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning that the assailants, panic-struck, were disordered and fled. The Israelites, recognizing the hand of God, rushed courageously on the foe they had so much dreaded and committed such immense havoc, that the Philistines did not for long recover from this disastrous blow.”

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us. {Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} “**EBENEZER** [ebb un EE zur] (stone of help) — the name of a place and a monument in Israel. 1. A place where Israel was defeated by the Philistines and the Ark of the Covenant was captured (1 Sam. 5:1). 2. A stone erected by Samuel to commemorate Israel’s victory over the Philistines. It may have been named after Ebenezer No. 1 to show that Israel’s defeat there 20 years before had been reversed (1 Sam. 7:12).”

13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. {JF&B} “This brilliant victory secured peace and independence to Israel for twenty years, as well as the restitution of the usurped territory.”

14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. The Philistines had experienced the power of God through the Ark of the Covenant and now through the prayers of His servant. Because of that, they humbled themselves before God's people and restored what they had taken. Matthew Henry says that the Amorites (representative of all of the Canaanites that were not conquered but who continued to bother Israel) settled down during this period also. No doubt, they saw the surrender of the Philistines, chief among those that afflicted Israel, and decided not to suffer a similar fate. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: PROVERBS 16:7** **When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.**

The Ministry of Samuel

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. 17 And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD. It's interesting that as significant a figure as Samuel was in the Old Testament, these few verses tell of his entire ministry.

Chapter 8

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: It is now many years later and Israel has returned to being, for the most part, godly. But now that they have come back to God, they want something – and demand something – that God did not want them to have. Whenever God says, “No”, let us not push and push to force His hand. Let’s learn to be content with what He blesses us with and with His timetable.

The Corruption of the Sons of Samuel

1 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba. 3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. {JF&B} “He was now about fifty-four years of age, having discharged the office of sole judge for twelve years. Unable, from growing infirmities, to prosecute his circuit journeys through the country, he at length confined his magisterial duties to Ramah and its neighborhood (1Sam. 7:15), delegating to his sons as his deputies the administration of justice in the southern districts of Palestine, their provincial court being held at Beersheba.” Samuel is said to be “old” at this time even though he is only 54 (my age!). However, remember that the life span at that time was much shorter than it is now. He appoints his sons as judges (not priests, like Eli) to handle civil matters but they could not be “civil” in those matters. {Matthew Henry} “It has often been the grief of good men to see their posterity, instead of treading in their steps, trampling upon them, and, as Job speaks, marring their path.” On a side note though, God blessed Samuel with tremendous long life – he was said to have lived to be 98, therefore, we know what will happen in the next verse was not a result of prayer.

The People Reject God & Samuel

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. There came a delegation to Samuel’s house to present a new, but sinister idea. They had reasons for their idea (his age and the corruption of his sons) but the real reason was at the end of verse 5 – “*to judge us like all the nations*”. This was not about Samuel and his family, or their actions would have probably been viewed with great anger by God. {Matthew Henry} “And it was very unkind, ungrateful, nay, and unjust, to cast him off when he was old, who had spent his days in doing them good. God had saved his youth from being despicable (ch. 3:20), yet they make his old age so, which should have been counted worthy of double honor.” We just saw in the prior chapter that Samuel’s prayers saved the nation. However, time has gone on and the people have begun to watch the actions of others – others that didn’t have the privilege of having God as their King.

This is a turning point in the history of Israel. They have gone from Abraham to this time (about 1,400 years per Dake) with God as their king. Now they want to be “like all the nations”. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** **Once you begin to determine your course of action based on watching the world, you cannot help but to have great difficulties.** This is what you do when you have no vision – you watch others and copy from them.

SIDE ROAD: We must be very careful when we make comparisons of ourselves against the world. It is done so often when we compare their commitment to each other (“Look how they share their wine bottle with each other”), their dedication to their tasks (“They will go out late at night, even if they’re tired, to not miss the party”), and their investment in their structures (“They really know how to build – look at that casino”). However, we miss the point. These are all things that they are driven to do by demonic influence. Yes, let us be committed to each other, dedicated to our service to the Lord, and make sure that our places of worship are worthy of the Lord’s presence. But we have better examples in the Scriptures to guide us without turning to the world. The world should be looking to us as examples and role models, as they used to.

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. {McGee} “The fact that Samuel had made his sons judges gives these people an excuse to ask for a king. Undoubtedly this was a heartbreak to Samuel. God comforts him with the assurance that Israel’s rejection is not of him but of God himself. Samuel’s sons are the excuse, but rejection of God’s sovereignty is the real reason.” God saw right through their disguise – they wanted a king they could see. Samuel took the right approach and took this to God in prayer.

7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. 9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. Notice the pain in the Lord’s voice as He speaks to Samuel. This rejection has been ongoing for hundreds of years and God has felt every rejection. Now Samuel, as God’s man, must also feel what He feels. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: There’s a price to be God’s servant.**

God was not surprised by this request. In fact, He had already prepared Moses to write of that day to give the people instruction on how to select their king and what the king must do (Deuteronomy 17:14-20 – Amplified Bible). This passage not only predicts this day but also says what the king’s qualifications shall be and what he shall and shall not do – things that the kings of Israel later disobeyed.

14 When you come to the land which the Lord your God gives you and you possess it and live there, and then say, We will set a king over us like all the nations that are about us,

15 You shall surely set a king over you him whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner, who is not your brother, over you.

16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to multiply horses, since the Lord said to you, You shall never return that way.

17 And he shall not multiply wives to himself, that his [mind and] heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

18 And when he sits on his royal throne, he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, out of what is before the Levitical priests.

19 And he shall keep it with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn [reverently] to fear the Lord his God, by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes and doing them,

20 That his [mind and] heart may not be lifted up above his brethren and that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left; so that he may continue long, he and his sons, in his kingdom in Israel.

10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. 11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. 12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. 13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. 14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. 15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. 16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and

put them to his work. 17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. 18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day. There are consequences when you use the world as your role model. God tells Samuel to show them all of the things that come with having a king. {JF&B} “*In the East, a person must accept any office to which he may be nominated by the king, however irksome it may be to his taste or ruinous to his interests. Cookery, baking, and the kindred works are, in Eastern countries, female employment, and thousands of young women are occupied with these offices in the palaces even of petty princes.*” These were the actions of the dictatorial kings of that time – an attitude that the kings of Israel slid in to.

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; 20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. **LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE:** The more you let people talk, the more you can discover what’s really in their heart. Now we see more of what Israel wants ...

- They want to be like everyone else – but everyone else sees the favor of God on their lives and wants to be like them.
- They want the king to judge them but what was Samuel doing and all of the men and women of the Book of Judges that God sent?
- They want someone to go out before them and fight their battles – didn’t God do this in the previous chapter?

No, what they really have is a carnal desire to look and act like the world so they won’t look so “peculiar”.

God Grants Israel Their Request

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. 22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city. Psalm 106:15 And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** What WE want won’t always bless us. We have to follow the direction of the Lord and be satisfied with Him.

Chapter 9

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: This is our first chance to meet Saul, soon to be first king of Israel. We won't find out much about him except that he has some physical gifts and that he comes from a wealthy family. These are not the qualifications to use to choose leadership.

Our First Introduction to Saul

1 Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. NLT **There was a wealthy, influential man named Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. He was the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, of the tribe of Benjamin.** The first qualification that we see of the man that will soon be king is that he comes from an influential, wealthy family. (Remember, the Lord is working to satisfy the longing of carnal people so He has chosen to meet them at their level...this time.) We don't see anything about the spiritual success of the family but we know they have had some natural success.

2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. NKJV **And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.** The second qualification that we see of Saul was that he was tall and handsome. Again, nothing is mentioned of his personal spiritual content. {JF&B} “[Saul] had a fine appearance; for it is evident that he must have been only a little under seven feet tall. A gigantic stature and an athletic frame must have been a popular recommendation at that time in that country.”

Side Road: I believe God did all of this intentionally (when you look at Saul's two qualifications). The people wanted a king so that they could look like the world. Therefore, this king had to look the part and had to come with some influence to help bring the various tribes together.

God Intervenes to Move Saul To Samuel

3 And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. God lost those donkeys intentionally to move Saul to Samuel.

4 And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not. 5 And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us. According to verse 20, Saul had been gone three days. He and his servant probably did not plan to be gone that long because we'll see later that they're almost out of food.

6 And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honorable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can show us our way that we should go. 7 Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we? {JF&B} “According to Eastern notions, it would be considered a want of respect for any person to go into the presence of a superior man of rank or of official station without a present of some kind in his hand, however trifling in value.”

14 And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place. {JF&B} “Such were the simple manners of the times that this prophet, the chief man in Israel, was seen going to preside at a high festival undistinguished either by his dress or equipage from any ordinary citizen.”

Side Road: At this time, the Lord “winked” at the use of a high place as a place of sacrifice. There was no central location of worship at that time. The Ark of the Covenant was in one place, the tabernacle was in another, and there were altars in various other places. However, once the Temple was built, this was no longer an acceptable place for worship.

15 Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, 16 To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. 17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people. I love the relationship that Samuel had with God. This was a relationship down to the last detail and because he was totally submissive to God, the Lord had no problem dealing with him in the most routine items. Since we have a covenant built on a better Savior and better promises, we should have a better relationship but it will also require total submission.

Saul Meets Samuel

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer’s house is. Samuel just looked like everyone else so Saul had no idea he was talking to him. Samuel had no entourage or adjutants, fancy clothing or signs of importance. He lifted up the Lord and, because of that, his relationship with Him was very strong. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** If we want the Lord to bless us with His relationship, we have to lift Him up and not ourselves.

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I AM THE SEER: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart. I love the first part of this verse. There is no false humility from Samuel – he knows who he is and his position with God. He is the seer, the prophet that God had established for that time. Because he knows who he is, he doesn’t have to put on airs (such as discussed in the previous verse) to let people know who he is. He does not have an insecurity issue as so many “leaders” have today.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father’s house? NLT And don’t worry about those donkeys that were lost three days ago, for they have been found. And I am here to tell you that you and your family are the focus of all Israel’s hopes. It was probably very well known that the elders of Israel had gone to Samuel desiring a king – the focus of Israel’s hopes. So the last statement by Samuel probably caught Saul off guard.

21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me? {JF&B} “By selecting a king from this least and nearly extinct tribe (Judges 20:46-48), divine wisdom designed to remove all grounds of jealousy among the other tribes.” {McGee} “There was nothing to prompt a speech like he gave. I personally feel that his was a false humility. I think Saul felt very much like he was the

one who could be king.” This is an interesting comment from Dr. McGee and explains why Saul so could so quickly and easily be filled with pride and arrogance – it was already there.

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlor, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons. There’s an obscure point out of this passage I’d like to point out – AND HIS SERVANT. The servant went with Saul and was given the privilege of sitting in the chief place because he was Saul’s servant. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: There’s a blessing in being a servant.**

23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. 24 And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left! set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. Samuel, as the priest, had the right shoulder of the sacrifice reserved from him as instructed by the Lord through Moses. He had set this aside knowing that Saul would be there for the sacrifice.

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house. {JF&B} “Saul was taken to lodge with the prophet for that night. Before retiring to rest, they communed on the flat roof of the house, the couch being laid there (Jos 2:6), when, doubtless, Samuel revealed the secret and described the peculiar duties of a monarch in a nation so related to the Divine King as Israel.” This was one of those conversations that the average saint would dream to be a part of – an intimate meeting with one of the Lord’s great ones.

26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. 27 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on), but stand thou still a while, that I may show thee the word of God. This is probably another inappropriate break in chapters done by the commentators because we’re left hanging. We’ll see the Word that Saul received in the next chapter.

Chapter 10

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Saul will be anointed as the first king of Israel and presented to the people. Saul went through a process that changed him from being the man he was. He was the people's choice but had to be made into a better man. David was God's choice and came ready made.

Saul Is Anointed the First King of Israel

1 Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? {McGee} “Samuel anoints Saul as king and then kisses him, which was probably an act demonstrating his personal affection for Saul.” This is an interesting emotion that Samuel shows to the man that is going to take his place. However, this is another reason why Samuel was such a significant figure in the Old Testament.

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

3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: 4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands. 5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: 6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. Samuel gave Saul a specific detailed prophecy of what was to happen that day. It's not only a prophecy but there are commands for Saul to follow in order for everything to come to pass. Saul had an issue with submission to authority but for him to receive what God had for him, he had to obey this Word specifically. Also, on a sad note though, Saul had to be transformed by God in order to perform the work. He did not come prepared. Some have used this as symbolic of the transformation that Christians go through with the new birth but Saul did not become a NEW man, he became a DIFFERENT man. I look at it as a sign of a problem – Saul had to be made but David (1 Samuel 13:14) came ready made. Saul is the people's choice but David will be God's choice.

7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee. God would support Saul...once the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. This was not to be a standing rule for everything he did as king but he seemed to take it as such.

8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do. This part of the prophecy was forgotten by Saul because it pointed to a standing rule he was to use in dealing with his enemies. {JF&B} “This, according to JOSEPHUS, was to be a standing rule for the observance of Saul while the prophet and he lived; that in every great crisis, such as a hostile incursion on the country, he should repair to Gilgal, where he was to remain seven days, to afford time for the tribes on both sides Jordan to assemble, and Samuel to reach it.” His later disobedience to this rule started him on the way to the loss of the kingdom.

9 And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him ANOTHER heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. 10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. God equipped Saul with everything he needed to be a successful, holy king and after all of that, he still failed. The other sad situation about this section, most of which I have left you to read, is that it appears that Saul had a character that was totally the opposite of the prophets prior to this time. This is why it was such a wonder to the people to see him prophesying with these holy men. Remember, Saul was the people's choice.

14 And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were nowhere, we came to Samuel. 15 And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you. 16 And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not. This interchange with Saul and his uncle is not addressed by most of the commentators. Dake says that this man was Abner, who later became the head of Saul's army. The key point is that the Word that God gives to you is not for sharing on an indiscriminate manner with every nosy person that comes along. In fact, you only share it as God directs. Saul's uncle didn't have the opportunity to eat with Samuel so none of what Samuel shared was his business.

Saul Is Presented to Israel

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh; 18 And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you: 19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands. In spite of God's work to secure a king for the people, their rejection of God was still the motivating factor and was not to be forgotten.

20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. 21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found. 22 Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold he hath hid himself among the stuff. Saul had ample opportunity to say, "No, this is too much for me" but he exhibits fear and, according to Dr. McGee, false humility in hiding himself.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. 24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king. The people are excited because of what he LOOKS like. They have no idea what kind of man he is. He has fought no battles for them and has not intervened in anyone's behalf on anything. According to historians, he is a married man with children who still lives in his father's house. He just looks good and this is what the people wanted. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Decisions made by such a shallow standard as this will ALWAYS get us in trouble.**

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. {Matthew Henry} "The learned

Bishop Patrick thinks he now repeated and registered what he had told them (ch. 8:11) of the arbitrary power their kings would assume, that it might hereafter be a witness against them that they had drawn the calamity upon themselves, for they were warned what it would come to and yet they would have a king.”

26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. God did one last thing for Saul. He gave him a loyal following of men whose hearts had been touched by God to be loyal to Saul. God gave Saul every opportunity to succeed because He knew the baggage that came with Saul.

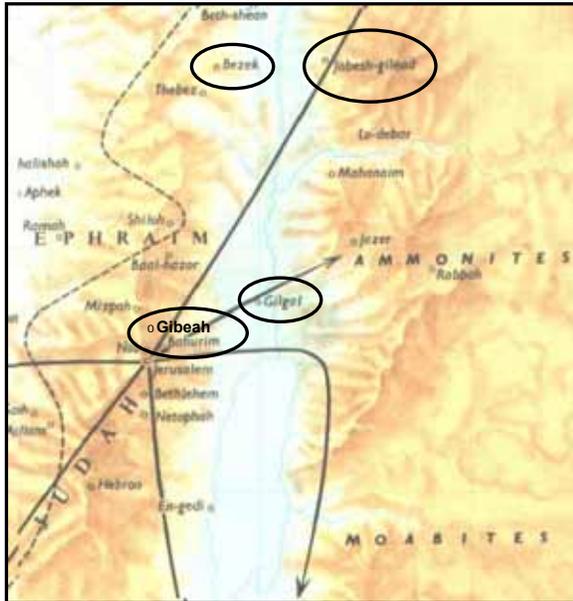
27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought no presents. But he held his peace. NIV **But some troublemakers said, “How can this fellow save us?” They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.** Every leader can expect opposition especially when they first come into leadership. The NIV gives a good description of these types of folks. They are nothing but troublemakers. However, Saul gives the right response – don’t address them or let them trouble you. Don’t focus on them. The writer gave the positive first (**a band of men, whose hearts God had touched**) before dealing with the negative (**troublemakers**). Let our focus also be on the positive first.

Chapter 11

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Saul has his first test as king. God has uniquely equipped him for the position but this anointing does not appear until catastrophe hits. It is under pressure that the anointing that God has given you begins to appear .

Nahash Threatens to Invade Israel

1 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. JF&B says that the people gave in



easily to Nahash because (1) they didn't see any prospect of help from the western part of the nation (see map below for the distance between Jabesh-Gilead and Gibeah) and (2) those in that part had already failed in keeping the Philistines in check. All of this appears to have been done without prayer. We're about to see this principle happen again – **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Terrible things happen when people don't pray!**

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel. {JF&B} “Nahash meant to keep the Jabeshites useful as tributaries, whence he did not wish to render them wholly blind, but only to deprive them of their right eye, which would disqualify them for war.

Besides, his object was, through the people of Jabesh-gilead, to insult the Israelitish nation.” See what happens when you don't pray? The devil raised his requirement.

3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee. 4 Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept. {Adam Clarke} “It does not appear that the people of Jabesh-gilead knew any thing of Saul's appointment to the kingdom, for the message is not directed to him but to the people.” JF&B has a different opinion – the Gileadites didn't have any confidence in their new “king” who had no army and no resources. Their appeal was to ANYONE to come help them even though we'll see in the next chapter that Saul became king for just this situation.

5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh. The Israelites were people who easily gave in to defeat and discouragement in spite of having the Awesome Wonder on their side. They took the approach of despair, grief, and sorrow in spite of the fact that no battle had been fought. {Matthew Henry} “They would sooner lament their brethren's misery and danger than think of helping them, shed their tears for them than shed their blood.”

6 And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. God has equipped Saul for leadership. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Leaders should have some kind of emotional**

response when they see pain among their people. His anger is righteous anger, “How dare these Gentiles threaten God’s people in such a manner!”

7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent. Now they responded to the fact that they heard that they could lose their livelihood but they did not respond earlier when they heard that they could lose their brethren! **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Don’t be more concerned about your “stuff” than your brothers and sisters!**

8 And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. Saul has succeeded in putting this army together in less than a week! He has gathered that army 50 miles north of his home in Bezek which, according to our map, is across the Jordan River from Jabesh-Gilead so they won’t have far to travel for the battle the next day and they’re out of the detection of the enemy. We see the God-given wisdom and leadership ability of the new king.

9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabeshgilead, To morrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed it to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. What a king Saul has turned out to be! This same man a month earlier couldn’t find three donkeys. Now he has turned a disjointed nation into an army. God has thoroughly equipped him for his position!

Side Road: It’s unfortunate that we know the end of Saul’s story because it is beginning so well. **SAINTS’ QUESTION:** What would we do differently in our lives if we knew the end of our story? Well, we do know our destiny through the Word of God so let’s trust God to bring it to pass.

10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, Tomorrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you. The people of Jabesh know that their help had arrived and they have no problem responding to the wicked demands of Nahash, a descendent of Lot (the Ammonites were the result of the incestuous relations that Lot had with his daughter). This news probably put the Ammonites at ease for if they had sent out scouts in a 10-20 mile radius; they would have found the large army of Saul not too far away and would have prepared themselves.

Nahash Is Defeated by Saul’s Army

11 And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together. {JF&B} “Crossing the Jordan in the evening, Saul marched his army all night, and came at daybreak on the camp of the Ammonites, who were surprised in three different parts, and totally routed. This happened before the seven days’ truce expired.” Look how thoroughly God enabled Saul and his army to win this battle! At the end, there were not even two of the Ammonites walking (running?) together away from the battle.

Side Road: How did “Farmer Saul” know how to put together this strategic plan (organizing an army, mobilizing them to a staging area, and developing a battle plan) to save God’s people? After all, he’s a farmer, not a warrior. This was a result of the Spirit of God coming on him in prior chapters. The Holy Spirit of God will energize us with supernatural wisdom, knowledge, and understanding if we’ll just ask Him for that direction. We have no need to be stressed in job situations, home situations, family crises, or whatever as long as we depend on God’s wisdom and help. Of course, remember to give God ALL of the praise when He works in our behalf.

Saul Established as King in the Hearts of the People

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. They are referring to the “troublemakers” at the end of the last chapter. Saul had been announced as the king but now he has done something to show that his choice was the correct one and the people are excited.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel. 14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. 15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. {JF&B} “The enthusiastic admiration of the people, under the impulse of grateful and generous feelings, would have dealt summary vengeance on the minority who opposed Saul, had not he, either from principle or policy, shown himself as great in clemency as in valor. The calm and [wise] counsel of Samuel directed the popular feelings into a right channel, by appointing a general assembly of the militia, the really effective force of the nation, at Gilgal, where, amid great pomp and religious solemnities, the victorious leader was confirmed in his kingdom.”

We ended the last chapter with Saul as king in name only. He had a “band of men” that went with him. He had the look and wealth of a king but, in the hearts of the people, he was just a man from the tribe of Benjamin. However, we end this chapter with Saul as king in the hearts of the people and he has a real army.

Chapter 12

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The people are excited about their new king but they have never dealt with their rejection of God and He has not forgotten. Sin cannot be handled through gifts and kind words. It must be confessed and forsaken. The people have sinned against God and against Samuel and must give account for their actions.

Samuel Defends His Service to Israel

1 And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. Before the congregation went back home from Gilgal after the confirmation of Saul as king, Samuel needed to clear the air about his service to the country and God's service to them. According to Dake, Samuel was about 60 years old at this time.

2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and gray headed; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. I detect a note of bitterness in the voice of Samuel. He has spent his ENTIRE life in the service of the country except for the short period of time when his mother weaned him. Now he's old and they have their king so they can be like everyone else. {Matthew Henry} "Now that you have made yourselves like the nations in your civil government, and have cast off the divine administration in that, take heed lest you make yourselves like the nations in religion and cast off the worship of God." His sons have not left the country but they have been, according to Dake, removed from their positions – "my sons are with you". Samuel did what Eli did not do.

3 Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. The people have accused his sons of taking bribes, however, Samuel has had to suffer for their mistakes. He uses this opportunity to give them a chance to publicly accuse him of ANY wrongdoing so he could make restoration.

4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. Samuel has lived through some of the worst days of Israel and has his testimony in tact and the very people that wanted him out of the way give the evidence. Today we have so much anointing, so much power, and we're so filled with the Spirit but no one speaks up to vindicate the church...especially not our enemies! This is our fault, not the fault of our enemies.

5 And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness. {JF&B} "By their own acknowledgment, he had given them no cause to weary of the divine government by judges, and that, therefore, the blame of desiring a change of government rested with themselves. This was only insinuated, and they did not fully perceive his drift." In other words, the people have publicly admitted that, for no reason, they have put aside the governmental method set up by the Lord Himself in favor of looking like everyone else. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** We have to be careful to not do things to "look" a certain way. If God hasn't blessed you, you don't have it.

Samuel Defends the Rejected Rule of God Over Israel

6 And Samuel said unto the people, IT IS THE LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Saul has just won a great battle but the hand of the Lord God did everything up to this point. He brought them out of Egypt, removed others out of their land, and gave it to the children of Israel. What Saul has done does not even deserve to be spoken in the same breath.

7 Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers. 8 When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. 9 And when they forgot the LORD their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. 10 And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. 11 And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe. {Matthew Henry} “Samuel mentions himself, not to his own praise, but to the honor of God, who had made him an instrument of subduing the Philistines.” The commentators say that “Bedan” could either be Samson or Barak, both of whom are named among the judges.

12 And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God was your king. From this statement, the second reason for the people wanting a king was because of this impending invasion. It was not only a move of worldliness but of unbelief of the lowest level. God was their king but they felt that a man could do better.

13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. The people didn’t choose Saul but he was the answer to their desires. They didn’t actually choose him until AFTER he was king and had defeated Nahash.

Samuel Warns the People to Fear God

14 If ye will FEAR THE LORD, and SERVE HIM, and OBEY HIS VOICE, and NOT REBEL against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: 15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers. God is no longer their King, as far as governmental style, but He is still the King. Their king must answer to the King of Kings. They cannot do as they wish because God is still in control. But God is so gracious that He has only given them four things to do for the continued prosperity of their nation: (1) Fear the Lord; (2) Serve the Lord; (3) Obey the voice of the Lord; (4) Don’t rebel against the commandments of the Lord.

16 Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. 17 Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. 18 So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. This was a great miracle because during harvest time, rain was an unusual event. God has answered their request but He lets them know that their request was great wickedness. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Just because God answered your prayer does not mean that you are in right standing with God. Psalm 106:15 *And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.*

19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king. Finally, the eyes of the people come open and they realize their sin. They did the right thing in desiring prayer for God’s forgiveness and mercy.

20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; 21 And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. 22 For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people. This is where we are today. If we would remember who we are – we are the people of God – then we would not be so quick to run after “vain things”, things that don’t profit or add to our eternal destiny. These things that we want so much are what the Lord has already promised AFTER we seek Him FIRST.

23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: And neither will I walk off and leave you. That would be a sin against God! I'm staying right here at my post praying for you and teaching you the good and right way to live. Samuel was not going to “fade away” into retirement and not be involved with the lives of the people. He started this chapter by stating how he had walked before them his entire life. He had suffered public scrutiny even as a very young child. He probably did not have the “normal” childhood filled with play and adventure but he was always in preparation to serve the people of God. What a noble life the Lord gave him! Now that he’s been retired from one job, one aspect of his life must continue – his prayers for the people. {McGee} “Each one of us has a prayer responsibility. I feel the necessity to pray for a certain group of ministers in this country, most of whom are my friends. I have been in their churches, and I know something about their problems. I pray for them regularly. I also have a responsibility to pray for my family. If I don’t pray for them, who will? You too have a responsibility, Christian friend. We ought to pray for one another. There are many needy people. God forbid that we should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for one another.”

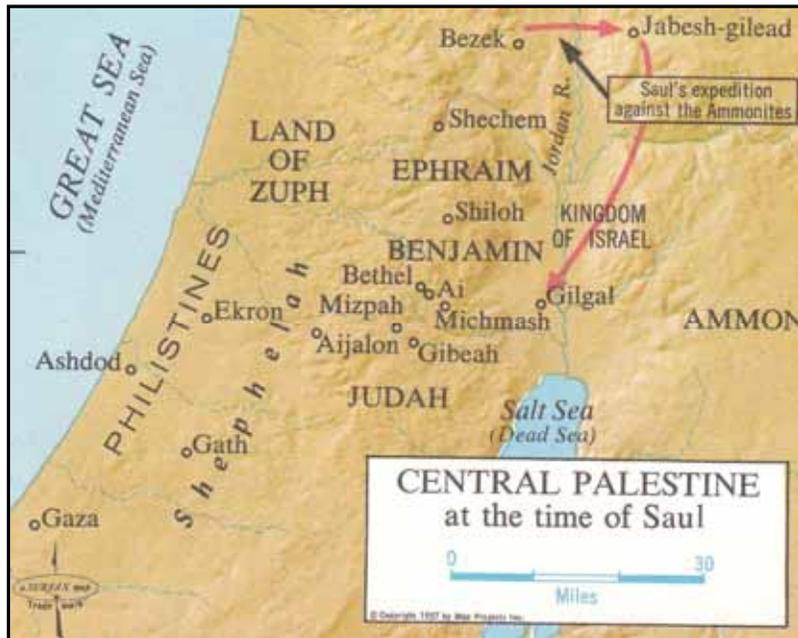
24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. 25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king. Message Bible ***But I beg of you, fear God and worship him honestly and heartily. You’ve seen how greatly he has worked among you! Be warned: If you live badly, both you and your king will be thrown out.*** As Samuel closes the meeting, he reminds them that they still have a King over them, and it’s not Saul. This King has more power than their king so they must conduct themselves properly.

Chapter 13

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Saul has passed first test as king but the enemy has more for him. This is one of the most important chapters for our understanding of the failure of Saul and his kingdom. We must learn from his mistake. It destroyed him and it will destroy us.

Saul Stirs Up War Against the Philistines

1 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, There's controversy regarding the actual translation of this verse. The New American Standard Bible says, "*Saul was thirty years old when he*



began to reign, and he reigned forty two years over Israel." Other translations agree with the King James Version and some, such as the NIV, agree with the NASB. There's nothing definitive in the Scriptures about the age of Saul when he began to reign or how long he reigned. However, there is reason to believe that the events of this chapter took place more than a year after the events of the last chapter.

2 Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel,

and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. {Map courtesy of The Golden Bible Atlas} Saul is obviously feeling full of himself about his victory over the Ammonites in the previous chapter and has decided to deal with the Philistines also. **(Did you notice any mention of him praying about this move???)** He doesn't go into this campaign as he did the prior campaign. He has chosen 3,000 men to be the first real "army" of Israel. Their intent was to be "raiders", a small group of men that could move quickly against the enemy in small skirmishes. {JF&B} *"This band of picked men was a bodyguard, who were kept constantly on duty, while the rest of the people were dismissed till their services might be needed. It seems to have been his tactics to attack the Philistine garrisons in the country by different detachments, rather than by risking a general engagement; and his first operations were directed to rid his native territory of Benjamin of these enemies."* {Adam Clarke} *"Saul, no doubt, perhaps hoped, by surprising these garrisons, to get swords and spears for his men, of which we find, [verse 22], they were entirely destitute."*

3 And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. This is the first mention in the Scripture of Jonathan. We will hear more about him through the rest of the book until his demise in the last chapter. {JF&B} *"The word rendered 'garrison' signifies, literally, something erected; probably a pillar or flagstaff, indicative of Philistine ascendancy. That the secret demolition of this standard, so obnoxious to a young and noble-hearted patriot, was the feat of Jonathan referred to, is evident from the words, 'the Philistines heard of it,' which is not the way we should expect an attack on a fortress to be noticed."* When

we find later in this chapter that there was a great lack of weaponry among the Hebrews, this verse begins to make more sense. Jonathan did not have the power to take on a Philistine garrison without swords (at least, not in the flesh).

{McGee} “*The true character of Saul is beginning to emerge. When we get a good view of him, we are going to see that he is a phony. We read in these verses that Jonathan ‘smote the garrison of the Philistines.’ Who got credit for the victory? It was Saul.*” This is better understood in the very next verse.

4 *And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.* Remember, from 1 Samuel 10:8, that this was to be the standing rule in the relationship between Saul and Samuel. Saul was to gather the people together at Gilgal and wait for Samuel to arrive. 1 Samuel 10:8 **And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.** Saul has performed the first part of his instructions. He has gone to Gilgal and is now waiting on Samuel. He has to receive the Lord’s blessings and instructions from the prophet/priest before he can do anything. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: We need a Word from the Lord because without that Word, we won’t know what to do and whatever we will do will be flawed.**

Saul’s First & Major Sin As King

5 *And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven.* The Philistines had no intention of coming into this battle poorly prepared like Saul and his men. They gathered themselves together to FIGHT with Israel...and win! They have chariots, horsemen, and soldiers that could not be counted. They were well prepared for the battle encamped about 15 miles from Saul’s position.

Side Road: This is how the enemy attacks in our spiritual lives. He does not come with the intention of “seeing what will happen”. He comes with the intention of utter destruction. John 10:10a Amplified Bible **The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy.** Since he’s coming with this purpose in mind, we have to deal with our personal issues and come to the time of worship with a mind to steal souls from the enemy’s kingdom, praise and worship God until His presence comes in with deliverance, and leave the service better prepared to fight the enemy in any situation. We can’t come playing games.

Note: Most of the commentators believe that there is a translation error in this passage and that **thirty thousand chariots** should be **three thousand chariots**. Regardless of the fact, even if it’s three thousand, that’s one chariot for every soldier of Israel.

6 *When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.* Message Bible **When the Israelites saw that they were way outnumbered and in deep trouble, they ran for cover, hiding in caves and pits, ravines and brambles and cisterns—wherever.** The ones that are afraid are part of Saul’s handpicked 3,000 men. He picked them according to verse 2. Remember how that the Lord gave him men to follow him whose hearts HE had touched? These are not the same men. These men are not prepared to fight. They have demanded a king to fight their battles but they didn’t think through the fact that they would be the ones doing the fighting. When God was their king, HE fought for them. Let me expand

our recurring principle so that everyone understands – **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Terrible things happen when people make decisions and actions without prayer!**

7 And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. Message Bible **They retreated across the Jordan River, refugees fleeing to the country of Gad and Gilead. But Saul held his ground in Gilgal, his soldiers still with him but scared to death.** Saul is losing his people in numbers and in spirit. He's stirred up the Philistines with the expectation that he'd have a great victory like he had with the Ammonites but things are falling apart. However, in the prior battle, the enemy attacked them and they defended themselves. Now he has moved in the flesh to make himself a name and is about to lose everything.

8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. Saul is not a patient man. His lack of patience is getting ready to rear its head in a very ugly way.

9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. {McGee} "Here is another revelation concerning Saul. He presumed that because of his position as king he could offer a burnt offering. Saul ignored God's explicit instructions that only a priest from the tribe of Levi could offer a burnt offering." Saul's arrogance and false humility is showing. He's only been the king for a short while but has decided to "ascend into heaven" as the devil said in Isaiah 14:13.

10 And it came to pass, that AS SOON AS HE HAD MADE AN END of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. {Adam Clarke} "Samuel was punctual to his appointment; one hour longer of delay would have prevented every evil, and by it no good would have been lost. How often are the effects of [hasty decisions] fatal!" This is typical of the trick of the enemy. He gets us to do something foolish right at the time our blessing is about to be released. However, the average person then feels great guilt for what they have done. There is no guilt with Saul in spite of the great sin he has committed!

11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; 12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. Saul has a good story for his actions but not one bit of this story includes, "I'm sorry for what I have done." He blamed the people, he blamed Samuel for being late, and he even blamed the Philistines for gathering so close. JF&B gives us what may be the real insight into the nature and character of Saul. {JF&B} "Saul, though patriotic enough in his own way, was more ambitious of gaining the glory of a triumph to himself than ascribing it to God. He did not understand his proper position as king of Israel; and although aware of the restrictions under which he held the sovereignty, he wished to rule as an autocrat, who possessed absolute power both in civil and sacred things. This occasion was his first trial. Samuel waited till the last day of the seven, in order to put the constitutional character of the king to the test; and, as Saul, in his impatient and passionate haste knowingly transgressed by invading the priest's office and thus showing his unfitness for his high office." Saul was an ambitious man that wanted to be over everything in the kingdom.

Side Road: Does this sound like the same man from chapter 10 who hid *“among the stuff”* when they called for the new king? Dr. McGee (and I agreed) called it false humility then and it’s obvious now. Only a short time later and he has moved himself from being king to priest. He wants more even though he hasn’t done what he should with what he has already received. Dake sounds a great warning to us when he describes the character of Saul – *“Saul was clearly backslidden – cold to God, lukewarm in zeal, impatient in spirit, self-sufficient in mind, carnal in conduct, and fearful of the future.”* Lord, help us!

13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. 14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee. Do you see the test that Saul has failed? God was about to establish his kingdom FOREVER! His sin penalized Jonathan and all of his descendents. He has done the same thing that Eli did in penalizing all of his family members for his actions. Now Samuel gives him a three-point indictment before all those that are around:

- (1) You have done foolishly (willful sin – he forced himself – is a foolish, deadly action);
- (2) You have not kept the commandment of the Lord (in spite of Saul’s excuses and blame placing on others); {McGee} *“Saul was told in the beginning that if he obeyed God, he would be blessed, but if he disobeyed, there would be judgment. The ruler must obey the Lord. Saul has disobeyed, so God has another man to be king. He is going to bring him on the scene a little later. Even Samuel, at this time, does not know who he is.”*
- (3) Your kingdom will not continue (Jonathan will not have the opportunity to ascend to the throne because of his father’s actions).

15 And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men. Samuel left without giving Saul the Word that he needed or offering a sacrifice unto God. He’s seen this spirit before. Saul has the spirit of the sons of Eli who caused the people to despise the offerings of the Lord. Why should he do what Saul has just done?

All of this chaos among the leaders has added to the fear of the people. Saul’s 3,000 has dwindled down to 600 men...and they’re all afraid.

16 And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. {JF&B} *“Saul removed his camp thither, either in the hope that, it being his native town, he would gain an increase of followers or that he might enjoy the counsels and influence of the prophet.”* The battle is about to begin and Saul, in desperation, moves everyone from Gilgal to Gibeah hoping to secure some help from his relatives.

17 And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual: 18 And another company turned the way to Bethoron: and another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. {Adam Clarke} *“The Philistines, finding that the Israelites durst not hazard a battle, divided their army into three bands, and sent them in three different directions to pillage and destroy the country.”* Since the Philistines could not engage the Hebrews in a real battle, they decided to use this

opportunity to plunder the country. The ones that suffered the most for this were the ones that were already suffering under the Philistines – the common people. They suffered because of bad leadership. Proverbs 29:2 NKJV ***When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan.***

The Desperate Condition of the Hebrews

19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: This verse seems to suggest that this chapter occurred more than a year after the previous chapter. The Hebrews have no swords and no spears. They do have bows and arrows but it is unlikely that they defeated the Ammonites with these weapons. The Philistines have stripped them of basic necessities – just as the devil does to the one that refuses to surrender their life to God.

20 But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. Not only had they been stripped, they had to suffer the humiliation of going down to their captors to have basic farming tools sharpened. They were probably ridiculed upon their arrival and they lost valuable time from the field when they made this trip.

21 Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. NIV ***The price was two thirds of a shekel for sharpening plowshares and mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing goads.*** The King James Version of this text leads you to a totally different conclusion. All of the translations that we typically use agree with the NIV that this verse is trying to convey the price of the sharpening in verse 20. However, the real message is how that their enemies have stripped them bare. What an embarrassment for God's people!

22 So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found. {McGee} *“Only two men, Saul and Jonathan, had swords. I suppose the other men in the army carried mattocks, axes, clubs, and similar instruments. This was the way Saul's army was equipped to fight!”* If there was ever a time that the Hebrews should repent for asking for a king, that time is now!

23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash. The plundering and pillage begins but this verse is really a lead in to the next chapter. We're moving toward the end of Saul. He will reign for many more years but he is about to completely lose his position with God.

Chapter 14

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: This chapter is a continuation of the previous chapter where we focus on the exploits of the eldest son of Saul, Jonathan. He is the kind of man any leader would love to have on his team. He has taken the vision of his father and has run with it with faith in God. This is why it is so important for leaders to make sure their vision is God-breathed. There will be a “Jonathan” that will take that vision, no matter how fleshly or spiritual, and run with it. We’ll also learn the basics of getting an answer from God and the foolishness of hasty decisions to try to move God when you’re not in position to move Him.

Jonathan Again Moves by Faith Against the Philistines

1 Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines’ garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father. Jonathan is obviously excited about the vision of his father to break the yoke of the Philistines from off God’s people. He is actually more excited about it than Saul is. Therefore, he tells his armor bearer (who, by the way, has no weapon) to follow him to the camp of the Philistines. (The Hebrew word for “garrison” here is different from the word in verse 3 in the last chapter. This word refers to a camp of soldiers.)

As one of Saul’s key men, why didn’t Jonathan tell his father that he was planning an incursion into the Philistines’ camp?

- First, it appears that Saul has lost faith in his own vision. This is obvious from the prior chapter where Saul sinned to try to make his vision happen. This seems to indicate the carnal origin of this vision but the enemy fights any vision.
- Second, he’s taking with him 50% of all of the weapons at their disposal. (Remember – 1 Samuel 13:22 *So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found* – there were only two swords among the Hebrews.)
- Third, if his father didn’t stop him, the people certainly would because he seems to have the heart of the people.

2 And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men; Saul was encamped in Gibeah with his men but he was in a spot at the rear. This makes me call to mind a saying that the late Bishop L. H. Ford would often say, “**You can’t lead from the back.**” Saul has given up his quest to lead. All he wants to do now is survive. As the king, he will be a marked man when the battle begins and he knows this. What is he going to do?

3 And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod’s brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD’s priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. {Matthew Henry} “*Samuel, the Lord’s prophet, had forsaken him, but he thinks he can make up that loss by commanding Ahiah, the Lord’s priest, to attend him.*” Saul didn’t have a priest available in the last chapter so he sinned by offering a sacrifice unto God. Now he tries to fix it by having Ahiah in his company. However, who is Ahiah? He is the great-grandson of Eli. This family is no longer fit for the priesthood having been rejected by the Lord but Saul is trying to fix things by having a priest (any priest!) ready to attend to him.

4 And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines’ garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5 The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah. Message Bible **The pass that Jonathan was planning to**

cross over to the Philistine garrison was flanked on either side by sharp rock outcroppings, cliffs named Bozez and Seneh. The cliff to the north faced Micmash; the cliff to the south faced Geba (Gibeah). The text gives us some insight into the layout of the land but the message is that this was not an easy task. This was not going to be quick and the land would give them time to think about their actions.

6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few. God is working in spite of Saul, not because of him. He has put a wonderful spirit of faith in his son that goes beyond his resources. Remember, he only has one sword so his armor bearer doesn't have any way to support his actions. {Adam Clarke} *"This is a fine sentiment; and where there is a promise of defense and support, the weakest, in the face of the strongest enemy, may rely on it with the utmost confidence."*

7 And his armor bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. Look at this additional blessing! Not only does Jonathan have faith, but also God has given him one that has a heart for his vision. Just like Jonathan has a heart for Saul's vision, this unnamed armor bearer has a heart for Jonathan's vision – and he has no sword! **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Faith, like unbelief, is contagious. Therefore, infect those around you with the right thing!**

8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. 9 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. 10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us. We have here the basics of asking God for direction. Often, young Christians are confused on how to get direction from God. In many church circles, this is called a "fleece" after the actions of Gideon in Judges 6:36-40. It is a very basic means of petitioning God when you're confused by the "voice" you may be hearing. At some point, Christians need to grow beyond the need for such basic signs and grow into the maturity level that Christ promised us – John 10:27 NLT **My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.** However, there is no indication in this passage that we can't use a fleece as a means of hearing His voice.

11 And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. Once again the Philistines insulted God's people but the Hebrews brought it on themselves with their fear and cowardice. Now those that trust God are lumped in that same number. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Our actions, good or bad, affect the entire body of Christ.**

12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armor bearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armor bearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. {Matthew Henry} *"The Lord has delivered them, not into our hands (he sought not his own glory), but into the hand of Israel, for he aimed at nothing but the advantage of the public. His faith being thus strengthened, no difficulty can stand before him; he climbs up the rock upon all four (v. 13), though he has nothing to cover him, nor any but his own servant to second him, nor any human probability of any thing but death before him."* This is the sign that Jonathan was waiting for. Now if he had received that sign and let the flesh get in the way, he would have never received the blessing. However, this simple move of faith is about to deliver the entire country. (I say it's a "simple" move but the reality is that

Jonathan took a bold step of faith entrusting his life and the life of his armor bearer in the hands of the Lord – if faith were not present, they easily could have both died.)

13 And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armor bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armor bearer slew after him. It was not simple to obtain the blessing but they were willing to pay the price to get that blessing! Once they got there, they immediately began to attack. {Adam Clarke} “Jonathan knocked them down, and the armor-bearer dispatched them.”

14 And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow. Jonathan and his armor bearer killed about 20 men in a small area of land.

God Begins to Work for His People

15 And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling. {Adam Clarke} “They were terrified and panic-struck; the people in general round about, those in the garrison, the spoilers, and the whole country, were struck with terror; the commotion was universal and most extraordinary.” The move of faith by Jonathan set off a chain reaction in heaven where God responded to his faith. In the process, panic and fear began to set in among the Philistines soldiers and the raiders.

16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another. In response to this panic, the Philistines began to kill each other and the people of God saw it. Jonathan did not yet know this Scripture but if he had, it would have fit perfectly. 2 Chronicles 20:15b **Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.**

17 Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there. Saul was so filled with fear that he could not handle watching over his few men and even lost track of his oldest son.

18 And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel. Why didn’t Saul ask Samuel what to do since they’re now both in the same little village? I believe his pride was offended in the last chapter when Samuel publicly reprimanded him. So instead of asking the Lord’s prophet, he goes to the rejected priest and foolishly brings the Ark of the Covenant to the battlefield. He has forgotten that it was lost to the Philistines the last time it was in battle because of the sins of the leader. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** When there is a need to repent, you can’t get around it and get an answer from God.

19 And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand. Saul shows his impatience again. His actions say, “I’m too busy for God’s direction. I have to move quickly!” {Matthew Henry} “He that believeth will not make haste, such haste as this, nor reckon any business so urgent as not to allow time to take God along with him.”

Side Road: God knows every moment now, past, and in the future. He is not moved by circumstances to act hastily or rashly. Since He is like that, should we not also be like that?

I recall receiving a “Word” from a prophet shortly after my wife and I were married that would have changed the direction of my life completely. It was a “Word” that caught my wife and I totally off guard. I will never forget that he ended the “Word” by saying, “DO IT QUICKLY! DO IT QUICKLY!” Those two sentences bothered me extremely but I felt compelled to obey. This person was not a novice and had a history of giving prophetic Words but this still did not sit well with me. I especially didn’t like those last two sentences. They implied rash actions without further prayer or counsel. I began to set some actions in motion but just when I was prepared to put my letter of resignation on my supervisor’s desk (this “Word” involved moving out of the city), I received a phone call from a family member who, in prayer, was greatly troubled by this same “Word”. She advised me to seek additional counsel and do nothing until I received that counsel. I did and have discovered, over time, that this “Word” was not God’s Word. Saul had no need for impatience. Every thing and every moment is in the hands of God.

Be careful when faced with a “Word” that urges you to haste (unless you KNOW that you’ve been slothful and following the Lord’s leading that you already received) especially when it catches you off guard. Seek wise counsel and confirmation before you move out.

20 And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man’s sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture. What a sight they saw when they arrived! Their enemies were killing each other!

21 Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.

22 Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle. {Matthew Henry} “Those that had deserted and gone over to the enemy, and were among them, now fought against them.” Traitors and deserters now want to be numbered with those that will win the victory.

SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Some won’t get with the vision until they see proof of obvious success. This is “help” that you don’t need.

23 So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Bethaven. It was not because of the last minute help from the traitors and deserters. The LORD saved Israel that day.

A Foolish “Leadership” Action by Saul

24 And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food. There is a time to call a fast and there is a time when the people should NOT be fasting. These are basic principles in understanding fasting. Saul, however, was desperate. God’s prophet had turned from him, the people were leaving him, and he had no Word from the Lord. Therefore, he calls a fast in desperation; one that he insists that they follow by adding a curse to it so the people are fasting in fear.

25 And all they of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground. 26 And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath. 27 But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. Message Bible **But Jonathan hadn't heard his father put the army under oath. He stuck the tip of his staff into some honey and ate it. Refreshed, his eyes lit up with renewed vigor.**

28 Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day. And the people were faint. {McGee} *"It was a foolish command that Saul had given. The men were weary. They had fought a battle and won. They needed something to eat. Saul said, 'I will not let anyone eat anything until I am avenged of my enemies.'"*

29 Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. 30 How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? 31 And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint. Warfare, natural and spiritual, is very tough, tiring business. Saul was so focused on being avenged (Avenged for what? He started this!) that he missed the basics.

Saul Causes the People to Sin With His Foolish Oath

32 And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood. The people were famished and in their extreme hunger, threw off all restraint and ate the meat without proper preparation, half cooked and still with blood in it. This was a result of poor leadership that was not concerned about the people.

33 Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day. Ye have transgressed? What about you, Saul? {Matthew Henry} *"Saul, being informed of it, reproveth them for the sin: You have transgressed; but did not, as he should have done, reflect upon himself as having been accessory to it, and having made the Lord's people to transgress."*

34 And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew them there. At least Saul worked to correct the error.

35 And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD. The time we're focusing on in our text is after the Law has been given. Altars were built in Genesis but after the Law, this was the responsibility of the priest. One builds an altar for sacrifice. Saul has not repented of his sin from the previous chapter but intends to keep doing it. He is obsessed with being a king-priest like the monarchs in the nations around him but God will not have it. {McGee} *"He actually built an altar to the Lord and offered sacrifices!"*

36 And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest,

Let us draw near hither unto God. Ahiah was a priest from a rejected family but that didn't mean he was not sincere in what he was doing. Saul was prepared to annihilate the Philistines without prayer.

Saul Seeks a Scapegoat for His Many Sins

37 And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day. Psalm 66:18 *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*

38 And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. 39 For, as the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him. Message Bible **Saul then said, "All army officers, step forward. Some sin has been committed this day. We're going to find out what it is and who did it! As God lives, Israel's Savior God, whoever sinned will die, even if it should turn out to be Jonathan, my son!" Nobody said a word.** Saul couldn't see his many sins over the last two chapters. He has made foolish oaths, intruded on the priest's office, and caused the people to sin. In all of this, though, he does not look inwardly but to others.

40 Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee. The army kept quiet during Saul's tirade because they knew that Jonathan was the one that had eaten but they also knew that without the faith of Jonathan, they would all be dead that day. But Saul was mad so they just let him have his way.

41 Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped. 42 And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. 43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die. 44 And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. Saul's conscience has been seared. Instead of repenting and asking forgiveness for his foolish oath, he is willing to kill his oldest son, the one that won the battle for them. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: If you won't recognize your sin and repent, your salvation is in jeopardy.**

Side Road: NO leader in the flesh is perfect. We will all make mistakes. However, if a leader cannot recognize their mistake and publicly apologize, that leader is dangerous and not worthy of being followed. That leader will destroy someone else to protect themselves. This is the leadership of Saul.

45 And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. The people have kept silent and let Saul rant but now things are getting serious and they're not going to let it go any further. Saul is showing glimpses of the jealousy that's in his heart.

- Jonathan was the one that stirred God to action.
- Jonathan was the one that worked with God for the victory.
- Jonathan was the one who showed faith that caused the Philistines to be defeated.

If Saul gets rid of him, then HE gets the praise. What an ugly spirit! The soldiers, though, know all of these things and they know that they owe their lives to the faith of Jonathan and that they almost died due to the foolish actions of Saul. They are intent on him not having the upper hand in this.

46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place. Saul had a chance to rid Israel of Philistine oppression once and for all but he sinned and would not repent and then made foolish oaths that made the army too weak to fight. We end this section with Israel alive but they have begun to see the true nature of their king – the king that they asked for.

Summary of Saul's Reign and Family

47 So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them. Though Saul was a poor king spiritually, he was successful naturally. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Don't confuse natural success and prosperity with the blessing of God.** God blessed Saul for the sake of His people, not for the sake of Saul.

48 And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them. We'll see some of this in the next chapter.

49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchishua: and the names of his two daughters were these; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: 50 And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. 51 And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

52 And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him. Saul could have completely broken the yoke of the Philistines from off Israel but deliverance comes to those that obey God and he would not do this. The people will continue to suffer because of him.

Final Words from Dr. J. Vernon McGee: *“We are now seeing the true character of Saul. Later on we will see how he will act in direct disobedience to God. He is going to do something that will bring tragedy to the nation Israel. Had God not intervened, it would have meant the extermination of the nation. Saul is revealing that he is not God's man at all. He is actually Satan's man. We will see in the next chapter that Saul is not obeying God any longer—he is following his own devices. Finally, the Spirit of God will no longer speak to him. God will no longer give him leading, and he will turn from God to the demonic world.”*

Chapter 15

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: This is the final turning point chapter in the reign of Saul. It is one of the saddest chapters in the Bible as we see this man that God had thoroughly equipped, completely walk away from God. The most critical thing we will learn is the importance of absolute obedience to the Word of God. And if we fail (we don't have to fail) we MUST humble ourselves, repent and be honest before God. Maybe He will be gracious and forgive us.

Saul's Final Test of Fitfulness to Remain As King

1 Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. It's interesting how Samuel begins this commandment from the Lord. He seems to be reminding Saul that he has a right to say what he's about to say because of the level to which Saul has sunk. {JF&B} *“Several years had been passed in successful military operations against troublesome neighbors. During these Saul had been left to act in a great measure at his own discretion as an independent prince. Now a second test is proposed of his possessing the character of a monarch in Israel; and in announcing the duty required of him, Samuel brought before him his official station as the Lord's vicegerent, and the peculiar obligation under which he was laid to act in that capacity. He had formerly done wrong, for which a severe rebuke and threatening were administered to him (1Sa 13:13, 14). Now an opportunity was afforded him of retrieving that error by an exact obedience to the divine command.”*

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. {Adam Clarke} *“The Amalekites had acted with great cruelty towards the Israelites on their coming out of Egypt. (See Exodus 17:8) They came upon them when they were faint and weary, and smote the hindermost of the people – those who were too weak to keep up with the rest. (See Deuteronomy 25:18.)”* It is now hundreds of years later but God has not forgotten the cruelty that was done to His people. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: God will not forget what you've gone through.**

3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. Message Bible **Go to war against Amalek. Put everything connected with Amalek under a holy ban. And no exceptions! This is to be total destruction — men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys — the works.** I added the Message Bible translation because it speaks so clearly of what the Lord had called Saul to do – He wanted a “holy ban” upon Amalek. They were set aside for divine judgment and God wanted to use His people to execute His judgment. In all cases, though, the command was very clear. This was to be a complete annihilation of the Amalekites. Can anyone question what the mission was to be?

4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. Saul has a more substantial army than he had in his last recorded conflict but he still has the same spirit, if not worse.

Saul's War Against Amalek

5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. 6 And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. {Matthew Henry} *“The Kenites were of the family and kindred of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, a people that dwelt in tents, which made it easy for them, upon every occasion, to remove to other lands not appropriated.”*

7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. It appears that Saul has obeyed God until we read on.

8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. {JF&B} “But he spared Agag, probably to enjoy the glory of displaying so distinguished a captive, and, in like manner, the most valuable portions of the booty, as the cattle. By this **willful** and partial obedience to a positive command, complying with it in some parts and violating it in others, as suited his own taste and humor, Saul showed his selfish, arbitrary temper, and his love of [dictatorial] power, and his utter unfitness to perform the duties of a delegated king in Israel.” Saul absolutely REFUSED to obey God. He had his own plan and agenda and he was intent on following that.

Saul Is Rejected By God

10 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, 11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. NLT *Then the Lord said to Samuel, “I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has not been loyal to me and has refused to obey my command.” Samuel was so deeply moved when he heard this that he cried out to the Lord all night.* {Adam Clarke} “That is, I placed him on the throne; I intended, if he had been obedient, to have established his kingdom. He has been disobedient; I change my purpose, and the kingdom shall not be established in his family. This is what is meant by God’s repenting-changing a purpose according to conditions already laid down or mentally determined.” Adam Clarke’s statement is significant – when God “repents” of something, He is not saying that He has done wrong but He is changing your destiny. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: You NEVER want God to repent of something positive that He has outlined for you.**

12 And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. NIV *Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, “Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.”* Saul was so far gone that he not only could not see his disobedience but he has also set up a monument to his “great victory”.

Side Road: What if Saul perfectly understood what the Lord told him through Samuel? Then he was probably not only disobedient (not trying to diminish his actions with the word “only”) but he also may have viewed strict obedience as unimportant. This is a terribly dangerous attitude. He viewed the Word of God as a guide and a direction to point to and not as the absolute life vs. death rule. There are too many today IN THE CHURCH that have this same view.

13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. I believe Saul really believed (at least he had convinced himself) that he had obeyed God and was waiting for his commendation from Samuel. {JF&B} “Saul was either blinded by a partial and delusive self-love, or he was, in his declaration to Samuel, acting the part of a bold and artful hypocrite.”

14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: The time when you think you have gotten away with your sin is the time when it will be exposed.** It is far better to keep your conscience pure by confessing your sin. 1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Notice how the King James Version puts this accusation of the king against his own people: THEY have brought them; the PEOPLE spared; WE have utterly destroyed. In other words, "It's not my fault. I did well but THEY did poorly." **LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE:** Leadership means being accountable for the actions of those under your charge. {Matthew Henry} "Those that are willing to justify themselves are commonly very forward to condemn others, and to lay the blame upon any rather than take it to themselves."

16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. These two words of Saul bother me. I see a picture of a man standing before God's prophet with a casual attitude toward his sin saying, as we would say, "Well, go ahead". There is no remorse mentioned in the text or nervousness but only a flippant response that says, "Well, go ahead. Say what's on your mind."

17 And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? There was a time when Saul really was humble. He was humble in spite of his stature and his wealth. I believe it was before anything we've seen in our study of this book and it was the deciding factor that moved God to elevate Saul. Saul was not elevated because of his stature or his wealth but because of his spirit. {Matthew Henry} "Those that are advanced to honor and wealth ought often to remember their mean beginnings, that they may never think highly of themselves, but always study to do great things for the God that had advanced them."

18 And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. In the politically correct world that we live in today, this verse would be viewed as bothersome. Many would have the nerve to accuse God because of this verse but the reality is that Saul was called to execute the plans of God as His leader on the earth. God could have done it Himself but He chose to let His people be a part of His plans. This was a great privilege but Saul still has in his mind that HE is the king and not the Lord.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? Amplified Bible **Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord, but swooped down upon the plunder and did evil in the Lord's sight?** West Translation – "Since you know all of this, why did you intentionally disobey the commandment of the Lord and rush after the goods of the Amalekites, actions which were evil in the sight of the Lord?" This is a tough question. This is the kind of question that should make any Christian hang their head and ask forgiveness. (If it doesn't, you have that same spirit of Saul and you need to repent and ask the Lord for deliverance.)

20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. Saul did not respect Samuel's office, which is why he had no problem arguing with him over the Word of

God. He already told him to “say on” regarding the Word God had for him. (Unfortunately, these are the actions of so many children today.)

Side Road: I know there are people who play, what I call, the “God card” (“*God told me to do it*”) to keep from being criticized by their actions but Samuel was a KNOWN prophet. He has worked in the prophetic ministry most of his life and is nearing the time when God will call him in. There was no excuse for Saul to think it was appropriate to argue over the Word of God. This is nothing but arrogance at its worst. His actions remind me of those of the spoiled child that has been caught doing wrong but refuses to admit guilt but argues with their parent. If that child is not punished by their parents, they WILL be punished by God.

Once again, Saul makes a difference between what he had done and what the people had done. He continues his argument **AGAINST THE WORD OF GOD** in the next verse.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. It wasn’t me; it was the people. There’s a price for leadership and the Word of God makes that price clear. Hebrews 13:17 admonishes the people to obey leadership but the key (to me) is the part that says that the leader must give account for their leadership. Saul wants the leadership praise and glory without the accountability. That’s bad leadership.

22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. Message Bible *Then Samuel said, Do you think all God wants are sacrifices — empty rituals just for show? He wants you to listen to him! Plain listening is the thing, not staging a lavish religious production.* Oh, people of God, if we could get this! We go on fasts, give money we don’t have, and work where God never called us to work in a feeble attempt to please God because we refuse to obey the basics. How often do we see people give money to the church in an attempt to ease their conscience but when it’s all finished, they’re still going to do what THEY want to do. God wants us to obey. It’s plain and simple. He wants us to return to the days when the Christian Church was one that would do as it was told.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. There are at least two great lessons in this verse.

1. In the first sentence of this verse, the King James Version has “*is as*” in both places italicized. This means it was not in the original text but added by the translators for clarity. When you remove the italicized words, the writer was saying, “**Rebellion = the sin of witchcraft**” and “**Stubbornness = iniquity and idolatry**”. This is an important distinction because it changes the verse from make a comparison to similar things to saying they are the same. Why is this important? When we understand how God views witchcraft, we understand how God views rebellion. Exodus 22:18 *Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.* {Dake} “*Witches claimed to reveal hidden secrets by contact with God and the invisible world. They were seducers of the people to turn them from God; thus they were to be killed.*” **THE REBEL HAS THE SAME NATURE OF A WITCH; THE NATURE THAT SAYS, “I KNOW WHAT TO DO BETTER THAN GOD SO WHY SHOULD I OBEY?”**

2. In the second sentence of this verse, Saul has rejected, through his arguments and disobedience, the Word of God. His actions, as I said earlier, demonstrate that the Word of God is a nice guide but not vital. You cannot have a Christian leader with this type of attitude! Hosea 4:6 *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.* This verse is often used to celebrate the need for education and instruction. This is good but it has nothing to do with this verse. The knowledge that we need comes from the Word of God. (You have to go back to Hosea 4:1 to see that the Lord had a controversy with the people because there was no knowledge of God in the land.) **BECAUSE THIS KNOWLEDGE IS REJECTED, THE ONE WHO DOES SO IS UNFIT TO STAND BEFORE GOD AND ALL THAT THIS ONE PRODUCES (CHILDREN) ARE EQUALLY UNFIT.** **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Every time you make a choice (you could have easily gone) to skip Sunday School or Bible study, your choice is the rejection of the Word of God.

24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Keep reading; this is not true repentance but we see a glimpse of the character of Saul in this verse when he said that he feared the people. Obviously, the people wanted some kind of reward for this war but it was up to the leader to make sure that everyone obeyed.

25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.

26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. Samuel made it clear that those he associates with ACCEPT the Word of God. Those that God rejects, he rejects. Could we make such a stand?

27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. 28 And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou. There's more than a symbolic action in this verse. Saul has taken hold of a key part of Samuel's wardrobe. {Easton's Bible Dictionary} "*The term 'mantle' is frequently applied to the 'robe of the ephod', which was a splendid under tunic wholly of blue, reaching to below the knees. It was woven without seam, and was put on by being drawn over the head. It was worn not only by priests but also by kings, prophets, and rich men. This was the 'little coat', which Samuel's mother brought to him from year to year to Shiloh, a miniature of the official priestly robe.*" By grabbing Samuel's mantle, Saul, whether knowing or not, demonstrates what he's been trying to do all of the time – he wants Samuel's priestly and prophetic roles. Even Samuel's mother did not intrude upon this position but honored it by providing him with his priestly mantle each year. Saul wants to be a prophet-priest-king without charge to anyone.

29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent. Samuel calls the Lord, the "Strength of Israel". This title of God had never been used before. It was important for Saul to know who the real Strength of Israel was and that He was not going to keep changing His mind back and forth because we're all over the place. {JF&B} "*Hebrew, 'He that gives a victory to Israel,' a further rebuke of his pride in rearing the Carmel trophy, and an intimation that no loss would be sustained in Israel by his rejection.*"

30 Then he said, I have sinned: yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God. 31 So Samuel turned again after

Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD. {JF&B} “[Samuel came] not to worship along with him; but first, that the people might have no ground, on pretense of Saul’s rejection, to withdraw their allegiance from him; and secondly, to compensate for Saul’s error, by executing God’s judgment upon Agag.”

32 Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. 33 And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. {JF&B} “This cruel tyrant met the retribution of a righteous [God]. Never has it been unusual for great or official personages in the East to perform executions with their own hands. Samuel did it ‘before the Lord’ in Gilgal, appointing that same mode of punishment (hitherto unknown in Israel) to be used towards him, which he had formerly used towards others.”

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel. {Adam Clarke} “From this time Samuel had no connection with Saul; he never more acknowledged him as king; he mourned and prayed for him, and continued to perform his prophetic functions at Ramah, and at Naioth, superintending the school of the prophets in that place.” Saul has lost his connection with God’s man. This was a great problem in the Old Testament because it meant that his actions were based on his own decisions and not on a Word from God.

Chapter 16

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: We are introduced to the second most exciting figure in the Bible – David. His name is mentioned more times than any other person in the Old Testament. Unfortunately, with his arrival, the rejection of Saul is complete. We'll be introduced to a glimpse of his home life and the transformation of Saul.

God Sends Samuel to Anoint a New King

1 And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. We don't know how long Samuel's mourning period went on. Perhaps God was waiting on Saul to exhibit even a small amount of remorse or maybe God was waiting for His new king to come of age. However, the point is that Saul was the people's choice but David will be God's choice.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. The commentators criticized Samuel for his fear. However, we don't know the conditions or the things that he went through to come to this point. God doesn't criticize him – He gives him an answer. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: GOD is the Judge, not us.**

3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: {Matthew Henry} Those that go about God's work in God's way shall be directed step by step, wherever they are at a loss, to do it in the best manner.** The commentators had a lot of discussion on this verse, "Was God telling Samuel to lie?" Then they went on to justify why God did what He did. **GOD DOES NOT NEED OUR HELP TO VINDICATE HIS HOLINESS OR HIS AWESOME ABILITY!** He is God, He is holy, and He is awesome. Whatever He does is good. Until we understand that, we're almost in the dangerous position of criticizing the actions of God. {David Guzik} *"The first king of Israel was anointed for the people. He was the 'king from central casting,' the kind of king the people wanted. Now, the 'people's choice' had failed and disqualified himself. Now, the LORD said, it's time for a king for Me. God was going to show Israel His king."*

4 And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? Unlike the people of the Bible, today's church RUNS to meetings when there is a "prophet" present. However, the role of the prophet is to "cry aloud and spare not" and it is to "rebuke and reprove". The prophet's role is not to be the game show host to tell you what you're about to win and how blessed you will be. The prophetic ministry keeps the church in order. Therefore, there should have been some level of anxiety at the appearance of the prophet when he normally did not come to this town.

5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. Do you see the wisdom of God? The importance of having a sacrifice was that there was a private dinner afterward with the prophet-priest. This allowed him time to pull Jesse and his sons aside for his main mission because it could not be done publicly.

An Important Lesson on God's Way

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him. Samuel is still stuck on the choice of Saul. Yes, God chose him but He chose him to grant the desire of the hearts of the people.

7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. NLT **But the Lord said to Samuel, “Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”** The Lord has a different way of viewing things than we do. He can see into the heart. Because we can’t, we choose the next best thing (to us), the external appearance.

Caution! Be careful with this concept because our natural inclination is to try to see things as God sees them. We can’t! In addition, people have used this verse to excuse sinful behavior from “Christian” people – “You know God looks on our hearts.” Therefore, the lesson for us is since man looks on our outward appearance, our outward appearance has to reflect what’s in our heart.

8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. 9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. 10 Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. 11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. {Adam Clarke} *“This certainly was not done publicly; Samuel, Jesse, and his children, must have been in a private apartment, [prior] to the public feast on the sacrifice; for Samuel says, 1 Samuel 16:11, We will not sit down till he (David) come.”*

This is the first insight we have on the childhood of David and it is a poor testimony. Yes, he was the youngest but his family viewed him in such a poor light that when the man of God called for ALL of Jesse’s children, David wasn’t even considered. David was not his father’s favorite child. Apparently, David’s mother was responsible for doing a fantastic job in instilling in him the way of the Lord. Unfortunately, David also learned his father’s attitude of favoritism and bad parenting, as we’ll see in Second Samuel.

David is Anointed as the Next King

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Dr. McGee (and others agree with him) that “ruddy” means that David had red hair. Others felt that it meant he had a fair complexion. Neither of these are attributes that you would expect from the average resident of the Middle East. However, in thinking about this, he probably did not have red hair as Irish or Scandinavian people are used to. My cousin’s youngest son has “red” hair, as we call it in the African-American community, but it would probably be better described as very light auburn. So we are introduced to David – he has (my interpretation) auburn hair, fair complexion, and is a good-looking boy but he does not have the overwhelming good looks of Saul. His finest attributes cannot be seen. Most of the writers agree that David is now around fifteen years old, at the oldest.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. 14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. It’s interesting how that when Samuel anointed David as king, the anointing for leadership left the current king and rested upon David. If he is 15 years old, we have fifteen more years of Saul’s reign with no influence from the Lord.

Side Road: Look at the longsuffering of our God! We don't know how much time passed from this chapter and the prior chapter but, even though God rejected Saul, God allowed His Spirit to stay with him until He chose a successor. In all of this time, I believe the Holy Spirit was working on Saul to encourage him to repent.

The evil spirit that afflicted Saul was not technically “from the Lord” but was allowed to do this by the Lord. How do we know this? The Word of God shows us God’s nature – James 1: 13 *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.* One of the jobs of the devil is to tempt man to sin. God does not do this because He hates sin. However, the “hedge” that God had around Saul is now gone and God is using this situation to put David in the court of the king so he can learn the ways of the court.

David Becomes Part of Saul’s Court

15 And Saul’s servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. 16 Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. 17 And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. 18 Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him. David had a great testimony in the court of the king but not in his own family. He is a fitting ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ who testified, “A prophet is not without honor EXCEPT in his own country”. We have another attribute of David – he was skilled in war even though he was a child and so skilled in the harp that his “gift would make room for him”.

19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. 20 And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. 21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armor bearer. The love of David for Saul is a great story by itself. This was not a fleeting love but he loved him to the end even though Saul will soon be maniacally jealous of David.

22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight. NLT *Then Saul sent word to Jesse asking, “Please let David remain in my service, for I am very pleased with him.”*

23 And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him. Many of the commentators tried their best to explain this verse but in my opinion for what it’s worth, did not do well. They tried to explain the spiritual with the natural. It was not the playing of David as much as the anointing of God upon his music. The Jewish historian, Josephus, understood this better and gives his account: “*And when he was come, Saul was pleased with him, and made him his armor-bearer, and had him in very great esteem; for he charmed his passion, and was the only physician against the trouble he had from the demons, whensoever it was that it came upon him, and this by reciting of hymns, and playing upon the harp, and bringing Saul to his right mind again.*”

Chapter 17

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Everyone seems to know (whether accurate or not) the story of David and Goliath so I will hit only the high points. The key point of this chapter is to show the vast spiritual difference between David the boy and Saul the king. This difference, and recognition of what he has lost and may lose in the future, will drive Saul to insane levels of hatred of David.

Israel Fights Against the Philistines Again

1 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim. 2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. 3 And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.

GOLIATH!

4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. 5 And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. 6 And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. 7 And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him. NLT

Then Goliath, a Philistine champion from Gath, came out of the Philistine ranks to face the forces of Israel. He was over nine feet tall! 5 He wore a bronze helmet, and his bronze coat of mail weighed 125 pounds. 6 He also wore bronze leg armor, and he carried a bronze javelin on his shoulder. 7 The shaft of his spear was as heavy and thick as a weaver's beam, tipped with an iron spearhead that weighed 15 pounds. His armor bearer walked ahead of him carrying a shield. Goliath represents every major problem we go through and the attack approach of the devil. As I stated earlier in our study, the devil doesn't come to just win but, as the Lord stated, to kill, steal, and DESTROY. The commentators agree that his MINIMUM height was 9 feet tall while some say he could have been as much as 12 feet tall! He is not only impressive for his height; he is impressive for his strength.

8 And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. 9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. 10 And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. Adam Clarke, quoting from the Targum (*the Targum is the Aramaic translations or paraphrases of the Old Testament that began to be developed after the Jews returned from the Babylonian Captivity*) stated that there were additional words from Goliath: *"I am Goliath the Philistine of Gath, who killed the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas the priests; and led into captivity the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and placed it in the temple of Dagon my god; and it remained in the cities of the Philistines seven months. Also, in all our battles I have gone at the head of the army, and we conquered and cut down men, and laid them as low as the dust of the earth; and to this day the Philistines have not granted me the honor of being chief of a thousand men. And ye, men of Israel, what noble exploit has Saul, the son of Kish, of Gibeah, done, that ye should have made him king over you? If he be a hero, let him come down himself and fight with me; but if he be a weak or cowardly man, then choose you out a man that he may come down to me."* This is not a surprising approach from the devil. He wants us to fear based on his past exploits so we won't believe God. He reminds Israel of their past failures

(death of the priests and loss of the Ark) and questions where they are now (what has Saul done?). Of course, just like the devil, he didn't bring up the many losses the Philistines had experienced under Saul's leadership.

11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. Goliath's tactics worked. Fear is paralyzing and the armies of God are now paralyzed.

David Goes to the Battle

12 Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul. 15 But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. Saul sent David home when the army went to war.

16 And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. This is one of the devil's tactics – constant reminders of your inadequacy to promote more fear. Goliath did this for forty days.

17 And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp of thy brethren; 18 And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. 22 And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren. 23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.

24 And ALL THE MEN OF ISRAEL, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: You can't work for God in fear. Fear is an indication of doubt and unbelief.

25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

26 And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? 27 And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him. 28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. Message Bible *Eliab, his older brother, heard David fraternizing with the men and lost his temper: "What are you doing here! Why aren't you minding your own business, tending that scrawny flock of sheep? I know what you're up to. You've come down here to see the sights, hoping for a ringside seat at a bloody battle!"* Why was Eliab upset? Here's what I think:

1. David is asking questions that any real warrior should be asking. They were afraid and his questions made them embarrassed about their fear.
2. He knew David was anointed to be king (chapter 16) and didn't like the idea of his baby brother have such honor. He was already in the court of the king. This was nothing but jealousy.

Eliab was jealous but he also knew that he shouldn't allow this Philistine to get away with this. However, he's still paralyzed with fear. He's so angry with himself for his fear and with his brother for his future that

he goes so far as to insult the work of his father to provide for his family. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** The revelation of your destiny will not be well received by everyone.

29 And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause? 30 And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner. 31 And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him. 32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. Look at David's confidence – it is not arrogance, as we'll soon see.

33 And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. Now look at Saul's fear.

34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: 35 And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. 36 Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. 37 David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee. I love David's testimony but what troubles me is that Saul just turned over his kingdom to a teenager! He could not find a single soldier to fight Goliath and deliver the kingdom (including himself) so he puts this into the hands of a cheese delivery boy.

38 And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. 39 And David girded his sword upon his armor, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. Now Saul should really be worried. Goliath's armor probably weighs more than David's body and David is going to meet him with NO armor. However, he has chosen the armor of God's divine protection.

David Fights Goliath

40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. 41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. 42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. 43 And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. Goliath viewed the appearance of David before him as an insult. He went so far as to curse David by his gods which also didn't work.

44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. 45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands. {JF&B} “When the two champions met, they generally

made each of them a speech, and sometimes recited some verses, hurling contempt and defiance at one another. David's speech, however, presents a striking contrast to the usual strain of these invectives. It was full of pious trust, and to God he ascribed all the glory of the triumph he anticipated."

48 *And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and RAN toward the army to meet the Philistine.* Compare David's attitude (running to the battle) to the attitude of the army of Israel earlier (fled from him and were sore afraid).

49 *And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. 50* *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. 51* *Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.* Per JF&B, David cut off Goliath's head "not as an evidence of the giant's death, for his slaughter had been effected in presence of the whole army, but as a trophy to be borne to Saul. The heads of slain enemies are always regarded in the East as the most welcome tokens of victory." God had already finished the job with a slingshot.

Israel Wins the Battle

52 *And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. 53* *And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. 54* *And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent.* {Josephus, Hebrew Historian} "But Saul and the entire army of the Hebrews made a shout, and rushed upon them, and slew a great number of them, and pursued the rest to the borders of Garb, and to the gates of Ekron; so that there were slain of the Philistines thirty thousand, and twice as many wounded. But Saul returned to their camp, and pulled their fortification to pieces, and burnt it; but David carried the head of Goliath into his own tent, but dedicated his sword to God [at the tabernacle]."

Side Road: Chapters 16 and 17 have some issues with chronology that the commentators have not been able to rectify. They are not "show stoppers" but can cause some confusion. Josephus ends this chapter at verse 54 as seen above. The events that are about to take place make it seem that Saul doesn't know David or his father. However, this was resolved at the end of the prior chapter when he sent to Jesse for David. I could count this to Saul's mental illness if not for the fact that Abner was also confused. Abner, the General of the Army and Saul's cousin, would know David, Saul's armor bearer and personal musician. Also, verse 15 of this chapter says that Saul sent David home before the battle so he HAD to know David. This does not effect our souls but those that hate God's Word will use it to question its integrity. The Word of God is still right even if something was lost in translation.

Final Thoughts

55 *And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. 56* *And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is. 57* *And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58* *And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy*

servant Jesse the Bethlehemite. Here is one commentator's attempt to handle the confusion: {JF&B} “*The growth of the beard, and other changes on a now full-grown youth, prevented the king from recognizing his former favorite minstrel.*”

{Adam Clarke} “*I have only to remark here, that the historical books of the Old Testament have suffered more by the carelessness or infidelity of transcribers than any other parts of the sacred volume; and of this the two books of Samuel, the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles, give the most decided and unequivocal proofs. Of this also the reader has already had considerable evidence; and he will find this greatly increased as he proceeds.*”

Chapter 18

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Two of the biggest paradoxes in the Bible are revealed in this chapter – the love of Jonathan, the heir to the throne, and David, who should be, but is not, his chief rival, and the hatred of King Saul for David, who won Saul's biggest battle. Jonathan was a man of tremendous integrity. Saul was a man of tremendous evil. David was a man of tremendous loyalty. We'll learn the importance of these characteristics in securing the favor of God.

The Beginning of the Relationship of Jonathan and David

Side Road: According to some of the commentators, the Septuagint, remember, this is the Greek version of the Old Testament held in high respect for its authenticity, excludes the first five verses of this chapter. Josephus also excludes them in his historical account. When you come to verse 6, they do seem to be in the wrong spot but they help us understand the beginning of the great relationship of David and Jonathan.

1 *And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.* This verse takes place right after the death of Goliath. At this time, they may even be still on the battlefield.

{Dake} “Jonathan was possibly 40 years old when he met David and 55 when he died with Saul. Ishbosheth, the youngest son of Saul, was 40 when he began to reign (2 Samuel 2:10).” Dake helps us with some of the chronology of this book. Most of the commentators put their ages closer together but then this helps explain how Jonathan could be captain over a thousand back in chapter 14.

2 *And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.* Samuel had warned the people of this back in 1 Samuel 8:11. David's shepherding days are over.

3 *Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4* *And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.* Those that don't know the Lord or are confused about Scripture have viewed the covenant of Jonathan and David in such an ugly manner with accusations as strong as homosexuality. I recently received an e-mail on the church web site from a young man who invited me to his blog where he discussed his Pentecostal background and his homosexuality, and justified it with the relationship of David and Jonathan. I found that troubling on many levels so I solicit your prayers for him. He cannot appreciate that brotherly, non-perverse love between two men is Biblically based and occurs all of the time. Proverbs 27:17 ***Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.***

{McGee} “The covenant that these two men made was that they would stick together. It is difficult to find another friendship equal to what these men had. There is nothing quite like it. David was a peasant boy, and he did not have the clothes befitting his new public life. Jonathan shared his wardrobe with David.” Adam Clarke goes on to say, “Presents of clothes or rich robes, in token of respect and friendship, are frequent in the East. And how frequently arms and clothing were presented by warriors to each other in token of friendship, may be seen in Homer and other ancient writers.”

5 *And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.*

{Matthew Henry} “David having signaled himself above the men of war, in taking up the challenge which they declined, Saul set him over the men of war, not that he made him general (Abner was in that post), but perhaps captain of the life-guard; or, though he was youngest, he ordered him to have the precedence, in

recompense of his great services.” This verse also helps explain how Jonathan ascended at a young age. It appears that one positive thing about Saul was that he promoted based on performance and had no issues with age, since David was still a teenager at this time. Saul gave him a battlefield commission even though David was not one of the original soldiers that came to the fight.

The Strife Between Saul and David

6 And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music. 7 And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. {Matthew Henry} “Some time after the victory Saul went a triumphant progress through the cities of Israel that lay next him, to receive the congratulations of the country. And, when he made his public entry into any place, the women were most forward to show him respect, as was usual then in public triumphs, and they had got a song, it seems, which they sang in their dances (made by some poet or other, that was a great admirer of David’s bravery, and was more just than wise, in giving his achievements in the late action the preference before Saul’s), the burden of which was, Saul had slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”

8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. The problem with favor (if there can be a problem with it) is that you have to handle the attacks of those that don’t have it. In the case of David, Saul has the advantage of being the king. David is now under the constant scrutiny of Saul. REMEMBER, David is still a child – he wasn’t old enough to go fight with the army against Goliath but he’s now over the men of war and under the constant jealous scrutiny of the king.

10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul’s hand. The actions of Saul had an immediate response. {Matthew Henry} “Those that indulge themselves in envy and uncharitableness give place to the devil, and prepare for the re-entry of the unclean spirit, with seven others more wicked.” The demonic prophesy of Saul was either a pretense of true prayer or the actions of a demon prophesying doom on David or a little of both.

11 And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice. This is Saul’s **FIRST** and **SECOND** attempts to kill David. There will be about twenty more attempts, according to Dake. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** There is a price for favor.

12 And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. {Dake} “Saul demoted David from being general over all his armies to being captain over only 1,000; yet there was no complaint from the man. He went out and came in before the people as usual, behaving himself so wisely in the demotion and new responsibilities that Saul became all the more afraid of him.” **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** People, that don’t have God’s favor don’t especially care for those that God has blessed. This principle seems ugly but it’s true. When you have favor and others don’t, especially those that use to have it, they don’t want to be bothered with you. Your very presence makes them look bad. It makes them remember what they used to have. Favor will allow you to take being misused better

because you see that your destiny is better than this current abuse. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** When you understand your future, you can deal with your present better.

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him. The remedy for foolishness is to act wise. If you get caught up in the actions of others, God will not be pleased. There's always someone watching you but when they saw David's actions, in spite of what they had heard, they were impressed (we'll see that more in verse 16).

15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. When you're misused and handle it well, the person doing the misusing becomes nervous and afraid of you. Others that are looking on will finally see the conduct of your abuser and, if they had any animosity toward you, it will begin to turn against the abuser. These are basic principles taught by the Lord Jesus.

16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them. The demotion of David to a captain over 1,000 moved him out of the king's court and among the people. This worked in his favor because he went out among them fighting their battles. The heart of the people went after David.

Saul Uses His Family Against David

Side Road: One of the most evil things a person can do is to engage their family in their personal issue. The result will be that the whole family will turn against someone and will not understand why. The result, unless they repent, is that they will invoke the wrath of God. Saul's actions were, at first, sinister and concealed but they will eventually come out and succeed. We'll see in Second Samuel, that most of Saul's family will turn against David, to their detriment. You can't curse who God has blessed.

17 And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him. This is Saul's **THIRD** attempt to kill David only he planned to let the Philistines be the instrument of his death. David, because of his great love for Saul, had no idea what he had in mind but God did, so He protected him. Saul never intended for David to marry his daughter but for him to be killed in battle for her. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** The devil doesn't move right to his goal but starts with something that seems innocent to move you to destruction. For this reason, the Spirit **MUST** lead us.

The thing to not forget is that Saul owed this to David anyway for killing Goliath. Do you remember these words from the previous chapter? 1 Samuel 17:25 *And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.* Since Saul did not keep any of his bargains, God will take up the cause.

18 And David said unto Saul, Who am I? and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king? David was truly overwhelmed with this honor. His humility was a part of his heart that God loved so much.

Side Road: No doubt so time has expired between these two verses. During this time, David was to, in Saul's words, "fight the Lord's battles" for him. Because David did not die, as Saul had planned, he came up with another ploy to humiliate David.

19 But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife. {JF&B} “But the fickle and [dishonest] monarch broke his pledge at the time when the marriage was on the eve of being celebrated, and bestowed Merab on another man; an indignity as well as a wrong, which was calculated deeply to wound the feelings and provoke the resentment of David. Perhaps it was intended to do so, that advantage might be taken of his indiscretion.” Even though the humility of David allowed him to be overwhelmed by this prospect, I'm sure he was still extremely disappointed, as well as humiliated, by this outcome. Saul was working on his emotions to get him to give a response that would allow the people to see a different side of him. It did not work.

20 And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. {McGee} “It says here that Michal loved David, but it was not that marital love that is needed to make a success of marriage. In the beginning, it was that love of the hero and his popularity. The day will come when she will ridicule him and despise him for his enthusiasm for God.” Saul sees another opportunity to misuse David and he's happy about it. He has another scheme planned for the death of David.

21 And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in the one of the twain. Saul will use the love of his daughter for David and the love of David for him to be his fourth attempt to kill David. He had to know that David had great love for him otherwise he would not have tried this again. After all, he had publicly humiliated David with his oldest daughter.

22 And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law. Don't you wish people would use their intelligence for good and not evil? This is the beginning of Saul's **FOURTH** attempt to kill David.

23 And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed? 24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David. {Matthew Henry} “It well becomes us, however God has advanced us, always to have low thoughts of ourselves. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. And, if David thus magnified the honor of being son-in-law to the king, how should we magnify the honor of being sons (not in law, but in gospel) to the King of kings! Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us!”

25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. {JF&B} “In Eastern countries the husband purchases his wife either by gifts or services. As neither David nor his family were in circumstances to give a suitable dowry for a princess, the king intimated that he would be graciously pleased to accept some gallant deed in the public service.” However, the truth behind this request was for David to be slain by the Philistines. Saul hid his true nature behind his royal office (the dowry of a princess has to be significant) and a pretense of going after God (forcibly circumcising these uncircumcised Philistines). **LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE: When you no longer care for the welfare of God's people, you're no longer fit to be in leadership.**

26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired. There was a time limit on this request, no doubt intentionally by Saul so that David

would act in carelessness and haste, but David, even in haste, was able to safely complete the mission. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** When God has a promise on your life or you're working to please God, you can't die until that promise happens. This is a HUGE principle and I believe it with all my heart.

27 Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. {Adam Clarke} “The Septuagint has only one hundred men. Saul covenanted with David for a hundred; and David himself says, 2 Samuel 3:14, that he espoused Michal for a hundred: hence it is likely that one hundred is the true reading.” This may seem like a gruesome episode but remember that we're dealing with different times and customs.

28 And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him.

29 And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually. Verse 29 tells the story of the rest of this book – David will be Saul's enemy until he dies in the last chapter of this book. He could see that the Lord was with David and that the princess loved him. Saul's planned had backfired. He had unwittingly given David closer access to the throne because he is now the son-in-law to the king, so he has a right to the throne, he has the favor of God, and the people love him.

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by. This is, not by design as much as a result of the fourth attempt, Saul's **FIFTH** attempt to kill David. The Philistines heard of the additional great humiliation that they had suffered by the hands of the boy soldier, David, and they came after him. David, by the Law of Moses, was free to stay at home for a year with his new wife (Deut. 24:5) and could justifiably be free from military service. But David's love for his country and his king was too great. {Adam Clarke} “Of this war we know no more than that David was more skilful and successful in it than any of the other officers of Saul. His military skill was greater, and his success was proportionate to his skill and courage; hence it is said, he behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul.”

Chapter 19

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Some unknown period has passed from the last chapter to this chapter. David is now living in a house with his wife but his very presence continues to plague Saul. Every great leader in God must go through a period of testing to be made by the Lord. We begin to see in this chapter the things in this chapter that will turn David from an impressionable young boy to a man of God.

Another Attempt by Saul to Kill David

1 And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. Saul is no longer trying to hide his feelings about David. He not only speaks to his servants but he includes his oldest son, Jonathan, in this conversation. His jealousy and fear has consumed him and turned to an all-consuming hatred for David. He may have included Jonathan because he wanted him to understand that his ascension to the throne was in danger as long as David was alive. He probably also has figured out the mistake he made in giving David his youngest daughter in marriage since now David has a LEGAL right (in addition to a spiritual mandate) to the throne as the son-in-law to the king. This is Saul's **SIXTH** attempt to kill David.

2 But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: 3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Every time the enemy tries to lay a trap, God provides a way of escape. In this case, David had favor with one on the inside who told him the entire plan and was willing to find out what else was on Saul's mind.

4 And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good: 5 For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? We need someone who will remind our enemies of the good intentions that we have ... if it's true. Sometimes people will hate you for no reason at all. That's the time to remind them that you mean them no harm.

6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul swore, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** {Matthew Henry} "We must be willing to hear reason, and to take all reproofs and good advice even from our inferiors, parents from their own children."

7 And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past. {McGee} "Saul listened to his son, and David came back to the palace. David was wary, however, because he knew his life was in danger." David may still be relatively young (around 20 years old according to some) but his time in the presence of the lunatic Saul and the battles he has fought have matured him rapidly. He's no longer sitting in his presence clueless.

David's Victory Brings Another Attempt on His Life

Side Road: Every victory we achieve in Christ makes us more of a target for the enemy's counter-attacks. He's not very concerned about those on the sidelines but he is very concerned about those that cause set backs to his kingdom.

8 And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him. David is continuing to have success fighting for Saul and this probably upset Saul even further.

*9 And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Not everyone appreciates your success even if it works in their favor.* Once again, David had success, which meant accolades from the people, and it meant that the people mentioned David's name and not Saul's. This ate at Saul and the devil used his anger, hatred, and jealousy as an opening.

10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin: but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. This is Saul's **SEVENTH** attempt to kill David but once again, the Lord gave him deliverance.

Saul Brings His Campaign of Murder to David's House

11 Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain. We immediately come to Saul's **EIGHTH** attempt to kill David. At this time, Michal is still in love with David. He's still much thought of by the people and he's still a great military leader. Everything that she loves about him is still there but God is going to use these incidents to take David to a new level in Him.

Side Road: Dr. McGee calls this period of time when Saul attempted so many times to kill David the time of David's disciplining. David was courageous as a shepherd but to lead God's people would mean a higher level of preparation so that he did not fall into the same errors of Saul. God used this period until he was 30 years old to prepare him for greatness through suffering. It was during this time that David wrote many of his Psalms (see especially Psalms 52-59) in prayer and praise for God's deliverance.

(Notice the similarity between David's preparation through running from Saul and Joseph's preparation by time spent in prison. They both started at about the same age and came out at the same age. Obviously, there is great benefit in what God takes us through.)

12 So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped. {Matthew Henry} “[Notice] David's wonderful deliverance out of this danger. Michal was the instrument of it, whom Saul gave him to be a snare to him, but she proved to be his protector and helper. Often is the devil out-shot with his own bow. And now it was that, either in his own closet before he went or in the hiding-place to which he fled, he penned that fifty-ninth Psalm, which shows that, in his fright and hurry, his mind was composed, and, in this great danger, his faith was strong and fixed on God; and, whereas the plot was to slay him in the morning, he speaks there with the greatest assurance (v. 16), I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning.”

13 And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth. 14 And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick. As I read this, I chuckle at the humor of God and the foolishness of man. As Matthew Henry said, Saul gave Michal to David to be a snare to him but she has turned into a snare to her father.

15 And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. Saul would have killed him in cold blood on his sick bed (if this had really been David). Look how far he has fallen.

16 And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster. Again, I have to chuckle as God gets another laugh at their expense.

*17 And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee? Yes, she lied but David escaped. The commentators got all worked about this but we're talking about an incident 3,000 years ago, in the Old Testament, from someone who will later demonstrate that she really hasn't doesn't have a heart for God. We find our principle for Saul in this verse – Proverbs 26:27 **Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.***

David Flees to Samuel

18 So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. {Matthew Henry} “Because Samuel was the man that had given him assurance of the crown, and his faith in that assurance now beginning to fail, and he being ready to say in his haste (or in his flight, as some read it, Ps. 116:11), All men are liars (‘not only Saul that promised me my life, but Samuel himself that promised me the throne’), whither should he go but to Samuel, for such encouragements, in this day of distress, as would support his faith?” {JF&B} “Samuel was living in great retirement, superintending the school of the prophets, established in the little hamlet of Naioth, in the neighborhood of Ramah.” According to Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, “Naioth [NAY oth] (dwelling places) [was] a place in Ramah where Samuel lived. Apparently, Naioth was not a separate village but a section of Ramah.” David did exactly what we should do when we have received a Word and it seems that everything is going in just the opposite direction. The only difference is that we should take our appeal back to God. David came to Samuel as he was working with the “school of the prophets”.

What was this “school of the prophets”? We’ll hear this term throughout the historical books of the Old Testament. Samuel was over one school, Elisha was over a school in Second Kings, and John the Baptist had what could be termed a school of the prophets, which he turned over to the Lord Jesus. According to an Internet site, “When prophets were joined together, they were referred to as a ‘company of prophets’. Included in this company were musicians, minstrels, psalmists, sons of prophets, and servants of prophets, who were actually prophets in training. Training was done through discipleship. This included common living quarters or living quarters in close proximity to one another. The prophet Elisha seems to have had some type of common living quarters with the sons of the prophets. The term ‘sons’ may refer to spiritual as well as natural sons. More often it refers to someone who is being trained by a ‘father’ or experienced, senior person in the ministry.” The school of the prophets was where the seasoned prophet who had experience God could impart those experiences into the younger prophets coming along. This is what David came upon. It was an important concept and today’s version, seminaries, is an attempt to repeat that type of training.

19 And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. I always find it interesting, yet sad, that in spite of David’s popularity among the people, there was always someone who would turn him into Saul. They probably saw favor with Saul as more important than favor with David, or with God. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** There are always those whose motives are not pure who cannot be trusted with the deep things of God or of your life. Therefore, always be led by the Spirit!

20 And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. NIV **But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there**

as their leader, the Spirit of God came upon Saul's men and they also prophesied. We have Saul's **NINTH** attempt to kill David. Now I know we're going to have a real problem with this verse and the following verses because we Pentecostal Holiness people feel that if you're not living holy, you will NEVER experience the things of God. Obviously, this thinking is wrong. God does what He wants to do to protect His legacy. He gave David a Word and it will not come back to Him void.

We have men here that knew David and appreciated David but still felt like they had to obey the commandment of Saul. Some of them may not have loved David. In spite of this, the Spirit of God came upon them. Whatever their issue was, the presence of the Lord overwhelmed them for the sake of protecting David and His Word. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **You don't have to fight for your anointing or for your destiny. God will fight for you if you'll remain faithful to Him.**

21 And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. Each of these incidents (the **TENTH** and **ELEVENTH** attempts on David's life) were orchestrated by the Holy Spirit to protect David and his destiny.

22 Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah. Finally, Saul had enough and decided to go to Ramah for himself – the **TWELFTH** attempt on David's life.

23 And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. Saul prophesied from the time he left the well unto he came to Naioth where his men, Samuel, and David were.

24 And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets? Amplified Bible **He took off his royal robes and prophesied before Samuel and lay down stripped thus all that day and night. So they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?** {Adam Clarke} “[Saul] threw off his royal robes or military dress, retaining only his tunic; and continued so all that day and all that night, uniting with the sons of the prophets.” Some of the translations and commentators fall over themselves over this verse on whether Saul was actually naked or if he only removed part of his clothing. Perhaps the Lord saw through time and decided to implement this verse before it came to pass: Revelation 16:15 **Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.** Shame could help bring repentance to Saul but it did not.

{JF&B} “Thus God, in making the wrath of man to praise Him, preserved the lives of all the prophets, frustrated all the purposes of Saul, and preserved the life of His servant.”

Chapter 20

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Saul, even though God stopped him in the last chapter, continues his pursuit of David. David and Jonathan work out a strategy to stay ahead of Saul. They use a basic form of finding God's direction – a fleece – to know what to do and God sends David away from his position with the king for a season for his protection. Following Divine guidance is more important than our pride.

David Flees from Saul Again

From the first verse, we see that this chapter probably should have been connected to the prior chapter. David has fled Naioth now that Saul is prophesying and can't get his hands on him.

1 And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? David is still young and still has a heart for Saul. This makes the actions of Saul that much more confusing to him.

2 And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so. Jonathan was a man that loved the Lord and trusted God but he was not aware of the tactics of the devil. He spoke presumptuously when he said, “*Thou shalt not die.*” He had no Word from God to say that but based it purely on his relationship with his father. He felt that he could go into his father, like he did in the previous chapter, and resolve everything just because he was his father's oldest and (probably) favorite child. However, the tactics of the enemy have changed and Saul is demon possessed. This changes everything.

SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: The children of God MUST have the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as promised through the Lord Jesus Christ and evidenced in the Book of Acts to effectively combat the changing tactics of the devil.

3 And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death. David understood that the tactics had changed because he was a man of war. He also realized that the assault of Saul would increase, not decrease, after the Divine intervention of the last chapter.

David and Jonathan Develop a Strategy for Saul

4 Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee. 5 And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even. 6 If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. 7 If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him. 8 Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father? {Adam Clarke} “*If thou seest that I am plotting either against the state, or the life of thy father, then slay me thyself.*” This is a statement of David's passion for the kingdom and for Saul. He knew this was not true and he wants to make sure that Jonathan understands that he is not a traitor.

9 And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee? {McGee} “*Jonathan was a real friend to David. It is*

wonderful to have a friend like that. A friend, we are told, is one who is born for adversity. A man proves he is your friend when you are in trouble. When David was in trouble, Jonathan proved to be his friend. He would do anything to protect David.”

10 Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly? 11 And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field. 12 And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to morrow any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee; 13 The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father. {Adam Clarke} “From this, and other passages here it is evident that Jonathan knew that the Lord had appointed David to the kingdom.” There are a couple of ways to view this last verse: (1) either Jonathan blessed David to be a king like his father or (2) he blessed David to for Divine protection like the Lord had kept his father. The next passage, however, lets us see clearly that Jonathan understood the destiny for David.

14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: 15 But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David’s enemies. 17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul. {McGee} “Jonathan realized that David, his brother-in-law, would probably succeed Saul upon the throne. So he requested that when David came into power his own relationship with David’s house might not be forgotten.” Often, the first thing that was done by a new king in this period was to eliminate all of potential enemies especially those of the former king’s family. Jonathan’s vow was for himself and his family.

18 Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. {Adam Clarke} “The months of the Hebrews were lunar months, and they reckoned from new moon to new moon. And as their other feasts, particularly the Passover, were reckoned according to this, they were very scrupulous in observing the first appearance of each new moon. On these new moons they offered sacrifices, and had a feast. And we may suppose that the families, on such occasions, sacrificed and feasted together. To this David seems to refer.”

19 And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel. 20 And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark. 21 And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt; as the LORD liveth. 22 But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away. 23 And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between thee and me forever. We’ve spoken of this before; this was a “fleece”. A fleece is a simple method of finding the mind of the Lord often used in the Old Testament. The word comes from the process that Gideon used to determine if he really heard from God or if he was moving in himself. The two parts of the fleece are underlined in the text.

The Strategy is Implemented

24 So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

25 And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty. 26 Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean. Saul's statement has to do with whether David was "clean" as spoken of by the Law of Moses. If he had touched a dead body, he would not be clean for the Lord's feast and needed to observe the actions of the Law to become clean. It would not seem unusual for a soldier to be unclean the first day. {Matthew Henry} "*Some ceremonial pollution has befallen him, which forbids him to eat of the holy things till he has washed his clothes, and bathed his flesh in water, and been unclean until the evening. Saul knew what conscience David made of the law, and that he would rather keep away from the holy feast than come in his uncleanness.*"

27 And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day? Now it's the second day and Saul expects that David should be clean by now.

28 And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem: 29 And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favors in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table. Did Jonathan lie? Yes, he lied. David was not in Bethlehem, had not planned to go to Bethlehem, and Jonathan knew exactly where he was. Don't get all worked up over this – just you make sure that YOU don't lie. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Be careful not to use the actions of people from thousands of years ago and in different cultures to excuse our own shortcomings.**

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? Various commentators have said a lot of things about this verse but have all come to a single conclusion – this was a great insult not directed at Saul's wife as much as he was insulting Jonathan by calling him illegitimate (I prefer to use this term instead of the one which is now considered very crude language), a traitor to his own father and family, and a fool for choosing to be the friend of someone who will cause his own destiny to suffer.

31 For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. Saul seems to understand the destiny of David and that it's a destiny that interferes with his son's destiny. This is a nice excuse but the reality is that Saul's hatred of David was nothing but jealousy and had nothing to do with his concern for Jonathan.

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done? 33 And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. 34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame. Saul

publicly humiliated Jonathan. He insulted his mother and he insulted his choice in friends. Before a large audience, he made him look to be less than a man. He concluded his tirade with an attempt on Jonathan's life. It is no wonder that he left the room in "fierce anger". **OBSERVATION: Many a man has lost his children (their love, their respect, and their time) because they have not learned how to SHUT THEIR MOUTHS. SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Everything that comes into your mind is not to come out of your mouth. Discipline yourself and put a guard over your tongue.**

The Result of the Strategy – David Must Get Away from Saul

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. 36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee? 38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. 39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. 40 And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city. God answered the fleece in the actions of Saul and now Jonathan communicates it to David with an arrow.

*41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. {Adam Clarke} "David's distress must, in the nature of things, be the greatest. Besides his friend Jonathan, whom he was now about to lose for ever, he lost his wife, relatives, country; and, what was most afflictive, the altars of his God, and the ordinances of religion." All of this was a result of the corrupt administration of King Saul. Proverbs 29:2 **When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.***

42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city. {McGee} "After David and Jonathan talked, Jonathan returned to the palace. I think he was a very sad man because he knew that his father was determined to slay his beloved friend."

Chapter 21

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: David now experiences an emotion he has not experienced (at least not on record in the Bible) before – fear. All of his actions of this chapter will be based on fear. Fear makes your actions irrational and does not work with Divine direction.

David Comes to the Priest for Supplies

1 Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? {Matthew Henry} “He had some with him (as appears Mk. 2:26), but they were only his own servants; he had none of the courtiers, no persons of quality with him, as he used to have at other times, when he came to enquire of the Lord.” According to JF&B, Nob was a city of the priests, in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives – a little north of the top and on the northeast of the city. It is said to have been about five miles from Gibeah, the hometown of Saul and the location of the events of chapter 19.

Side Road: Look at what God has done to David! He pulled him from following sheep to being known by name and face across Israel to being reduced to beg for bread from the priest. God is making him – developing him into what He wants him to be. We must all be “made” if we are to be used in the service of the Lord. The process will leave scars and emotional pain but we’ll be ready to be used by God.

2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabouts I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place. David lied. Fear, when you let it take control, will cause you to lie. He is not operating under Divine direction and his actions will have severe consequences for the priests in the next chapter. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Once you receive direction from God, you must continue to seek His guidance every step to get to where He wants you to be.

3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. 4 And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. {JF&B} “There would be plenty of bread in his house; but there was no time to wait for it. ‘The hallowed bread’ was the old shewbread, which had been removed the previous day, and which was reserved for the use of the priests alone (Lev. 24:9). Before entertaining the idea that this bread could be lawfully given to David and his men, the high priest seems to have consulted the oracle as to the course to be followed in this emergency. A dispensation to use the hallowed bread was specially granted by God Himself.” This last statement was supported by the words of the Lord Jesus (Luke 6:4).

5 And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. David and those with him had been hiding in the caves waiting for word back from Jonathan for three days so they satisfied the requirement of the priest.

6 So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul. God knew Doeg was there before David arrived. It is said that he was in the midst of a religious vow, which is the meaning of “detained

before the Lord". However, his heart is still filled with wickedness. If David had continued to seek direction and not let his hunger be his guide, God would have probably sent him somewhere else.

Doeg was an Edomite (not originally of the Hebrew people and not totally in tune with their customs) who was the chief of Saul's herdsmen. David, no doubt, knew him and he knew David. He also knew that David and Saul were at odds. Doeg will be responsible for the death of all of the priests of this city in the next chapter. David composed Psalm 52 shortly after this. {Matthew Henry} "*It fell out very unhappily that there was one of Saul's servants then attending before the Lord, Doeg by name, that proved a traitor both to David and Ahimelech. He was by birth an Edomite, and though proselyted to the Jewish religion, to get the preferment he now had under Saul, yet he retained the ancient and hereditary enmity of Edom to Israel. He would rather have been anywhere else than before the Lord, and therefore, instead of minding the business he came about, was plotting to do David a mischief and to be revenged on Ahimelech for detaining him. God's sanctuary could never secure such wolves in sheep's clothing.*" This we will see in the next chapter.

8 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. 9 And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.

David's First Attempt to Move to the Philistines

10 And David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. David, the one who had become one of the greatest enemies to the Philistines, now turns to them for safety. His fear has caused him to briefly lose touch with God. He is not there because God sent him but because his fear sent him. Did he expect to be well received riding into Gath wearing the sword of Goliath of Gath?

11 And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? This song just will not go away. It continues to cause David problems.

12 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. 13 And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. 14 Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me? 15 Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house? God used this incident to get David back to where he should be. After his deliverance here, he wrote Psalm 34 (*A Psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech (or Achish); who drove him away, and he departed*). His time of losing touch with God was very brief and his faith has been renewed – Psalm 34:19 **Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.**

Chapter 22

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Saul is nearly insane. He operates in a persecution complex and uses manipulation to try to get people to do what he wants. He is totally obsessed with killing David. David comes to the realization in this chapter that his actions in the last chapter have had severe consequences and publicly confesses his wrong. May we similarly learn from our actions.

David Lives in the Caves

1 David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. This cave was named because it was a known formation of caves that sat on the Philistine border. {JF&B} “[These were] a number of pits or underground vaults, some nearly square, and all about fifteen or twenty feet deep, with perpendicular sides, in the soft limestone or chalky rocks. They are on the borders of the Philistine plain at the base of the Judea mountains, six miles southwest from Bethlehem, and well adapted for concealing a number of refugees.” David’s family came to him there, not for support to him but for fear for their own lives. Saul’s venom toward David was so great that it extended to everyone connected to him.

2 And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men. Among those that came to David, while he was hold up in this rock formation became those that later were his champions among his Mighty Men. 2 Samuel 23:13 *And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.*

3 And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. 4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold. It would make sense for David to bring his parents to Moab since his great-grandmother, Ruth, was of this country. By this time, his parents were older and not fit for the conditions in the caves. They could not return to their homes because Saul was after everyone connected to David.

5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth. {JF&B} “This sound advice, no doubt, came from a higher source than Gad’s own [wisdom]. It was right to appear publicly among the people of his own tribe, as one conscious of innocence and trusting in God; and it was expedient that, on the death of Saul, his friends might be encouraged to support his interest.” David may have been in the caves for quite some time and the prophet advises him to return to his own people. (It was said that Gad was of the school of the prophets and sent to be with David by Samuel.) He will be safe in his own tribe and can develop alliances for when he becomes king.

Saul Discovers David’s Location

6 When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeath under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him;) Let’s repeat a principle from a few chapters ago because it’s obvious that one of David’s kinsmen let Saul know where he was. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** **There are always those whose motives are not pure who cannot be trusted with the deep things of God or of your life.** However, this is not a problem because David is there in obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit through Gad.

7 Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; 8 That all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? This is nothing but MANIPULATION at its ugliest. Manipulation comes under the heading of witchcraft. Saul is appealing to the emotions and sympathies of his fellow Benjamites, while accusing David (and Jonathan) of treason, to get them to do what he wants them to do. This is manipulation and control, which are the basics of witchcraft.

SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: If you use these methods, your actions are UNGODLY!

9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. 10 And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. From all appearances, David's actions in the last chapter were not done by the leading of the Spirit. We met Doeg in that chapter and he saw David with the priests. David knew then that he was exposed but it was too late.

Saul Accuses the Priests of Treason

11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. 12 And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord. 13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? Saul is moving further and further into insanity. It began with jealousy over a teenage boy who saved his kingdom. Every action is met with paranoia and accusations. Nothing that Ahimelech the priest did was sinful or treasonous. Because Saul had left the service of the Lord, Ahimelech had no idea that there was a feud between the both of them.

14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honorable in thine house? Ahimelech proclaims his innocence by extolling the virtues of David. This probably stirs up Saul even the more.

15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more. NLT This was certainly not the first time I had consulted God for him! May the king not accuse me and my family in this matter, for I knew nothing at all of any plot against you.

16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. {Dake} "Saul determined this before he called them, so anything they could say would not change him. He was one of the most contemptible despots of history, showing how far back a man who was at one time filled with the Spirit, can go." **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Take an example from the horrible life of Saul and stay filled with the Spirit.

17 And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD: because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. To refuse an order of the king could mean certain death but these men feared for their souls. To kill the Lord's priests could mean eternal death.

18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. NLT Then the king said to Doeg, "You do it." So Doeg the Edomite turned on them and killed them that day, eighty-five priests in all, still wearing their priestly garments. How important is it to be led by the Spirit? What seemed innocent in the last chapter has resulted in this horrible execution.

19 And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword. Saul would not obey God and do this to the Amalekites but, to satisfy his own insanity, he'll do it to the families of the God's priests.

David Learns of the Death of the Priests

20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. Abiathar is the only descendent of Eli that remains at this time. He will continue as priest until Solomon deposes him so he's probably quite young at this time. (See 1 Kings 2:27)

21 And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests. 22 And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. David's repenting spirit is seen again. He knew he was responsible for this action and he did not hide behind his position or the prophetic Word on his life.

23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

Chapter 23

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: There is one major thing to learn in this chapter, as David did: DON'T PUT YOUR TRUST IN MAN.

David Fights Against The Philistines Again

1 Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing floors. At this time, David is, according to the commentators, hiding in the forest of Hareth, which was in the western region of Judah and not far from this town. {Adam Clarke} “*This was an ancient custom of the Philistines, Midianites, and others. See Judges 6:4. When the corn was ripe and fit to be threshed, and they had collected it at the threshing-floors, which were always in the open field, then their enemies came upon them and spoiled them of the fruits of their harvest.*”

2 Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. For Christians today who are used to asking God for an answer and receiving it, this verse doesn't leave an impact. However, in the Old Testament, the Lord spoke through angels, prophets, or the method provided to the high priest (we'll talk about that in verse 6). At this time, David probably received his answer through the prophet Gad because Abiathar has not yet arrived with the garments of the high priest.

3 And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? I love their honesty! I know we're all going to walk through hell right to the devil's door (I'm being sarcastic) but some will be honest and let the Lord know what He already knows.

4 Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. Was this a matter of unbelief? No! David needs a sure Word to encourage his men. He was ready to move out on the original Word. Now they have been guaranteed success by God and the men have caught faith.

5 So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. Just as the Word promised.

6 And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand. When Abiathar came to David, he also brought the garments of the high priest, which allowed him to “enquire of the Lord”. Let's understand the importance of this garment:

Exodus 28:30 **And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.** Amplified Bible **In the breastplate of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim [unspecified articles used when the high priest asked God's counsel for all Israel]; they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goes in before the Lord, and Aaron shall bear the judgment (rights, judicial decisions) of the Israelites upon his heart before the Lord continually.** What are these mysterious articles only designated by strange words (pronounced **yū'rīm** and **thūm'im**) in the Bible? According to Rabbi Geoffrey W. Dennis on www.pantheon.org/articles/u/urim_and_thummim.html, “[These items represented a] method for inquiring of the God of Israel that was kept part of the priestly garments. Little is truly known about the Urim and Thummim; even the name has been subjected to wildly

different translations. The Rabbis understood the Urim and Thummim to be part of the Breastplate of the High Priest and that its oracular function came from light shining through the twelve gemstones mounted on the breastplate.” Another site says that they were in some way connected with the ephod (a sacred linen garment worn by the high priests of Israel.).

Look at what God has done for David! The high priests garments and, more importantly, the method for getting an answer from God is no longer available to the king but to this fugitive hiding in the wilderness.



Saul showed that he did not appreciate the Lord’s priests by his execution of them. David welcomed the priest therefore God gave him the benefit that came with respecting His priest – access to Him.

Now, outside of Samuel, who Saul considers his enemy, Saul has no way of getting an answer from God. This will be an important point for a chapter that lies ahead.

Thirteenth Attempt to Kill David by Saul

7 And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars. 8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. Whoever told Saul about

this obviously didn’t tell him that David was doing the job he should have been doing in protecting his borders.

9 And David knew that Saul secretly practiced mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. David tells Abiathar to bring the Urim and Thummim so that he might receive an answer from the Lord.

10 Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. 11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down. 12 Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up. This is amazing! After David helped the people of Keilah, they turned on him. However, in all of this, I love David’s attitude because he never responded to them like they responded to him.

13 Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbear to go forth. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** If you’re going to ask God for an answer, be prepared to react to that answer.

Fourteenth Attempt to Kill David by Saul

14 And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. 15 And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood. David saw what was happening with him. What you see, is what can discourage you so God sent him encouragement in the next verse.

16 And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. Isn't it amazing that Jonathan could find David but Saul could not.

17 And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. {JF&B} "To talk with calm and assured confidence of himself and family being superseded by the man who was his friend by the bonds of a holy and solemn covenant, could only have been done by one who, superior to all views of worldly policy, looked at the course of things in the spirit and through the principles of that theocracy which acknowledged God as the only and supreme Sovereign of Israel. Neither history nor fiction depicts the movements of a friendship purer, nobler, and more self-denying than Jonathan's!" What I find interesting is that Jonathan knows that Saul also knows of David's destiny and that he's working to stop that. By doing so, Saul is not fighting against David but against God!

18 And they two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

19 Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? 20 Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand. You can never put your trust in man. Man will forget what you've done in the past and will be motivated purely by the flesh.

21 And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me. 22 Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there: for it is told me that he dealeth very subtly. 23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah. 24 And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. These treacherous people have been tasked to find out everything they can about David so that they can bring the information back to Saul. They must know that, if Saul succeeds, David will die!

25 Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David; wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. 26 And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. David is now at the brink of death.

God Delivers David

27 But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. 28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth. 29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi. Our God will keep us...if we let Him!

Chapter 24

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: David continues to run for his life from Saul but in this chapter, he learns that he must not try to hasten his destiny or relieve himself from his problems by destroying the Lord's anointed. He learns a great leadership principle that many have yet to learn today.

Saul's Fifteenth Attempt on David's Life

1 And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi. In the prior chapter, God had delivered David by sending the Philistines to invade the land. The word of their invasion came right at the time that Saul was closest to capturing David. He's dealt with them and now returns to his obsession – the death of David. This is now the **FIFTEENTH** attempt by Saul to kill David.

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. NLT **So Saul chose 3,000 elite troops from all Israel and went to search for David and his men near the rocks of the wild goats.** These “elite” or “chosen” troops were probably men that would have no problem destroying their fellow citizens or doing whatever was necessary to be totally obedient to Saul.

3 And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave. NLT **At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were hiding farther back in that very cave!** Of all the places for Saul to go, how is it that he came upon this place? Did this occur by accident or chance? Behind this is probably the hand of God to test David's heart.

SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: When you submit yourself to the will of God, little, if anything, occurs by accident. Psalm 37:23 NKJV **The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and He delights in his ways.**

4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. {JF&B} “God had never made any promise of delivering Saul into David's hand; but, from the general and repeated promises of the kingdom to him, they concluded that the king's death was to be effected by taking advantage of some such opportunity as the present.” **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Watch people! Watch how you handle circumstances! If you're not careful, they will move you to do things that may abort your destiny! These actions were not in line with the usual actions of David. He was tired of being chased and he was “encouraged” by those that felt for him (and that were also tired of being chased).

Side Road: David has been dealing with a significant issue (a “big picture” item) for a long time now and he's tired. Most of the things that discourage us and ruin our days and weeks fall into what I call “small picture” items. God doesn't focus on the small picture – He focuses on the big picture because how we handle this, impacts our destiny. In other words, He's working on our entire lives at one time. There are only a few things that fall into the “big picture” category. These are things like family tragedies (loss of a close loved one, loss of a home due to a disaster, or severe sickness in yourself or a loved one), major upheavals (moving from one state to another), or family changes (new child or a child moves out suddenly), and such like. However, the things that mess up our days and weeks are much smaller than that. I believe that God reserves the “big” items for times when He knows that we're prepared to handle them otherwise our failure could be devastating to our souls.

5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. 6 And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD. Message Bible **But then David's conscience began bothering him because he had cut Saul's robe. 6 "The Lord knows I shouldn't have done that to my lord the king," he said to his men. "The Lord forbid that I should do this to my lord the king and attack the Lord's anointed one, for the Lord himself has chosen him."** {Adam Clarke} "However unworthily Saul was now acting, he had been appointed to his high office by God Himself, and he could only be removed by the authority which placed him on the throne. Even David, who knew he was appointed to reign in his stead, and whose life Saul had often sought to destroy, did not conceive that he had any right to take away his life. He is the Lord's anointed and therefore sacred as to his person in the Lord's sight." This is a tremendous leadership principle for the people of God today so that we do not find ourselves doing as the world does in drawing up sides against leadership.

7 So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way. It appears that David's men had in their minds that if he wouldn't take care of it, they would. I believe that if David had done this deed, he would have significantly changed his destiny and, in the minds of his men, diminished the importance of being the anointed of God. Because of this, it would have come back to haunt him when he became king. Would men hazard their lives for another man if they viewed him only as a man?

8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself. By comparison, our attitude is that we've never been in bondage to any man. However, David understands what it means to humble yourself and humbles himself before the Lord's anointed. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: If we would learn how to view people right, we could do right toward them.**

9 And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? 10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD's anointed. 11 Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. 12 The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. 13 As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. 14 After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea. 15 The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand. David's appeal to Saul further shows how David humbled himself before the man who had tried to kill him fifteen times.

16 And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. David's integrity and humility melted the stone heart of Saul. For once, Saul acknowledges David as a family member, "Is this thy voice, my son David?" David had been running from Saul for many years but to Saul he has always been "the son of Jesse".

17 And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. Saul goes on to publicly confess his wrong and acknowledge the fact that what he has done over the years has been wrong.

18 And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. 19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. Perhaps now we see the real reason for the overwhelming emotion that Saul showed. He was so happy that David didn't do to him what he would have done to David. He was happy to be alive and because he was happy, he revealed everything in his heart.

20 And now, behold, I KNOW WELL THAT THOU SHALT SURELY BE KING, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. 21 Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. This is now the **SECOND TIME** that Saul has acknowledged part of the real reason of his constant pursuit of David – he knows that David will be the king and not Jonathan. This would be in fulfillment of what Samuel told Saul in chapter 15:28. Through all of this, Saul was actually fighting against God.

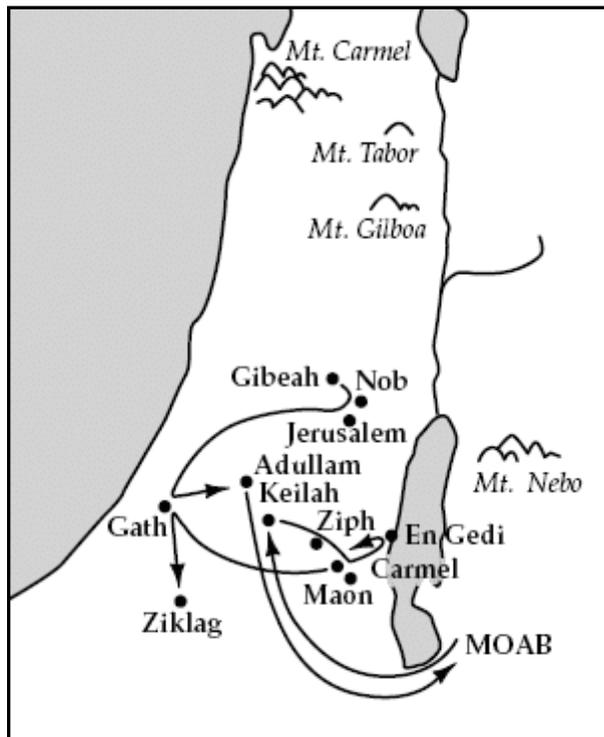
David Returns to Moab

22 And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold. According to other translations, David and his men returned to Mizpeh of Moab where they were in chapter 22. Saul had made a public “show” of repentance but he never invited David back to the palace or to return home to his wife, Saul's youngest daughter. Therefore, David may have been relieved but he was not going to trust Saul. {Adam Clarke} “*David could not trust Saul with his life; the utmost he could expect from him was that he should cease from persecuting him; but even this was too much to expect from a man of such a character as Saul.*” **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: Don't trust those that don't trust God.**

Chapter 25

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: There are three characters in this chapter that we will learn from: DAVID, who will act rashly in wrath, NABAL, a silly man who thinks it clever to “get over” on people, and ABIGAIL, a wise woman with a depth of knowledge of spiritual and natural principles. The men will teach us what NOT to do and Abigail will show us how to correct what the men have done. As a historical point, the chapter begins with the death of the last judge, Samuel.

The Death of Samuel



1 And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran. {Dake} “Samuel died at a ripe old age and all Israel mourned for him as they did for Moses, Joshua, and other great recognized leaders. It is supposed that he died about 2 years before Saul did, and when he was about 98 years of age.” There is no indication from the Scriptures that David attended the state funeral of Samuel, however, it’s likely that he did make some type of appearance to pay his respects. The death of Samuel was a signal to David to move further away from the influence of Saul. David may have attended the funeral and then moved south to the Wilderness of Paran, which would be at the very bottom of the map at the right. The Wilderness of Paran was part of the region that the children of Israel wandered in during the forty years after they left Egypt. It was a

remote barren region and was far from Saul.

Nabal and Abigail

2 And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. {Dake} “This indicates that David was in the north part of the wilderness of Paran.” This is NOT the Mt. Carmel at the top of the map, which was a frequent resting spot of the prophet Elijah, but this is a village in the southern part of Israel, not far from the Dead Sea.

3 Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb. {JF&B} “[Nabal was] of the same tribe with David himself; but many versions consider Caleb (‘dog’) not as a proper, but a common noun, and render it, ‘he was snappish as a dog.’” Look at the comparison between Nabal and Abigail. He was churlish (rude and coarse) and evil while she was sensible, clever, and very beautiful.

4 And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. 5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: 6 And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house,

and peace be unto all that thou hast. 7 And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. 8 Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favor in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. {JF&B} “David and his men lurked in these deserts, associating with the herdsmen and shepherds of Nabal and others and doing them good offices, probably in return for information and supplies obtained through them. Hence when Nabal held his annual sheep-shearing in Carmel, David felt himself entitled to share in the festival and sent a message, recounting his own services and asking for a present.” David, as a shepherd, understood the customs of shepherds, as we’ll see in the next passage.

Nabal Insults David and His Men

9 And when David’s young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. 10 And Nabal answered David’s servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. 11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be? 12 So David’s young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. {JF&B} “Nabal’s answer seems to indicate that the country was at the time in a loose and disorderly state. David’s own good conduct, however, as well as the important services rendered by him and his men, were readily attested by Nabal’s servants. The preparations of David to chastise his insolent language and ungrateful requital are exactly what would be done in the present day by Arab chiefs, who protect the cattle of the large and wealthy sheep masters from the attacks of the marauding border tribes or wild beasts. Their protection creates a claim for some kind of tribute, in the shape of supplies of food and necessities, which is usually given with great good will and gratitude; but when withheld, is enforced as a right. Nabal’s refusal, therefore, was a violation of the established usages of the place.” The words of Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown give us a better understanding of the customs of that time. David wasn’t just begging for a favor but what he sought was an expected gift from Nabal for his services.

13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff. It was necessary to leave this large force behind because the region they lived in was filled with nomadic tribes that would love to steal what they had. Also remember that they had their families (wives and children) there who would be sold into slavery by these roving bands if they had the opportunity. Seeing the hunger of the children and the women may have even added to David’s anger. Therefore, he is preparing to do something that could influence his destiny – he’s going to take judgment into his hands.

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal’s wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. 15 But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields: 16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. 17 Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him. The servants understood the importance of the service that David and his men rendered to them. They were safe because of them (since a shepherd often wanders with the herd far from their home base and in dangerous areas) but

Nabal didn't appreciate it or care. He was as those that look at the life of saints as the life of fools. He felt like he "got over" on David and he certainly was not going to pay him now. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: The stingy, evil heart wants blessings and favor without paying a price.** These servants were also afraid for their lives. Obviously, the text does not indicate how greatly Nabal insulted the men of David or the severity of that insult.

Abigail Intercedes For Her Household

18 Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. 19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: The wise woman builds her house.** Abigail is doing what is necessary to save her house and this is not her husband's business since he's the one that caused the problem.

20 And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert on the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them. According to Adam Clarke, David was coming down from Mount Paran when he met Abigail.

21 Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good. 22 So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall. {Dake} "This was a peculiar expression among Hebrews for males. It is used six times [in the Bible and twice in this chapter.]" **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: When you're discouraged or tired or both, be especially careful with your actions and your speech because you'll have a tendency to move totally in the flesh and later be embarrassed by your actions.** {Adam Clarke} "Nothing can justify this part of David's conduct. Whatever his provocation might have been, he had suffered, properly speaking, no wrongs; and his resolution to cut off a whole innocent family, because Nabal had acted ungenerously towards him, was abominable and cruel, not to say diabolic. David himself condemns this most rash and unwarrantable conduct, and thanks God for having prevented him from doing this evil, 1 Samuel 25:32."

23 And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, 24 And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. 25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. 26 Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. 27 And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. 28 I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. 29 Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling. 30 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; 31 That this shall be no grief

unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid. There is a lot in this appeal of Abigail to David showing the qualities of an intercessor, a good wife, and a prophetess:

- (1) She humbled herself before David. No intercession can begin with humbling yourself. Abraham gives a great example of this when he interceded before the Lord for Sodom and Gomorrah.
- (2) She took full responsibility for the actions of her husband. As an intercessor, she “stands in the gap” for her husband and invites the judgment to come on her instead of him.
- (3) She provided reasons why the judgment should be on her instead of him. *25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.* Nabal means “folly” but she takes the blame because she did not see the young men that David sent.
- (4) She appealed to David’s current troubles and future destiny. She pointed out in verse 29 that she knows Saul is pursuing him but she also points to his destiny in verse 30 when he will become ruler of Israel. She encourages him to have a “clean slate” when he comes into his destiny so that the actions he was about to undertake will not be hanging over him.
- (5) Finally, she speaks prophetically, as if she knows Nabal’s destiny, and asks David to remember her. We don’t know if she knew how soon those words would come to pass or if she understood the depth of those words.

32 And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: 33 And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. 34 For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall. {Matthew Henry} “As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear, Prov. 25:12. Abigail was a wise reprover of David’s passion, and he gave an obedient ear to the reproof, according to his own principle (Ps. 141:5): *Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness. Never was such an admonition either better given or better taken.*” David would have killed ALL of the males of the household of Nabal including the servants. Nabal had violated a custom but the penalty was far greater than the offense.

35 So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person. Abigail’s appeal has worked. She has calmed David down and he has come to himself.

The Death of Nabal

36 And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. All indications are that Abigail was an unhappy woman. She probably was in an arranged marriage because of the wealth of Nabal (her family would have prospered from it) because she and Nabal seem to have no relationship and nothing in common. However, she was, in spite of that, a great

wife because she saved his life, his goods, and his household. She wisely waited until Nabal was sober to tell what she had done because he now has a right to know.

37 *But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.* Various commentators say that the dread of what could have come upon him and the way that he had made a fool of himself before his whole family weighed so heavily on Nabal that he fell into a deep depression from which he never recovered.

38 *And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.* In the previous chapter, we learned of the importance of how you treat the Lord's anointed. However, remember, David was the Lord's anointed also.

David Marries Abigail

39 *And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.* It's sad that, when you die, someone says, "Blessed be the Lord" because you died. Such was the testimony of Nabal.

40 *And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. 41* *And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. 42* *And Abigail hasted, and arose and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and BECAME HIS WIFE.*

David's Problem

43 *David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives. 44* *But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which was of Gallim.* We end this chapter with facts and a problem – David had three wives. However, this was never the intention of the Lord. He probably married Ahinoam after he lost the wife of his youth, Michal. Now he is infatuated by the beauty and wisdom of Abigail and marries her. David's infatuation with women will become a stain on his life (Bathsheba). He will pass this problem on to Solomon (1 Kings 11:3 *And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.*) and his grandson, Rehoboam (2 Chronicles 11:21 *And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.))*).

Chapter 26

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: No matter how often the enemy comes against you, the Lord will protect you.

Saul's Sixteenth and Final Attempt on David's Life

Side Road: Between this chapter and the previous chapter, David moved his base from the southern regions, where he met Nabal, back to the country of Judah where his countrymen were. We'll soon see that this move will have serious consequences.

1 And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon? This is the second time that these “countrymen” of David have betrayed him to Saul (see 1 Samuel 23:19). There are always going to be those that focus on their personal gain at everyone else's expense but I love David's attitude here. We never hear of him seeking retribution against them. They are his countrymen even though they have their own set of issues. Until we can set an example like this in the church, we'll never see this happening in our country.

2 Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. These are probably the same “elite” or “chosen” troops mentioned in chapter 24 who would have no problem destroying their fellow citizens or doing whatever was necessary to be totally obedient to Saul. They were probably part of Saul's bodyguard.

3 And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. 4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed. David knew this area better than Saul did so he was able to see him set up camp without being detected. {McGee} “David could not believe that Saul would come into territory that was unfamiliar to him. It was a military blunder of such proportions that David sent spies out to see if Saul really was in the area. His scouts reported that Saul was indeed in the wilderness.”

5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him. {Adam Clarke} “The [Hebrew] word which we translate in the trench, and in the margin in the midst of his carriages, is rendered by some in a ring of carriages, and by others in the circle, i.e., which was formed by his troops. Luther translates it [as] a fortress formed of wagons or carriages.” This note adds more to our understanding of the events that are about to take place. Saul is well fortified with everyone around him.

6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. This is our first introduction to the sons of Zeruiah, the sister of David. Remember, David is the baby of the family. His sister was probably much older because, from all appearances, her sons were around the age of David and older.

Side Road: David has had enough! He has a scheme in mind to stop running from Saul. Saul has hunted him, lied to him, and taken all that he had and he's tired. David is now 28 years old (we'll understand how I arrived at that in the next chapter) and his trial is about a year and a half from ending. However, he's starting to take things into his own hands.

7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. Look at David's leadership style – he will not ask his men to do anything that he would not do. He could have sent someone but he wanted to make sure that nothing more occurred than he wanted to have happen. When he showed up, God had already gone ahead and put everyone to sleep. Saul thought he was protected but he is totally at David's mercy.

8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time. Abishai is like his uncle. He also has had enough. He says to David, "If you allow me to strike him, I won't have to strike him a second time because the first blow will kill him."

9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** This principle extends beyond the Old Testament. You cannot rise up against those that God has put in place (whether you believe they are spiritual or not) without judgment from the Lord.

10 David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Those that fight against God have a day; it is a day that He will stipulate but don't you do anything to "help" this except follow God wholly.

11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go. David's plan was to take those things that would definitely belong to Saul. The commentators said that the king always had a significant spear and an ornate canteen (cruse of water) right by his side. It was not only a clever plan but a very dangerous plan because it meant David would have to go right next to his enemy in their camp.

12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them. The danger was not as great as it seemed because God intervened. He sent a deep sleep on Saul and on his men.

13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space being between them: 14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king? 15 And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. 16 This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster. {Adam Clarke} "This is a strong irony. Ye are worthy to die; ye are sons of death-ye deserve death for this neglect of your king. And had not Saul been so deeply affected with David's generosity in preserving his life, he had doubtless put Abner and his chief officers to death; though they were not to blame, as their apparent neglect was the effect of a supernatural sleep."

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king. Once again, Saul is excited and repentant because David spared his life. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:**

True repentance does not appear because one has been spared a tragedy or received a blessing. It only comes when one sees themselves as God does and hates themselves.

18 And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand? Once again David questions why Saul would waste his time pursuing David for crimes he had not committed. He truly wants to know what wrong he has done but his wrong is being in the wrong place at the wrong time with a jealous man.

19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods. David's statement is powerful and we've brought this up before. The actions of Saul have caused David to be excommunicated from the true worship making it easier for him to serve other gods. In fact, if he had not been the man of such strong character as he was, he might have done this but God kept him.

20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

21 Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. Saul appears to have truly repented (but we'll see in the next chapter that this is not true). He has invited David to return to his position in the palace – something he had never done before in his false repentance.

22 And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. 23 The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered thee into my hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. 24 And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation. 25 Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place. {McGee} "Although again Saul admitted he was wrong and gave up his pursuit of David, David knew it was only a temporary respite. We find that David's heart is becoming very discouraged. He is weary of this continual running away and hiding in the dens of the earth." This discouragement will raise its ugly head again in the next chapter.

Chapter 27

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: (McGee) “Here is David—discouraged, despondent—doing something he should not have done. He leaves the land of Israel and goes to live among the Philistines. There is nothing in this chapter that would reveal that David is a man of God.”

David's Critical Move of Unbelief

*1 And David said **in his heart**, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.* David has had it. He has been chased up and down, left and right throughout Israel. He's had to run out of his house, live as a vagabond, live in caves, and take his parents to a foreign pagan country. All of his actions were carefully scrutinized and one innocent action, seeking food from the priest, caused the death of an entire city. His crime is that he saved the people of God from bondage to the Philistines by killing their champion. However, his real crime is being anointed by God. This has bred discouragement. Discouragement is born and bred in the heart of man. It may be caused by external factors but the breeding ground is in the heart, the seat of our emotions. Discouragement is a crime of unbelief and lack of trust. (I wanted to call it something else but I kept hearing the Holy Spirit calling it a “crime”.) Recently, my wife read a statement to me from a book our church book club is reading entitled The Shack by William P. Young. The statement convicted me and I'm still trying to assimilate it into my spirit. This was a statement by God to the main character in the book:

“The real underlying flaw in your life is that you don't think that I'm good. If you knew I was good and everything – the means, the ends, and all the process of individual lives – is all covered by my goodness, then while you might not always understand what I am doing, you would trust me.”

David, at this point, is experiencing the same thing. He's not convinced that God is good so he's taken matters into his own hands.

2 And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath. 3 And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. Discouragement affects others. Six hundred families were affected by the discouragement of David. He, no doubt, didn't express his emotions but had some other reason for telling them to follow him to the capital city of their enemies. The discouraging words of the ten spies that Moses sent to spy out the Promised Land caused the people of God to wander in the wilderness for forty years. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **Discouragement can affect the lives of others if left unchecked.**

4 And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him. This lets us know that Saul had not really repented in the last chapter. He was still on the hunt for David but, when he found out that he had gone to the land of the Philistines, he finally gave up. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** **David's plan worked but just because a plan works, doesn't mean that God is in it.**

David Before Achish

5 And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? {JF&B} “It was a prudent arrangement on the part of David; for it would prevent him being an object of jealous suspicion, or of mischievous plots among the Philistines. It would place his followers more beyond the risk of contamination by the idolatries of the court and capital; and it would give him an opportunity of making reprisals on the tribes that infested the common border of Israel and the Philistines.”

6 Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. 7 And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months. David became king of Judah at the age of 30, according to 2 Samuel. Therefore, he’s about 28½ years old at this time. His trial is nearly at an end but he’s taken matters into his own hands.

David’s Actions in the Land of the Philistines

8 And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt. 9 And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish. David’s real purpose for being in the land of the Philistines was to get away from Saul. He had no desire for Achish or for the Philistine people. Therefore, when he went against those nomadic tribes that were troubling Israel, he had to completely exterminate them to cover his tracks. This was a dark time in David’s history.

10 And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. {JF&B} “Jerahmeel was the great-grandson of Judah, and his posterity occupied the southern portion of that tribal domain. [The Kenites were the descendents of] Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, who occupied the south of Judah.” David lied to Achish so he would not see that he was still fighting Israel’s battles.

11 And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines. In this 16-month period, David destroyed everyone to keep himself safe. Not only has his discouragement moved him into a pagan land but it also has turned him into a butcher because of his lack of trust in God.

12 And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant forever. Achish was deceived but we know that God was not pleased with David’s actions.

Chapter 28

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: There is only one way to receive divine direction – we must humble ourselves before God. Saul will refuse to do this in this chapter and commit his final sin but it will be a great sin.

The Philistines Prepare to Attack Israel Again

1 And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men. According to Adam Clarke, three things happened that made the Philistines bold enough to attack Israel again:

- (1) The Philistines had received a great increase to their armies by vast numbers of men, which the Egyptian Pharaoh had driven out of his country.
- (2) Samuel was dead changing the spiritual makeup of Israel. (Can you see how important spiritual leadership is?)
- (3) David was now on their side changing the military might of Israel.

The Philistines are the Old Testament representatives of the devil. They exhibited a key demonic attribute in that they were relentless in their desire to destroy God’s people. David had been “playing” with the devil with his move to Philistia in the last chapter and his lies to Achish. Now he finds that it backfires because Achish expects him to go with him to fight against God’s people. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Playing with the devil will ALWAYS backfire on you. Your soul is too important for such behavior.**

2 And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever. {David Guzik} “Here, David seems completely surrendered to the ungodly Achish. He will fight for the Philistines, against Israel! We might wish that David was really operating as a ‘double agent,’ and he planned to turn on the Philistines in the midst of battle. But the text gives us no reason for such an optimistic perspective. David has come to a very low place!” What a dreadful situation David finds himself in! He is a lover of God and God’s people but he has made himself an ally of those that don’t love God. All of this came about because he convinced himself that there was “nothing better for him” than to leave the place of blessing and move to the land of the Philistines. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Terrible things happen when decisions are made without prayer.**

Saul Seeks God But God Refuses to Answer

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. Samuel’s death was recorded back in chapter 25 but the writer is setting the stage for what’s about to happen. He’s letting us know that Saul has no means of getting divine guidance either through God’s prophet or the devil’s emissaries. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Any spiritual “guidance” that does not come from God is sinful, devilish, and will destroy your soul.** Saul is about to experience this principle.

4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. 5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. When fear sets in, you need a Word from the Lord but Saul has separated himself from God through his sins, adding to his fear.

6 And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Isaiah 59:1-2 *Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he WILL NOT hear.* **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** If you ever find yourself in such a condition (needing an answer from God and not receiving it), your first move must be to repent (**HUMBLE YOURSELF!**) and seek the Lord's forgiveness no matter how "right" you think you are.

There were three methods of obtaining direction spoken of in this verse:

- **DREAMS** – the dream would come to the one asking with perhaps the interpretation given to a prophet if the dream was not clear. God refused to speak to Saul through this method.
- **URIM** – {Adam Clarke} *"This was a kind of oracular answer given to the high priest when clothed with the ephod, on which were the Urim and Thummim. How these communicated the answer, is not known."* The "official" ephod, which contained the Urim, was with Abiathar who was with David. Another one must have existed that Saul tried to use. Remember, we went into this in greater detail in chapter 23. God also refused to speak to Saul through this method.
- **PROPHETS** – The prophet to the nation, Samuel, was dead and his successor, Gad, was with David. The school of the prophets was at Ramah but God refused to give any Word in connection with Saul to these prophets and they were well trained by Samuel to only speak what God said.

Saul's Final Sin – He Seeks Out a Witch

Side Road: This is Saul's last night alive. He and many of his sons will die in battle the next day. I wonder what he would have done differently if he knew that he was going to stand before God the next evening. What would we do if we knew? Since we don't know that day or hour, we have to be ever vigilant to not allow ourselves to come to this day unprepared.

7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

The woman mentioned has, according to the original texts, a "python spirit" that responds to her requests ("familiar" to her) and gives her words of "guidance" to the requestor. Don't be deceived! This is still a devil that is operating through her and she will receive the "fruits" of dealing with the devil as revealed by the Lord Jesus – John 10:10a *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.* He is using her to destroy others and will eventually destroy her. (Note: There are people today who operate with a familiar spirit – these spirits speak to their "host" to tell you things about yourself but they will NEVER lift up the name of Jesus. **BEWARE OF THOSE OPERATING IN THIS SPIRIT (MEDIUMS, PSYCHICS, PALM READERS, AND FORTUNE TELLERS).** This is NOT a joke or harmless entertainment!)

{Dake} *"No spiritualist medium was permitted to live in Israel. Each one found was to be put to death (Exodus 22:18, Leviticus 19:31). Witchcraft was as the sin of rebellion (1 Samuel 15:23). Witches claimed to reveal hidden secrets by contact with God and the invisible world. They were seducers of the people to turn them from God; thus they were [by divine decree] to be killed."*

This woman not only is "playing" with the devil, she is misguiding the souls of the people and leading them to hell.

8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee. This woman lives about 12 miles from Israel's camp in Endor so it was relatively easy for Saul to reach her. Saul had to disguise himself to get the woman to practice her devilish art since he was the one responsible for killing many of her contemporaries.

9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? 10 And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Once again Saul has overstepped his boundaries. How can he promise (by the Lord!?) to bless whom God has cursed? Exodus 22:18 **Thou shalt not suffer (allow) a witch to live.**

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. There's a lot of controversy with this passage over whether the woman actually saw Samuel or not. JF&B has a nice summary for us to consider but there is no "right" answer:

{JF&B} *"It is probable that [Saul's] extraordinary stature, the deference paid him by his attendants, the easy distance of his camp from Endor, and the proposal to call up the great prophet and first magistrate in Israel (a proposal which no private individual would venture to make), had awakened her suspicions as to the true character and rank of her visitor. The story has led to much discussion whether there was a real appearance of Samuel or not. On the one hand, the woman's profession, which was forbidden by the divine law, the refusal of God to answer Saul by any divinely constituted means, the well-known age, figure, and dress of Samuel, which she could easily represent herself, or by an accomplice--his apparition being evidently at some distance, being muffled, and not actually seen by Saul, whose attitude of prostrate homage, moreover, must have prevented him distinguishing the person though he had been near, and the voice seemingly issuing out of the ground, and coming along to Saul--and the vagueness of the information, imparted much which might have been reached by natural conjecture as to the probable result of the approaching conflict--the woman's representation--all of this has led many to think that this was a mere deception. On the other hand, many eminent writers (considering that the apparition came before her arts were put in practice; that she herself was surprised and alarmed; that the prediction of Saul's own death and the defeat of his forces was confidently made), are of opinion that Samuel really appeared."*

Adam Clarke goes further in his understanding of the passage: *"That Samuel did appear on this occasion, is most evident from the text; nor can this be denied from any legitimate mode of interpretation: and it is as evident that he was neither raised by the power of the devil nor the incantations of the witch, for the appearances which took place at this time were such as she was wholly unacquainted with. Her familiar did not appear; and from the confused description she gives, it is fully evident that she was both surprised and alarmed at what she saw, being so widely different from what she expected to see."*

13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. 14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. 15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? Saul's continual rebellion and refusal to repent turned God against him.

17 And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David: Only Samuel could say these words. The devil wanted no part of this so he would not even utter them. Samuel is abundantly clear, because Saul's death is imminent, that David will take the kingdom.

18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. Again, only Samuel would say these words. The devil has no use for obedience and he was, no doubt, behind the sins of Amalek that God was so much against.

19 Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. Samuel prophesies the death of Saul. The devil could only speculate and attempt to bring this to pass but only God could give a definitive word like this to Saul.

20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. Over the years, Saul had lived a life of rebellion, sin, and wanton disregard of the Lord's ways. He had made Samuel fear for his life when he was alive because of his actions. God gave him a long reign to repent and he did not repent. Now his actions have come back to him and the Word of the Lord has taken all strength from him. Friend of mine, don't waste your life like Saul and come to a point where you need God and can't find Him except in judgment!

21 And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. 22 Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way. 23 But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

24 And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: What a bitter meal this must have been! This was Saul's last meal eaten in the house of a witch.

25 And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night. {JF&B} “Exhausted by long abstinence, overwhelmed with mental distress, and now driven to despair, the cold sweat broke on his anxious brow, and he sank helpless on the ground. But the kind attentions of the woman and his servants having revived him, he returned to the camp to await his doom.”

Final Thought on this Chapter: Deuteronomy 18:10-12 NKJV *There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire (sacrifices their children in fire), or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who conjures spells, or a medium (KJV – a consulter with familiar spirits), or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead (KJV – necromancer). 12 For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.* There are at least two television programs that “celebrate” this demonic craft, “**GHOST WHISPERER**” on CBS, and “**THE MEDIUM**” on NBC. Both programs admit on their web sites that they are inspired by “real life” mediums and that the main characters communicate with the dead. These are not television programs to be enjoyed by the people of God! Remember, this is NOT a joke or harmless entertainment!

Chapter 29

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: We want to learn from this chapter that the nature and essence of God is that He is good and if we really desire to be right before Him, He will help us.

God Preserves David from Fighting Against Israel

1 Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel. 2 And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish. NIV As the Philistine rulers marched with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were marching at the rear with Achish. What a sight this must have been to the Lord! There is the man who will be His new king coming to battle His people with the enemy of His people. I believe David's heart was not in this but he had started a series of actions in motion that were too great for him to overcome. He needed the remedy the Lord was about to give. **SAINTS'**

PRINCIPLE: God always has a way of escape.

3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day? The Philistines, rightfully so, were offended by the presence of David and his men but Achish was still clueless about the real intentions of his Hebrew guest.

4 And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men? The other lords of the Philistines were not only offended, they were very angry at the idea of David marching with them. They knew of the ongoing conflict between Saul and David and certainly did not want them to reconcile on the battlefield. They were safer with David on neither side so they wanted him sent back to Ziklag.

5 Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands? I often wondered if anyone in Philistia still remembered the defeat of Goliath.

6 Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favor thee not. This statement should have cut David because he has lived a lie over the last 16 months and deceived Achish. However, his thought may have been that, since Achish was a Philistine, he didn't deserve the truth. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Character, the essence of holiness, is what we are all the time, in front of anyone, and especially when no one is looking.

7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines. 8 And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king? We don't know David's true motive in this verse but, whatever it was, God stepped in and stopped it.

9 And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

10 Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart. 11 So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: If down in your heart, you really want to do right, God will help you. Therefore, there is no excuse for a "shabby" life.

Chapter 30

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: As stated in a prior chapter, there is only one way to receive divine direction – we must humble ourselves before God. David will do that in this chapter and the Lord will respond to his request.

David's Home in Philistia is Invaded

1 And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; 2 And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. While David was busy trying to keep peace in his life by going to war with the Philistines, his actions actually contributed to a lack of peace. In his zeal and presumption (probably thinking that God would take care of his city) he took ALL of the men of the city with him to go to war with the Philistines. This was not only foolish militarily but foolish spiritually. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: You can't expect God to bless us when we're out of His will.** However, God, in His goodness, did not allow ANY to be killed. This is quite a contrast to how David treated his enemies.

3 So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. What a shock this scene must have been as they rode toward home and saw the smoke of destruction coming from their city and then to discover that their wives and children were gone! Then think of the thoughts that came to their minds of what has and is happening to their families.

4 Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. They cried in agony until they had no more tears to cry.

5 And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 6 And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God. These two verses are so very powerful as we see the transformation of David from where he was in chapter 27 (“*there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines*”) to this point now where he encourages himself in spite of the fact that his wives and children have been taken by the Amalekites. He's not playing games with himself! He is in a real crisis. His family could be dead (and no doubt his men have convinced themselves of that fact). His friends and family members who make up his militia have turned against him because he really is the one to blame for this. Something has happened in the spiritual growth of David since chapter 27 because he's looking a horrible crisis in the face with absolute confidence in God!

7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: You can't make the correct decision in discouragement. You must find a way to encourage yourself to clearly hear an answer from God.** Look how David found his way back according to Pastor David Guzik:

David would have strengthened himself remembering God's love. At this point of total loss, David now saw the love of the Lord in the rejection of the Philistine leaders. If they had not sent him away, he and his men would not have returned right now, when the Amalekites had just left and the fires of their destruction were still burning. If God had not sent him back home through the rejection of the Philistines, it would have been months and months until he

returned, and the situation would have been far worse. That which stung him before became sweet to him now, and the most precious expression of the Lord's love.

David would have strengthened himself remembering God's promise and calling. He could shake his head, clear the fog that had set about it for the last year or so, and say "I am a man anointed by God, called by God, and promised by God to be the next king of Israel. I have a high calling and promise from God, and He hasn't taken it away. I need to start living according to that destiny." David could thank God and see the glory of His power in this high call.

David would have strengthened himself remembering God's past deliverances. He could say, "This is a terrible spot, no doubt. But remember all the times when the Lord delivered me out of a bad spot before? If He did it then, He will do it now. He didn't deliver me before just to let me perish now."

David refused to have a "pity party" but he encouraged himself by remembering the love of God, the promise of God, and the deliverance of God. He turned to where he should have turned before to get an answer from God. Isn't it amazing how good God is? David has wasted these sixteen months in Philistia, but when he turned back to God, God heard him.

8 And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all. How can we not love the Lord? He gave David a specific and encouraging Word to motivate him to get down to business. This is the kind of Word that changed the attitude of the men who were in despair and made them men of hope. We also see in this verse backslidden David returning wholly to the Lord. He has had access to the high priest's garments for some time but has made his own decisions and done things his way. Now he humbles himself before the Lord and the Lord gives him specific answers to his specific questions.

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE: When you receive a Word from the Lord, everything (circumstances, weather, demonic situations, etc.) will conspire to distract you from that Word.** David could have allowed discouragement to resurface. He's pursuing a large Amalekite force and his numbers have been reduced by one-third because he has men that can go no further. (Remember, they had just traveled for three days from the battlefield to return to Ziklag.) However, we'll see that he wisely left all of the excess gear with them so that the remaining 400 could move more swiftly. This is actually working toward his benefit. This could be viewed as bad news but he's gaining a Romans 8:28 benefit out of it.

11 And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water; {JF&B} "Old and home born slaves are usually treated with great kindness. But a purchased or captured slave must look to himself; for, if feeble or sick, his master will leave him to perish rather than encumber himself with any additional burden." David and his men could have easily chosen to ignore this man collapsed in the field. They were on an urgent mission involving the lives of their loved ones but "something" made them stop and help him. Their blessing was in this man that needed help.

12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights. This man was near death but, as we'll see, he has information vitally important to David – information he would not have received if he had not shown him kindness. **SAINTS' PRINCIPLE:** Sometimes we miss our blessings because we're moving too fast and not demonstrating the life of Christ.

13 And David said unto him, To whom belongest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. 14 We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire. 15 And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company. {Guzik} “In showing unexpected kindness to this Egyptian, God shows David unexpected blessing.”

16 And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. The Amalekites were convinced that they could take their time in getting away. They knew all of the men of war of Philistia were to the north preparing to fight against Israel. This was probably a strategically planned invasion and they were “full of themselves” for their “good fortune”.

17 And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. Pastor David Guzik says that this is a poor translation. It actually should say from dawn until the evening of the next day. This makes more sense. David came upon them when they were yet drunk and hung over from their revelry. The final part of the verse lets us see how large the Amalekite raiding party was. David killed many of them and the “small” part that escaped was equal in size to David’s army. This points to the great fear that took hold of the Amalekites because of the Lord working with David and his men.

18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. 19 And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all. The writer emphasizes the fulfillment of the Word of the Lord given earlier in this chapter.

20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drave before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil. (Adam Clarke) “He and his men not only recovered all their own property, but they recovered all the spoil which these Amalekites had taken from the south of Judah, the Cherethites, and the south of Caleb. When this was separated from the rest, it was given to David, and called David's spoil.”

Division Among David's Men

21 And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. 22 Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. The anger and results of living in Philistia with the heathen people are coming out of David's men. Notice their hostile words: You didn't go with us so take your wives

and children, not your possessions, and leave. This kind of foolishness cannot exist among God's people. We cannot separate each other on arbitrary rules that we have made along the way.

23 Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. 24 For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. David quickly intervenes to make sure everyone has an equal share in the spoil of battle. Those that stayed behind performed an important service in making sure the attacking force could move swiftly and return to their gear.

25 And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day. Rather than have to deal with this again, David made it a military ordinance from that time on. It continues to work in the church. Those that are in the "front lines" and those that support the front lines share in the victory. Maybe you can't go to the mission field (local or foreign) but your support is vitally needed for the success of the mission.

David Sends Gifts to His Friends in Judah

26 And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD; 27 To them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in south Ramoth, and to them which were in Jattir, 28 And to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa, 29 And to them which were in Rachal, and to them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them which were in the cities of the Kenites, 30 And to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach, 31 And to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt. {JF&B} "This was intended as an acknowledgment to the leading men in those towns and villages of Judah which had ministered to his necessities in the course of his various wanderings. It was the dictate of an amiable and grateful heart; and the effect of this well-timed liberality was to bring a large accession of numbers to his camp (1 Chronicles 12:22). The enumeration of these places shows what a numerous and influential party of adherents to his cause he could count within his own tribe [1 Samuel 30:27-31]."

Chapter 31

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Throughout this book, we have seen the many sins of King Saul. He has attempted to kill his son-in-law, and the Lord's anointed, many times, he has killed the Lord's priests, he has rebelled against God, he has consulted a witch and the list goes on. If there is one thing we'll see in this chapter is that the Scripture is right – be sure your sin will find you out (Numbers 32:23).

The Final Battle of Saul and Jonathan

1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. The battle that has been in development the last three chapters now begins and goes horribly unfavorably for Israel. Many fell before the archers of the Philistines and many just ran in fear.

2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons. The royal family was, and still is, a key target of any enemy. They know that if they can destroy the “head”, the “body” will follow.

Side Road: There is no telling what might have become of Jonathan if he had chosen to follow God's choice, David, rather than maintaining family ties. His allegiance to his insane father is a wonderful story but does it align with the mind of God? I can only speculate.

3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

4 Then said Saul unto his armor bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armor bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. Rather than suffer mercilessly at the hands of the Philistines, Saul chose to take his own life. We have no record of his repentance for his rebellion and his many sins. We only have a record of his death prophesied in the home of a witch the night before.

5 And when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. {JF&B} “The armor bearer, who, according to Jewish writers, was Doeg, following the example of his master, put an end to his life also. They died by one and the same sword – the very weapon with which they had massacred the Lord's servants at Nob.”

6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor bearer, and all his men, that same day together. What a massacre! The king is dead. His key sons, the princes, are dead and the king's body guard (the ones that helped him chase David) are all dead. This was all a result of the sins of Saul.

7 And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. This was wise on their part. The army has been defeated so the next step of the Philistines would be to torture, abuse, or execute the population that remained.

8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. 9 And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people.

10 And they put his armor in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan.

11 And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul; 12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. 13 And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days. The people of Jabesh-Gilead never forgot the kindness

of Saul when he saved them at the beginning of his reign. {Adam Clarke} *“This act of the men of Jabesh-gilead was an act of gratitude due to Saul, who, at the very commencement of his reign, rescued them from Nahash, king of the Ammonites, (see 1 Samuel 11:1), [and] saved them from the deepest degradation and the most oppressive tyranny. This heroic act, with the seven days’ fast, showed that they retained a due sense of their obligation to this unfortunate monarch.”*

Final Note

What a sad ending to our study! Saul had all of the physical and spiritual attributes to be a great leader. If he had obeyed God, he would have changed the history of Israel. However, he did not and died as a fool. However, we have seen the greatness of Samuel and a glimpse of the greatness that we’ll see in the next book of David.

This has been a significant study and I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I hope it has also been a blessing to you. May the Lord bless you in the reading, hearing and doing of His Word.

Completed December 5, 2008

