

# 1 SAMUEL

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This book centres on three main characters Samuel, Saul and David.

It tells of the institution of the monarchy and how corrupt religion had become and, as it is known, much human corruption comes through sexual depravity. The early part of the book deals with the Philistines defeat of Israel and the capture of the Ark of the Covenant a box overlaid with gold which contained the tablets of the ten commandments

On the lid of the Ark was the mercy seat which was a symbol of God's presence and on the annual Day of Atonement, the High Priest sprinkled the blood of animal sacrifices on the mercy seat for the atonement of God's people/ It was a day on national mourning, fasting and repentance. It was a Sabbath's day celebration, the most holy day, when the nation would humble their souls. It was the day the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies.

There was also the ceremony of the scapegoat when the High Priest laid his hands on the animal representing transferring the guilt of the people and the expulsion of the animal from the camp symbolising the removal of sin.

In this summary of this book we shall deal with other matters relevant to today.

## Chapter 1

Elkanah was of the tribe of Ephraim and had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. The latter had children but Hannah did not.

There are three major characters in the Bible who were barren. Abram's wife Sarah, the eventual mother of Samson and Elisabeth the mother of John the Baptist and she was the cousin of the Virgin Mary.

Each year, Elkanah and his family went to worship and sacrifice to the Lord at the tabernacle in Shiloh. The two sons of Eli the priest, Hophni and Phinehas were also priests. At the time of the annual sacrifice, Elkanah gave meat to Peninnah and her children and a double portion to Hannah whom he loved dearly but she was barren. His love for her, which she replicated, is an example of conjugal love.

On one visit, Eli noticed Hannah weeping in the tabernacle.

She was praying for a son and if this were to be granted unto her, she would give him back to the Lord. Hannah was in silent private prayer but Eli thought she was drunk and told her to put the wine away and said that the Lord would grant her request whatever that was.

There is much to commend silent and private prayer and we should recall what Scroggie said, Prayer is not a means of getting what you want but a means of becoming what God wants you to be. There are people who call themselves Christians but they do not talk to God in prayer and some that do tell God how wonderful they are and what they have done. Prayer is not self praise but is petition, worship, including thanksgiving, and praise of the Lord. It has been said that in the Lord's Prayer you cannot say I or me. In some churches testimonies are encouraged in which people get and talk about themselves and often they talk of their disreputable past whereas the Bible states that when we are saved the past must be put away ( 2 Corinthian 5.17) and Hebrews 8,12 says that God

will remember our sins no more. He has cast them into the depths of the sea and that is where we should leave them.

And when she had weaned him she took him, with items to sacrifice to the Lord at the tabernacle at Shiloh and she told Eli saying, For his whole life he will be given to the Lord.

He would also grow up to be a Nazirite.

Hannah was a woman of piety. To be pious today is probably rare. It means to be loyal to God and to be reverent. Modern worship can be very noisy and yet it is in quietness that we gain our confidence and strength ( Isaiah 30.15 ) and we must know that God is not deaf.

## **Chapter 2**

This chapter begins with Hannah's prayer which is really a song of rejoicing acknowledging God both as holy and the only God who will defeat the proud and mighty men since He has the power of life and death and can alter peoples circumstances if He deems it necessary. All of his adversaries will be defeated

It is a song of God's grace and power.

We should recall here what holiness is.

Paul said I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ( Galatians 2. 20), This shows that our past has gone and must be remembered no more. We are to be Christlike and have Him in us. We must be spiritual and not worldly, having a moral purity and not be two faced and live in the world and in the spiritual realm. Isaiah 35, 8 and 1 Peter 1.16 has God's words, Be ye holy for I am holy. I doubt whether some modern worship is holy

Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli, but Eli's sons did not know the Lord. They stole from portions of the Israelites items brought to Shiloh to sacrifice and put them to their own use.

They were hypocrites and false. They were not true servants of the Lord. A hypocrite is someone who appears to have virtue moral or religious beliefs which they do not possess and where their actions belie their stated beliefs.

Eli blessed Samuel's parents and Hannah went on to have three sons and two daughters. The hymn writer says:

Blessings abound where 'er He reigns.

## **Chapter 3**

Any revelation from the Lord in those days was not very often.

In the tabernacle, Samuel continued to serve the Lord under the aspersion of Eli.

The Lord called Samuel and he ran to Eli believing it was him who called him. Eli sent Samuel back to lie down.

It happened the second time and, on the third time, Eli told Samuel to reply to the voice and say, Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth.

The Lord said that He was about to do something in Israel that would make their ears tingle. Eli and his house were to be judged for Eli knew that his sons were blaspheming God and the house of Eli would never be atoned. Eli's sons were hypocrites and false

At first, Samuel was hesitant to tell Eli of the vision but eventually he did.

And all of Israel from Dan to Beersheba heard of this and accepted Samuel as a prophet. From the north to the south young Samuel was acclaimed.

There is nonsense spoken today about prophets. Mrs Jones had just purchased a beautiful piano for her daughter at a morning meeting in her church a 'prophet' stood up and said that the Lord told him that she was going to give her piano to the Sunday School. Lots of cheers and hallelujahs. This was a shock to Mrs Jones and it was a falsehood.

A prophet is one who has a genuine word from the Lord. The word prophet is used to describe one who predicts the future but as 1 Corinthians 13 states such prophecy has faded away, and, secondly, it is one who preaches or proclaims the existing Word of God.

## **Chapter 4**

This the event to make all the ears of Israel to tingle.

All of Israel encamped at Ebenezer and the Philistines at Aphek Israel was defeated in battle suffering the loss of 4,000 soldiers. Israel cried, Why has the Lord defeated us? Let us bring into the camp the Ark of the Covenant which is in Shiloh that it may save us from our enemies. This was done and the Israelites rejoiced and their shouting and celebrations was heard by the Philistines and they were afraid saying, These are the people who smote the Egyptians, with plagues

The battle resumed, many died and the Ark was captured and the two sons of Eli were dead.

A young man whose clothes were torn and was dirty ran to Eli and told him the dreadful news. Eli was now 98 with poor eyesight and somewhat heavy. His response was of great distress and he fell from his chair and broke his neck and died.

Phinehas's wife was pregnant at the time and when she heard all this news she bore a son and called his name Ichabod which means The glory has departed from Israel because the Ark has been captured and so many are dead including those of her family.

Should we have sympathy for Eli?

There is the matter of parental duty and responsibility and Eli was a sad failure. The sons were allowed to be the hypocrites that they were and the fact that Eli was occupied with his duties is no excuse. The sons defiled the sacred sacrifices to God, were certainly not true worshippers and the very place that they committed their offences was in the most sacred place in Israel.

What happened to Eli's wife and the son's mother?

## **Chapter 5**

The Ark was taken to Ashdod and put in the temple of Dagon, the Philistines' god. The next day Dagon was on the floor before the Ark and had to be put back in its place. The next day the same thing happened but Dagon's head and hands were broken off.

The Lord was against Ashdod and the area and sent tumours in the form of emerods, that is to say hemorrhoids among the people. The people blamed the Ark of the God of Israel who they cried must not stay with us for God's hand is on us and on our god, Dagon the god of fertility and agriculture.

The Ark was taken to Ekron and the people there bewailed,. The Ark of the God of Israel will kill us, and calling the rulers of the Philistines together they said, Send it away. Let it go back to its own place.

Death had filled Ashdod and Ekron with this plague. The Philistines were aware of the plagues upon Egypt and now were suffering as a result of another plague.

There is only one God and the commandment says that we should worship Him and Him alone. Idols are forbidden and, in any event, they cannot do anything. After all they are the work of men's hands. Why worship what we have made?

## **Chapter 6**

This chapter raises a great problem.

The ark was with the Philistines for seven months but they agreed to send it back but with a trespass offering believing that these actions would result in their being healed they would make golden images of emerods and five golden mice (some versions say rats which would indicate guilt) and the ten items represented the number of the lords of the Philistines.

The Ark was put on a cart and the Philistines would see if it made its way to Bethshemeh on its own. for if it did the Philistines would accept that the plague was from the Lord but, if not, it was just a plague and not the hand of God upon them. The cart arrived at its destination during the wheat harvest and the people rejoiced to see the Ark and made offerings to the Lord. The Philistines made offerings as well including one each for their cities of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron.

The Ark was set on the great stone of Abel.

The men of Bethshemeh looked into the Ark and were punished with a great slaughter because of this. Even the Levites were forbidden to look upon the Ark or into it, as well as other items in the Holy of Holies for fear of death ( Numbers 4. 19ff). It was irreverence to go against this law and dishonouring to God. Perhaps the people of Bethshemeh thought the Philistines might have violated it but, nonetheless. the law, however harsh it might seem, was the law and the men broke the law.

Commentators argue over the number of resultant deaths thinking it was a gross miscalculation.

## **Chapter 7**

The men of Kiriath Jearim took the Ark to the house of Abinadab who consecrated his son Eleazar to guard it which he did for twenty years.

Israel turned to the Lord. Samuel had said, Return to the Lord with all your hearts and put away all foreign gods and serve the Lord only and He will deliver you from the Philistines. This they did.

Samuel called the people to Mizpah to intercede to the Lord on their behalf. The people fasted and repented. But the Philistines came up to attack them and the Israelites were afraid. They told Samuel to stop pleading to the Lord for them and pursued the Philistines slaughtering them. The towns captured by the Philistines were restored to Israel and Samuel placed a memorial stone between Mizpah and Shem and called it Ebenezer meaning Thus far the Lord has helped us.

There was now peace between Israel and the Philistines

Samuel served the Lord all his life and was a circuit judge from Bethel to Gilgal and to Mizpah. He regularly went back to his house in Ramah where he built an altar.

But note the fickleness of the people. One moment repentant and welcoming intercession and the next chasing their enemies to kill them. Whatever faith they had vanished quickly. They were impatient and unreasonable.

Should they not have waited for Samuel and his intercession work?

Often we are impatient with the Lord and rush in and make mistakes.

## **Chapter 8**

Now for a great turning point in the history of Israel.

Samuel was old and made his sons Joel and Abijah judges, But they did not follow their father's good example. They took bribes, perverted justice and were dishonest. Remember Eli's sons.

The elders said these things to Samuel and demanded that Israel had king

This displeased Samuel. And the Lord spoke to him and said, Listen to the people. They have not rejected you but rejected me not wanting me to reign over them. With all that I have done since I brought them out of Egypt they have forsaken me and turned to other gods. But warn them to chose a king with good behaviour to reign over them.

Samuel told this to the people and spoke of the future king with his appointing an army, those to deal with the harvest. those to make weapons and chariots. There would be perfumers, cooks and bakers. Samuel continue, He will take the best of your fields and crops and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will protest at the king you have chosen and, in that day, the Lord will not hear you.

The people insisted that they wanted a king and, with that, Samuel told everyone to go home to their own city.

Can we understand God's reaction? His people, for whom He had done so much, were forsaking Him with ingratitude and contempt. It is abhorrent.

But we must look to ourselves. How do we treat the Lord?

Some churches seem to have an attitude that anything goes but He deserves the best, the reverence and the quiet meditation on Himself and His marvellous works.

Speak, Lord, in the stillness  
While I wait on Thee.  
Hush my heart to listen  
In expectancy.

## **Chapter 9**

There was a man of Benjamin called Kish and, among his family, was a very tall and handsome son named Saul. Kish's donkeys were lost and Saul and his servant were bidden to locate them and so

they travelled through many areas but did not find them. At Zuph, Saul said, Let us forget about the donkeys and go home. Father may be worrying about us. The servant replied that in the city there was a man of God, who was honourable and all that he said came true. He will tell us what to do. But what do we give him?, asked Saul and the servant said that he had a fourth of a shekel of silver.

So they went into the city. It was a day on which a sacrifice was being made and the people would not have their meal until Samuel arrived. The Lord had forewarned Samuel that Saul was coming. They met and dined together and, afterwards, on the outskirts of the city, Samuel told Saul to send his servant away since he wished to tell Saul of the Word of God.

Today we should spend more time reading the Bible and increasing our knowledge of God and his Will.

## **Chapter 10**

Samuel anointed Saul with oil and kissed him and said, The Lord has anointed you over His inheritance. When you leave me today you will find two men by Rachel's tomb at Zelzal who will tell you that the donkeys have been found. Your father has forgotten about the donkeys and is worried about you.

At the terebinth tree of Tabor you will meet three men going to Bethel to worship. One will have three goats, another three loaves of bread and the other will have wine. You will receive two loaves. You will go to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is and a group of prophets will meet you with musical instruments. The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you and you will prophesy with them, proclaiming the Word of God. God is with you. Go before me to Gilgal and a week later I will come to you and we will offer burnt and peace offerings. I will shew you what to do.

When Samuel left God gave Saul a ' new heart ' and the signs came to pass in that Saul prophesied again. His uncle enquired of where he had been,

Samuel called the people together at Mizpah and reminded them of God's deliverance from Egypt but that they had rejected God and asked for a king. When Saul finally emerged the people shouted, Long live the king.

Samuel reminded the people about the behaviour of royalty

Saul went home to Gibeah with his valiant men but not everyone was happy. Some rebels said, How can he save /help us?

For the Christian the Lord Jesus is king.

## **Chapter 11**

Nahash the Amorite attacked Israel at Jabesh Gilead and the men of that town asked for a treaty and said that they would serve them. Nahash said that he would only make a treaty if the right eye of everyone was gouged out which would bring disgrace to all Israel. The people of Jabesh asked for seven days to consider this. They would send messengers throughout Israel to see if they could be rescued and, if not, they would submit to the Amorites.

The messengers came to Gibeah where Saul was. At the time, he was working in the field.

When he arrived he saw the distress of the people and asked why they were weeping. He was told what had happened. He was angry and the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. He mutilated two oxen

and sent the pieces throughout Israel saying, This is what will happen to anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel.

Saul mustered his army at Bezek saying, By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, Jabesh Gilead will be rescued.

But the threatened people said to the Amorites, 'Tomorrow, when the sun is hot we will surrender'.

This was a clever ploy.

The next day, Saul and his army defeated the Amorites and there was a great slaughter.

The people then said to Samuel complaining about those who asked, Shall Saul reign over us? The people of Israel said Turn these men over to us that we may kill them

But Saul said, No, but rather we should rejoice for the Lord has given us victory

Samuel spoke, Let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingship in the presence of the Lord and make Saul king. Sacrifices were made and there was a great celebration,

There is much to comment on here.

There is the awful threat of the Amorites. They were cruel and evil and it reminds us of the heathen nations in Canaan and their destruction by the Israelites which was not butchery but surgery. People like this do not deserve to survive and it is all very well saying Israel invaded the land and took it, but the original inhabitants were vile and included sacrificing children in the fire to appease a heathen god and many other acts of depravity That the Amorites wanted to gouge out eyes and disgrace the whole of Israel is unbelievably vile.

The fear the Amorites struck into the hearts of the people is unmitigating threats of terrorism. The Amorites had to be destroyed. That the Jabesh Gilead people were prepared to surrender and suffer shows the depth of their fear.

The Israelites wanting to kill those who spoke against Saul were wrong but in view of the prevalent warlike attitude it may be understandable

We may not fully appreciate the climate of the times with the emphasis on violence.

## **Chapter 12**

This has been called Samuel's farewell speech or his final address.

He said, I listened to you and you wanted a king and so I anointed one. He is now your ruler. I am old and white haired and my sons are with you. I have walked before you all my life. Witness to me. Have I ever stolen or defrauded or oppresses or taken a bribe?

The people agreed with his honesty and integrity.

Samuel continued, Moses and Aaron delivered you from Egypt. Let me tell you of the righteous acts of the Lord. Moses and Aaron brought you to this place but when you forsook the Lord. He sent you into the hands of Sisera, the Philistines and the king of Moab. You admitted your sin and your going after the heathen gods of Baalim and Ashtaroth. The Lord sent you judges such as

Jerrubaal, Bedan, about which we know nothing, Jephthah and Samuel to deliver you from your enemies.

Now you have a king.

Fear the Lord, serve Him, obey Him. Do not rebel against him. But if you do not obey the Lord, then the hand of God will be against you.

It is the wheat harvest. God could send thunder and rain because of your wickedness in wanting a king. The people pleaded with Samuel to pray to the Lord lest they die. Samuel repeated, Fear not. All your weaknesses is now done. Fear the Lord. Serve Him in truth and with all your hearts and remember the great things He has done for you. But if you do wickedly, you and your king will be consumed.

### **Chapter 13**

We begin with a statement that Saul was about thirty years old when he became king and was king for forty years.

And we return now to the time of events. Saul had chose 3000 soldiers, 2000 were with him at Michmash and a thousand with his son, Jonathan.

Jonathan attacked the Philistines at Geba and the people of Israel blamed Saul for this and Israel were now obnoxious to the Philistines.

Saul called Israel to Gilgal. The Philistines assemble to fight Israel with 300 chariots, 6000 charioteers and a large army so that Israel were afraid and hide in caves, thickets, rocks, pits and cisterns.

Saul was commanded to wait for the arrival of Samuel ( verse 8). But waiting did not allay the fear of Saul's men and they began to scatter. Impetuously, Saul prepared burnt offerings and peace offerings to find favour in God's sight fearing that the Philistines would come upon him.

Samuel rebuked Saul for breaking the command to wait for him seven days. He said, You have done a foolish thing and not waited seven days as the Lord commanded. Now you and your kingdom will not endure.

Samuel went to Gilgal and Saul numbered the men left which were only 600.

There were no blacksmiths working in Israel at the time for fear of the Philistines knowing that Israel were making weapons and Israel had to go to the Philistines to have their agricultural and domestic implements sharpened and this was costly. The Philistines made raids on Israel. If there were to be a battle, Israel had no weapons.

### **Chapter 14**

The chapter starts with Jonathan and his young armour bearer going to see the garrison of the Philistines but Jonathan did not tell his father. It was a reckless act with dire consequences. But the people of Israel got to know about it. Ahiah, the son of Ichabod's brother, apparently knew about it.

In the passageway to the Philistine garrison there were sharp rocks on both sides. They agreed not to approach the Philistines unless it was opportune. The Philistines saw them and decided to teach them a lesson. There was an attack and Jonathan and his companion killed about twenty men.

This attack caused concern and, indeed, panic among the Israelite army and God did not prevent this fear. The army seemed to melt away. Jonathan and his armour bearer were nowhere to be seen.

Fearing an attack, Saul said, Let us take up the Ark of the Covenant.

There followed a battle and the Philistines were in utter confusion. Other Israelites joined it.

Saul put his men under oath by forbidding them not to eat before the evening and before he had avenged his people. The army went into hiding and in the woods they found honey but did not eat it. Jonathan did not know about the oath and he did eat honey.

The Lord struck down the Philistines The Israelite army was hungry and exhausted after the battle and took of the livestock of the Philistines to eat. Some complained to Saul that men were eating meat with its blood. This was against the law for life is in the blood ( Deuteronomy 12.23 ) Saul reprimanded them and, for the first time, he built an altar.

He asked what had happened that day and if anyone had been disobedient. even his own son, they would die for such disobedience He then heard about Jonathan eating honey. The people said that he must not die as he had served the people well. Saul did not pursue the Philistines.

In his life, Saul fought the many enemies of Israel. Moab. the Ammonites. Edom, the kings of Zobah and the Philistines. He was a valiant man and delivered Israel from their enemies.

Details of Saul's family are given. His sons were Jonathan, Ishyn and Malchishua. His daughters were Merab and Michal. His wife was Ahinoam. His commander in chief was Abner, son of Saul's uncle, Ner.

## **Chapter 15**

This is a sad chapter dealing with God and Samuel rejecting Saul as king

Samuel tells Saul, The Lord will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they came up from Egypt. Now, go and attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all of them.

So Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in a ravine. Saul won the battle and took Agag as a captive along with the best of his livestock.

But the Lord spoke to Samuel regretting making Saul king for he had turned away from the Lord and not followed His instructions. Samuel was angry and prayed all night.

Saul was setting up a monument in his honour and Samuel asked, What is going on?

There was noise in the camp.

He said, The soldiers have brought livestock from the Amalekites and are going to make sacrifices to your God. Note your God.

Samuel told Saul what the Lord said about him You were once small in your own eyes. I have made you king and instructed you to utterly destroy the evil people but you have not done so. Why? Saul replied that he had obeyed the Lord but admitted that he had sinned but please. he added, do not dishonour me before the elders. Come with me and we will worship God together.

Agag bound in chains came before the people.

Saul went back to Gibeah and he never saw Samuel again.

The Lord regretted making Saul king over all Israel. Saul disobeyed the word of the Lord that came through Samuel on more than one occasion.

See 1 Samuel 13. 7 - 12.

He had been impetuous and from a human point of view, some have said that the mistakes and the punishments were dreadfully wrong. Saul was human and there is some of that in all of us. In 2 Samuel 1. 19 David laments for Saul and the mighty men of valour and says that the glory of Israel remains slain.

Saul was a disappointment from the beginning. He could not find his father's donkeys. He was not a spiritual man in his ways and dealing. He was a man according to the flesh, a worldly man.

## **Chapter 16**

The Lord tells Samuel to stop mourning for Saul since He has chosen another to eventually be king. Samuel is to go to the home of Jesse in Bethlehem. On arrival in the town, the people asked Samuel if he came in peace and, as instructed by the Lord, he replied I have come to make a sacrifice to the Lord who had told him to bring a heifer. Samuel was afraid that if Saul found out what Samuel was doing Saul might kill him, hence the sacrifice

At the house of Jesse, his sons passed before Samuel such as Eliah and Abinadab. These were not God's choice. The youngest of the eight sons was David who was tending the sheep and he was called for. He was a fine young man, healthy of good appearance and handsome. This was the one. Samuel anointed him in what was a private ceremony and not for immediate or soon publication. Had it been made known, Saul would have reacted. It has been anticipated that David might have been ten years old at this time.

Who knew about this and how was it kept quiet? It says that he was anointed in the midst of his brethren ( verse 16) and in 1 Samuel 18 verse 1-4 we read that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward. In the main, he was a man after God's own heart and he was occupied with God and the beauty of the Lord (Psalm 27.4). One of his first acts was to locate the Ark of the Covenant. His heart was for God (Psalm 132. 1-6 ). Even in his early days, David faithfully looked after his father's sheep caring for them and even attacking a lion and a bear to protect the lambs. Yes, he did sin and grievously but Psalm 51 shows his repentance.

Saul was now subject to moods and depression and it was said that an evil spirit from the Lord descended on him. To soothe his nerves he called for a lyre player and David was found and taken into the king's service and whenever Saul was depressed, David played his lyre to ease his troubled mind. Clearly Saul knew nothing about David and that he would one day be king.

## **Chapter 17**

The Philistines prepared for war again. How they hated the Israelites and anti-Semitism is still rife today.

Saul and his army assembled for war.

The Philistines had a champion, a giant of a man named Goliath who had a Bronze helmet and armour and leg covering all of bronze. He taunted the Israelites daily telling them to choose one man to take him on and he said, If he kills me, we will be subject to the Israelites

Saul and his men were dismayed and for forty days, Goliath abused them.

David went up to the Israelite camp with provisions for his brothers and the soldiers. His eldest brother, Eliah, asked why had he come and was it to watch the battle.

The young man approached Saul and said that he would fight Goliath which surprised the king. But David asked what reward will there be for him. Saul protested saying that David was only a youth. David replied that he had kept his father's sheep and fought with a lion and a bear delivering lambs from their mouths.

David could not manage the armour as it was too heavy so he took his staff and with a stone in his sling, threw it and it hit Goliath's forehead and killed him. Taking the Philistines sword David decapitated him. The Philistines were now in disarray and were pursued by the Israelites and slain and their camp was plundered.

Goliath's head was taken to Jerusalem and David kept the giant's armour in his tent

Saul enquired who David was and no one knew until David said that he was a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite.

## **Chapter 18**

This chapter deals with Saul's growing distrust in David and his tremendous jealousy and dislike of him and would not allow him to go home. Jonathan loved David and this affection was reciprocated. Jonathan gave David his robe, tunic, sword, bow and belt to David. David was very successful in the army and Saul gave him a high rank. The soldiers admired David. After his success with Goliath, dancing and singing women came out to greet Saul saying, Saul has slain his thousands but David has slain his ten thousands. Saul was very angry at this and determined to watch David carefully. The next day, Saul was in a dreadful mood and, as he always held a spear by his side, he hurled it at David who was playing his lyre. Twice did David have to elude him. Saul sent David away from his presence, made him a captain of a thousand men and all of Israel and Judah loved him.

Saul offered his daughter Merab in marriage to David who said, Who am I to be the son-in-law of the king? However, Merab married Adriel.

Saul's bad feelings increased and he said to David, Bring me a hundred foreskins of Philistines as the price of your bride to be. Saul hoped that the Philistines would kill David but he told his servants to tell David that he and all his servants loved him. Michal was a daughter of Saul and she loved David and Saul liked the idea of giving her to David so she could be a snare to him and the Philistines would be against him.

David brought in two hundred foreskins and consented to be the king's son-in-law and married Michal. But Saul was a real enemy of David.

## **Chapter 19**

Saul tells Jonathan and all the attendants of his household that he wants to kill David. Jonathan, who is fond of David, warns his friend to be on his guard tomorrow as Saul is looking to kill him. Jonathan reminds his father of the good that David has done from which Saul has benefited and Saul agrees that no harm shall come to him. Equilibrium is restored. From hostility to sense.

War with the Philistines breaks out again and David defeats them.

But the evil spirits take over Saul again and when David playing his lyre before the king, Saul hurls a spear at him, David escapes.

From there on, Saul watches David all the time including his house wanting to kill him in the morning. Michal warns David of this and lets him down through a window and makes an idol also using goats hair and putting this replica on David's bed. The men come and Michal says that David is ill but the deception is revealed. Saul and his men have been tricked.

David has fled to Samuel in Ramah.

Saul and his men track David down but his men encounter prophets and Samuel prophesying by which is meant that they were declaring the greatness of God gifted by the spirit of the Lord .They were not foretelling the future or making predictions. Form hostility to honouring God.

Saul sent men for the third time and the same thing happened again. Finally, he went to Ramah himself asking where Samuel and David were. The spirit of the Lord came upon him and he prophesying about the greatness of God. He lay naked all day and night though he was not nude. Naked in the Bible means with little clothing such as in Isaiah 47 where it states that a woman with bare thighs even in water is naked. In Amos 2. 16 a soldier fleeing from battle would remove his heavy armour and said to be naked.

Saul appears to be a different man.

## **Chapter 20**

David meets up with Jonathan and asks, What crime have I committed that your father wishes to kill me?

Jonathan replies, Thou shalt not die. My father does nothing without first telling me.

David responds, Your father knows that I have found favour in your eyes.

Jonathan answers, Whatever you want me to do, I will do it for you

David hatches a plan by saying, Tomorrow is the feast of the New Moon. I am supposed to be dining with the king. I will hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. If your father misses me then tell him I had to go to my home town of Bethlehem for an important sacrifice with all the family. If Saul accepts this I will be safe. But if not and he has a temper then I know he wants to kill me If I am guilty of something then you kill me yourself.

Jonathan reacts with the word, Never. I swear by the Lord that I will sound out my father and by this time the day after tomorrow if my father is favourably disposed to you I will not send you word, But if he intends to harm you I will let you know. Shew me kindness so that I will not be killed and do not withdraw your kindness to me and my family even when the Lord destroys all your enemies.

So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David including the statement, May the Lord deal with the enemies of David. He reaffirmed his oath with David because he loved him as he loved himself.

He continued, Tomorrow is New Moon. You will ne missed The day after tomorrow in the evening go to the place where this trouble began and wait by the stone Ezel. I will shoot three arrows and

send a boy to fetch them saying, Look if the arrows are on the side of you bring them to me ( and you David, will be safe).. If they fall beyond the boy then you must go.

At the meal, Jonathan explained David's absence. Saul was furious and speaks to his son, You have sided with him. Send someone to bring him here for he must die.

Jonathan tries to intercede, What has he done?

Saul hurls his spear at his son..

As arranged, the shooting of the arrows takes place and shows that David's life is at risk. The boy returns to his master.

David and Jonathan embrace, kiss and weep. David had bowed three times before his friend. David has to go and Jonathan returns home

It was a sad occasion and they may have thought it would be their final meeting.

David was now a fugitive.

## **Chapter 21**

David goes to Nob and the priest Ahimelech at the sanctuary there. The priest is alarmed, Why are you alone?

David says that he is on secret mission for Saul and will meet his men in a certain place and requests five loaves or whatever the priest has. The reply was that he had no ordinary and only the hallowed bread the shewbread but he will not give it to David if his men have been with women. David replied that this was not the case and that his men and their bodies were pure and holy. The bread was given and replaced by hot bread.

Saul's chief shepherd, Doeg the Edomite, was there.

David asks for a sword or spear and the priest produced the sword of Goliath. Having fled from Saul he now went to Achish,king of Gath, one of the Philistine cities. The men of that city said, Is this not the king of the land, the one of whom people sing and dance, Saul has slain his thousands but David his tenthsousands?

Afraid of Achish, one wonders why he went there. His faith was weakened and he was exchanging one enemy for another.Gath was close to the sanctuary at Nob and David may have hoped for protection from Achish of whom he was afraid. Before him he pretended to be mad, scribbled on the door and let saliva run down his beard. Achish says that he was not short of madmen and why has this insane man been brought before him? Perhaps his display of madness might preserve his life and be interpreted as he was no longer a threat. Later, we shall consider Achish's kindness to David.

Perhaps David might have thought that Achish would deliver him to Saul.

It is often said that David was a man after God's heart but here he shows himself to be a liar. There as no secret mission; he was wrong to take the hallowed shewbread ( Matthew 12. 3ff ) and he was wrong to pretend to be insane. When he was in spiritual health, he was honouring to the Lord.

His writings are powerful. read his distress in psalm 55 and in Psalm 116.9 he writes, It is better to trust in the Lord than ut confidence in princes and in Psalm 56.3, he states What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.

It must be noted that Achish does show kindness to David and helps him.

(1 Samuel 28 verses 1 and 2 and 29.6)

## **Chapter 22**

David leaves Gath and escapes to the cave at Adullam. His brothers visit him there. Many people in distress and debt joined David, about 400 men.

From there, he went to Mizpah in Moab and asked the king if his parents could stay there. He agreed if David stayed there in the stronghold. But Gad the prophet told David not to stay there and so he went to the forest at Hereth.

Saul now slays the priests of Nob accusing them of siding with David. Doeg has reported to the king that David had visited Ahimeleck who with his family is summoned to Saul who asks, Why have you conspired against me? Ahimeleck speaks well of David, the kings son in law who is respected in Saul's household

Saul orders the priest and his family to be killed. Saul's servant are unwilling to do this and so Doeg undertakes to take charge of these murders killing about 85 people. He also kills many others of Nob including women, children and livestock.

One of the sons of Ahimeleck called Abiathar escapes and tells David who says, I thought Doeg would tell Saul. The man who wants to kill you also wants to kill me. Stay here with me and you will be safe.

## **Chapter 23**

David is told that the Philistines are attacking and looting Keilah David asks the Lord if he should attack the Philistines and the Lord says, Yes. But David's men are afraid and said that if they attacked the Philistines their men would be more fearful. David enquired of the Lord again and was told that the Philistines would be delivered into his hands. So they fought the Philistines who incur heavy losses and the Israelites take their livestock.

Saul was told of this and calls up his forces to go into battle.

David asks the Lord, Will the people of Keilah surrender me to Saul?

Jonathan goes to David in the woods and helps him find strength in God. He says, You will be king over Israel and I will be second to you. My father will not lay a hand on you They made a covenant about this.

The Ziphites told Saul that David was hiding in the woods and they would deliver him up to Saul. Saul is pleased and request more information

AS Saul was closing in on David a messenger arrived to say that the philistines were raiding his land and so the pursuit of David ceased. David then lives in the strongholds of Engedi

## Chapter 24

Saul is told that David is in Engedi and so with 3000 men Saul sets out to find him near the Rocks of the Wild Goats. In a cave Saul covers his feet. In other words, he wraps himself up to be comfortable and apparently goes to sleep. David and his men were further back in the cave. David crept up to Saul and cut off a piece of his robe. He was then sorry for having laid his hands on the Lord's anointed and told his men not to attack Saul. David calls out after Saul bowing down to him and prostrating himself on the ground saying, Why do you listen when men say that I want to harm you? The Lord delivered you into my hands today and I cut off a corner of your robe. I could have killed you.

Saul admits that he has treated David badly and says that David has been righteous. The king continues, You did not kill me. I know that you will king one day over all Israel but do not kill my descendants and family nor erase my name from my father's family.

In response, David gave his oath to Saul who returned home while David went back to the stronghold.

## Chapter 25

Samuel dies and is greatly mourned and was buried in Ramah.

David has moved to the deserts of Paran.

Nabal was a wealthy man with 3000 sheep and 1000 goats and property in Carmel. He was a surly unpleasant man, mean and abrupt. His wife, Abigail, was a beautiful woman.

David sent men to greet Nabal cordially. He responded, Who is this David?. Why should I entertain you with food and drink?

This displeased David. He was angry and, as Rossier says, he was in danger of giving vent to his feelings. He and his men strapped on their swords. As Rossier adds, they were getting ahead of themselves. 400 men prepared to go with David and 200 looked after the supplies.

David was rash.

A servant told Abigail that David's men suffered at the insults of Nabal but that Nabal's men were good to them. None of their flock went missing while they were nearby to Nabal's flocks. They added, Your husband is a wicked man and disaster is hanging over him and his household.

Learning that evil is planned, Abigail takes 200 loaves, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, roasted grain, raisin cakes and figs loaded on donkeys telling David's servants but not telling her husband. She tells David's men to go on ahead and that she will follow.

When she arrived, she bowed down before David saying, Pay no attention to Nabal. Accept these gifts that I bring to you and your men.

David was delighted and thanked her, accepting the gifts.

Back at home, Abigail found Nabal having a party. He was drunk and in the morning she told him what had happened. His heart failed and in ten days he was dead.

David sent word to Abigail to be his wife which she became. He also married Ahinoam and Michal, the king's daughter was also his wife.

## **Chapter 26**

The Ziphites go to Saul at Gibeah saying, David is hiding in the hills of Hakalah. So Saul went to the desert of Ziph with 3000 men to find David who was staying in the wilderness.

He sent out scouts who reported back that Saul had definitely arrived

David and Abishai went to Saul's camp and found Saul and Abner asleep and lying down. Abishai says, The Lord has delivered your enemy into your hands. David replies, Do not harm him. He is the Lord's anointed. We cannot lay our hands on him. Let us take his spear and the water jug close to his head and go. This they did and no one woke up.

A little distance away, David calls to Abner taunting him, Why do you not look after the king? Where is his spear and water jug? He replies, Who are you?

Saul recognises David's voice and speaks, Is that you, David, my son?

The reply is, What have I done wrong? If the Lord has incited you against me then may He accept an offering. If it is the people, then let them be accursed. The king has come out to look for a flea.

Saul admits that he has sinned saying, You have spared my life again today. I will not try to harm you again.

David asks for someone to collect Saul's spear adding, I valued your life today as may the Lord value mine and save me from trouble.

Saul answers, May you be blessed, my son. You will be great and triumph.

The king went home and David went on his way.

## **Chapter 27**

David. a man after Gods own heart? Not always. In this chapter he becomes a bandit

He still believes that one day Saul will kill him and thinks the best thing he can do is to join the Philistines where Saul will not look for him. He had Abigail and Ahinoam with him. He asked Achish for a place rather than live in the palace and the king of Gath gave him Ziklag. David lived among the Philistines for 16 months.

He now went up against the Geshurites, the Gizites and the Amalekites. They were enemies of Israel and he did not leave any alive but took their livestock. Achish would ask, Where have you raided today? The king of Gath liked David who had become obnoxious to the Israelites. He was a outlaw.

## **Chapter 28**

In this chapter, the Philistines join forces to fight Israel. Achish tells David, You and your men will accompany me and my army and you will be my bodyguard for life,

Now that Samuel was dead, Saul was in a quandary as to how to obtain advice. He had expelled all the mediums and spiritists from the land.

The Philistines came up to Shumen and Saul gathered Israel to Gilboa. The sight of the Philistine army terrorised Saul and Israel and Saul enquired of the Lord what he should do but the Lord did not answer. Saul called for a female medium and they found the Witch of Endor.

Disguised, he went to see her. She said, Saul has cut off the mediums and spiritists. Why have you set a trap for me?

She was assured that she would not be punished.

Saul requested that she bring up Samuel and she did. Samuel complained, Why have you disturbed me?

The king explained about the Philistines and that the Lord did not answer him. He adds, Tell me what to do.

Samuel replies, Why consult me now that the Lord has departed from you. The Lord will take the kingdom from you and give it to David. The Lord will deliver you into the hands of the Philistines and you and your sons will be with me. Israel will be given to the Philistines.

Saul collapses on the floor and was also weak because of hunger. At first he refused food from the medium but eventually did so and then he and his men left.

The over riding matter in his chapter is why would David go to war against his own people?

## **Chapter 29**

The Philistines assembled at Aphek and the Israelites camped at Jezreel.

The Israelites saw some Hebrews in the Philistine army and asked who they were.

Achish answered, This is David who was an officer of Saul. He has been with me for a over a year and I find no fault in him.

Some commanders in the Philistine army were angry and told Achish to send David back and that he must not go into battle for he may turn against us. We recall what was said, Saul has slain his thousands but David his ten thousands.

Achish told David to go back although he approved of him. David replied, What have I done? Why can't I fight against the enemies of you, my king?

The king of Gath repeats what his commanders have said. So David and his men arose early in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines as the Philistine army went on to Jezreel.

## **Chapter 30**

When David and his men returned to Ziklag, they found it burnt and destroyed and the men, women and children were taken captives but no one killed. There were other raids in the Negev. Among the captives were David's two wives. Many were distressed at the whereabouts of their sons and daughters and they were in great distress and wept aloud including David who found some comfort in the Lord. He said to Abiathar the priest, Bring me the ephod, and David asked the Lord, Shall I

pursue this raiding party? and the Lord answered Yes, you will overtake them and succeed in your rescue. David and 600 men went into the Valley at Besor where 200 men then stayed with the supplies as they were exhausted. The 400 continued. In a field they found an Egyptian who was weak and they gave him food and drink. In answer to a question, he said he was an Egyptian and was with the Amalekites in their raids including the one on Ziklag but that he had been abandoned because he was ill

David asked if he could lead them to the raiding party. He did and a fight proceeded, in which the Amalekites were defeated. 400 Amalekites got away on camels and the captives were restored and much plunder taken. They returned to the 200 men and shared the plunder with them and with other areas of Judah in acknowledgment of the help they had given David.

### **Chapter 31**

The Philistines fought Israel and they were strong and fierce. The Israelites were in disarray. Many died on Mount Gilboa, Saul's sons, Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki Shua were killed. Saul was badly wounded by arrows and called on his armour bearer to kill him rather than suffer such abuse from the uncircumcised Philistines. The armour bearer could not do this and so Saul fell on his sword and died.

The Israelites fled and abandoned their towns which the Philistines occupied. They cut off Saul's head and removed his armour which they put in the temple of Ashteroth. His body was fixed to the wall in Bethshan, but the valiant men of Jabesh Gilead took his body and those of his sons by night and burned them and they buried their bones under a tamarisk tree and fasted for seven days.

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Ref. no. 17-8