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SAMUEL**

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**BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK**

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***STUDIES IN  
SAMUEL***

by

Willard W. Winter

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# DEDICATION

To Puella



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## PREFACE

The work being presented is the outgrowth of a number of years of teaching the books of Samuel as a part of a course embracing the twelve books of history in the Old Testament. The method followed is one of providing both questions and answers on the verses where problems most often arise. The questions are much after the style used by J. W. McGarvey in his *Class Notes on Sacred History*, but move beyond the number he raised on each chapter.

With each question the verse number is also given, thus enabling the student to turn to the Bible to read the text and see the verse in its context. The wording of the King James Version is followed inasmuch as, in the opinion of the author, it is still the most frequently quoted version among Bible-believing students.

A general introduction to the books of Samuel precedes the actual text of the present work providing the student with general information about Samuel with regard to such questions as the name of the books, the author, the date of contents, the date of writing, the purpose, the plan, and the general outline.

In addition to the general outline of the books found in the Introduction, a fuller outline is given at the beginning of the text for each of the two books of Samuel. This broader outline is a recapitulation of the sections in the chapter digests found throughout the book.

A special feature of this work is the digest of each chapter which precedes the actual text. This digest is followed by another special feature entitled "Lessons for Learning." These "Lessons for Learning" are truths gleaned from the events described in the chapters.

In order that the real message in the Scriptures be embedded in the minds of the readers, it is suggested that the actual Scripture text be read first. This should be followed by a quick reading of the digest of the chapter. The "Lessons for Learning" should next be considered and

finally specific questions on finer points should be read along with the answers to the questions.

In order to give the student a quick review of the chapter, ten questions are appended to each chapter. These questions are not answered for the student but provide a means for him to check up on his impressions from his study. At times these questions are repetitions for emphasis of the questions in the text for which answers have been provided. At other times they are general questions which should stimulate the student to new thoughts which will embed the truths of the Bible indelibly in his mind.

It is hoped that the end result will be that the reader may say with the Psalmist, who is really the main person of the books of Samuel, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105) and with the purpose in mind of being able to say, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Name of the Book*

The two books of Samuel of our contemporary English Bibles were originally considered as one book by the Jewish people. This is evidenced by the fact that Josephus (*Against Apion*, I, 8) says, "For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us disagreeing from and contradicting one another (as the Greeks have), but only twenty-two books. . . ." No doubt he is referring to the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament which would be reduced to twenty-two by combining such double books as Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, by considering the Minor Prophets as one volume, and by combining such books as Lamentations with Jeremiah, as well as Ruth with Judges.

The Jewish people have always referred to these books as the books of Samuel. When the Greek translation was made, the translators called it First and Second Kings (*Basileion Alpha* and *Beta*). The Latin titles give the books the names of *Liber I Samuelis* and *Liber II Samuelis*.

### *The Date of the Book*

The writings which we call the books of Samuel cover a period extending from the birth of Samuel through the reign of David. The period begins immediately after the end of the book of Judges. It is quite possible that Eli was High Priest in Shiloh while Samson was active among the Philistines.

Chronological notes in the book of Judges total over four hundred years, but if we take the periods of judgeship alone along with the periods when the land had rest, the total is 299 years. Jephthah indicated that the people of Israel had come into Palestine three hundred years before his own date (Judges 11:26). If we consider the length of judgeships of those who followed Jephthah and the time from Moses to Judges, the period of Judges still is around three hundred years.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

We therefore conclude that Samuel must have been born around 1100 B.C. or three hundred years after the time of Joshua which is dated around 1400 B.C. If Samson was still active while Eli was high priest at Shiloh, it is quite possible that Samuel was a bit earlier than this date.

We do know that the division of the kingdom between Rehoboam and Jeroboam occurred around 931 B.C. The time of the reign of Solomon is set at 40 years (I Kings 11:42). This would mean that Solomon came to the throne around 970 B.C. This would be the end of the reign of David and would mark the extent of time to which the books of Samuel ranged. We are also informed that David reigned for forty years (I Kings 2:11), and we are thus able to establish the end of the reign of Saul at around 1010 B.C.

Such dates as these make it possible for us to state with a reasonable amount of accuracy that the books of Samuel cover a period of over a hundred years; and since the books close with David still active and say nothing about the way in which he died, we are also reasonably sure that the books were written during the lifetime of David, during the close of his reign. This would indicate that the books were written around 970 B.C.

### *Authorship of the Book*

The Talmud says that "Samuel wrote the book which bears his name and the book of Judges and Ruth" (*Baba Bathra*, 14b). In the later section of the Talmud, however, it is recorded that "Samuel wrote his book (*Sifro*) but is it not written in it 'Now Samuel was dead?'" (*Baba Bathra*, 15a). Jewish tradition maintained that Samuel wrote the book, but naturally objections to holding the position that he wrote all of the book were raised even at that time.

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Samuel's death is recorded in I Samuel 25:1 and mention is made again of his death in I Samuel 28:3. Events which took place long after Samuel's death are also recorded in the two books. God temporarily raised him from the dead, according to the record in I Samuel 28:11-19.

Some critics hold the position that the books were not completed in their present form until sometime after the kingdom was divided under Rehoboam and Jeroboam (Edward J. Young, "The Books of Samuel," *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 188-189).

It hardly seems plausible that the books were written at such a late date. The second book of Samuel ends with David still active, and the first book of Kings takes up with David still old and serving as king. It appears more likely that the death of David would have been recorded in Samuel if the books were not written until a long time after the event took place.

The more logical position is that the books of Samuel were written while David was still alive. *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* has this note: "Samuel is the historian of his own lifetime. Nathan and Gad together give the history of David's reign" ("Introduction," page 11).

Quite likely Samuel did write the history from the beginning of the books until the account of his death. Probably Nathan wrote the rest of the history, making some additions and insertions in the earlier part as he brought the books to their present form. The books should still be called the books of Samuel, because they not only tell the story of Samuel's life but also the story of the lives of the two kings he anointed—Saul and David.

### *The Purpose of the Book*

The general purpose of the book and main theme of the book are to trace the advance of the people of Israel

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

under the Divine guidance to a state of settled prosperity and union in the Promised Land. Also to give prominence to the rule of God which was the essential condition of Israel's life as the people of God under all the changing forms of early government. The books are a record of the changes, national and constitutional, which accompanied the growth and development of the national life. At the close of this period the Israelites found themselves united under the rule of the king to whom all gave allegiance. They were controlled and guided by the definitely established institutions and laws.

Samuel himself is sometimes described as a "king-maker." He was called of God to anoint both Saul and David, the first kings of Israel. The books of Samuel naturally trace out not only the career of Samuel, himself, but also the career of those with whom he was associated.

Without the books of Samuel our knowledge of the history of Israel would be incomplete. We would be left to wonder how they progressed from the state in which they found themselves under the leadership of Judges to the place where they had men like Solomon and Hezekiah to be their kings. The simple purpose of the books may be described as that of carrying forward the history of the people of Israel.

### *The Plan of the Books*

The books are in the form of historical records of events. They are easy to read. One chapter seems to follow another in natural order, and people who like to read history are sure to enjoy reading these books. Critics of the Bible and of the progress of mankind admit that these books are genuine history.

A definite plan is hard to trace out in the two books if they are to be compared with the book of Genesis, which is quite evidently planned around the ten generations

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enumerated in Genesis. The writers of the books of Samuel, however, have quite evidently followed the natural plan of writing history. They give the narrative of facts and events in a chronological order together with the causes and effects of those facts and events.

Some background is laid for the appearance of Samuel himself. Eli was high priest when Samuel was born. His life is certainly not exemplary nor is the life of his sons. He was a part of the early experiences of Samuel.

Once the background for Samuel's life has been presented, the author proceeds then to tell of the career of Samuel. Samuel's associations with Saul are traced out, and the second king whom Samuel anointed is introduced.

David is quite evidently more important to the entire story of God's dealings with mankind than any of the others. He is introduced in the sixteenth chapter of First Samuel, and the rest of the book is largely a record of David's activities.

Not only does the plan of God demand that sixteen chapters of First Samuel be given to David, but it is also expedient that all twenty-four chapters of Second Samuel be devoted to the story of David. David ruled no longer than his son Solomon, but it was not in God's plan to tell as much about Solomon. Solomon was not as important to the entire account of God's dealings with his people, and so the story of Solomon is told in only eleven chapters of First Kings. The forty chapters devoted to David and the eleven chapters to Solomon show the comparative importance of the two men.

This inequality of length of treatment is sometimes called "literary disproportion." It would be better to call it an evidence of the plan of God, the ultimate author of the books. David was a man after God's own heart, and Solomon in all his glory was not more important. Neither was Saul, but the high place occupied by Samuel is indicated by the fact that the two books are called the

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books of Samuel. Such is the plan of God in giving us these two books.

### *The Outline of the Book*

Since the books of Samuel are divided into two sections in the English Bible, we may well outline the contents of the books of Samuel in two parts. Under this arrangement we have the following outline:

I. The influence of Samuel in the life of Saul—

I Samuel 1-31

II. The influences of Samuel in the life of David—

II Samuel 1-24

This kind of outline of the book, however, does not really give us much information about the contents of the two books.

A better outline of the books of Samuel would be to indicate the life of Samuel as a separate part. The outline would go as follows:

I. The life and work of Samuel—I Samuel 1-15

II. The life and reign of Saul—I Samuel 16-31

III. The reign of David—II Samuel 1-24

Still a third outline is suggested by the material in the books which outlines these points:

I. The lives of Samuel and Saul—I Samuel 1-15

II. The lives of David and Saul—I Samuel 16-II Samuel 1

III. The sole reign of David—II Samuel 2-24

From these various suggestions it is easy to see that the task of outlining the books is rather difficult, but any outline of the book must give prominence to Samuel. The only reason we know about Eli is that he was high priest when Samuel is born. The primary reason that we know Saul is the fact that he was anointed by Samuel. The outstanding thing about the beginning of the reign of David at least is that he was chosen by God through his prophet Samuel. The books are very properly called the

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Books of Samuel. They trace out the life of Samuel and the lives of those men upon whom he had primary influence.

### *The Contents of the Book*

Some of the most thrilling incidents of all Bible history are recorded in the books of Samuel. It is here that we read about the Godly character of Hannah. Hannah's song is the most important part of chapter two. Samuel's vision of the God who called him to be a prophet is in the third chapter. The Philistines come into focus as the reader continues through the next four chapters. Samuel is rejected by the people as king as prophet and judge in chapter eight, and then we are introduced to Saul. Saul's anointing and his first victories are recorded in chapters ten and eleven. Chapter twelve is given over to Samuel's address to the people of Israel in regard to the nature of the king and the kingdom. Final events in the association of Samuel and Saul are found in the next three chapters, and David is introduced in chapter sixteen.

The great encounter of David and Goliath is found in the seventeenth chapter, and then David's various associations with Saul and Jonathan are the subject matter of the next seven chapters. Samuel's death is recorded in chapter twenty-five, and David's continued flight from the presence of Saul occupies the final chapters of the book. Chapter thirty-one records Saul's death on Mount Gilboa, and the first chapter of the second book records the evidently spurious account of the man who said he had killed Saul. It is also in the first chapter of Second Samuel that we read the Song of the Bow, David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan.

David's reign in Hebron is recorded in II Samuel chapter two through five. This period of seven and one-half years was very important to the life of David. It was during this time that he married and fathered his first children.

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Perhaps these were the happiest years of his reign.

The reign of David from Jerusalem over all Israel is recorded in the rest of Second Samuel. The final chapters of the book contain David's last words and the account of his ill-fated numbering of the people of Israel.

David was a man after God's own heart. The records of his successes and failures are written in large letters so that they who read may understand. His life is exemplary and one that should be studied diligently by every Christian. It is perhaps this reason that makes most of us interested in the books of Samuel.

In addition to all the dramatic interest which is aroused by the records in First and Second Samuel is the fact that David is the ancestor of Jesus Christ. Jesus was of the house and family of David. He has been known as the Son of David. As the Christ was a Prophet after the order of Moses and a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, He was a king after the order of David. One can hardly understand the impact of the ministry of Jesus Christ without understanding the reign of David.

All these reasons go together to make studies in Samuel an imperative part of every Christian's background. Not only is the material to be covered a part of the Holy Writ, but it is also a part that looms large among the essential parts of the Bible. To know Samuel and David is ultimately to know God, the Father, and His Son, the true Son of David.

# STUDIES IN SAMUEL

## AN OUTLINE FIRST SAMUEL

- I. The Judgeship of Samuel, 1:1—12:25.
  1. The Birth and Infancy of Samuel, 1:1—2:11.
    - a. Samuel's simple surroundings. 1:1-8
    - b. Hannah's prayer. 1:9-18
    - c. Samuel's birth. 1:19-23
    - d. Samuel presented to the Lord. 1:24-28
    - e. Hannah's song. 2:1-11
  2. The Childhood of Samuel, 2:12—3:21.
    - a. Eli's sinful sons. 2:12-17
    - b. Samuel's service in the tabernacle. 2:18-26
    - c. Prophecy against Eli's wicked sons. 2:27-35
    - d. Samuel's call. 3:1-10
    - e. Doom pronounced on Eli's house. 3:11-14
    - f. Samuel established as a prophet. 3:15-21
  3. Loss of the Ark and End of Eli's House, 4:1-22.
    - a. The loss of the Ark. 4:1-11
    - b. Death of Eli. 4:12-18
    - c. Sadness in Israel. 4:19-22
  4. The Captivity of the Ark, 5:1—7:17.
    - a. The Ark in the temple of Dagon. 5:1-6
    - b. The Ark in Gath. 5:7-9
    - c. The Ark in Ekron. 5:10-12
    - d. The decision to return the Ark. 6:1-9
    - e. The Ark returned. 6:10-18
    - f. The men of Beth-shemesh smitten. 6:19-21
    - g. The Ark in the house of Abinadab. 7:1, 2
    - h. Israel purged at Mizpeh. 7:3-8
    - i. Israel delivered under Samuel. 7:9-17
  5. The Installation of Israel's First King, 8:1—10:27.
    - a. The people ask for a king. 8:1-5
    - b. The Lord instructs Samuel. 8:6-9

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- c. Samuel describes a king. 8:10-18
  - d. The people persist. 8:19-22
  - e. Saul's search for his father's asses. 9:1-5
  - f. Saul seeks the seer. 9:6-10
  - g. Samuel and Saul meet. 9:11-21
  - h. Samuel honors Saul. 9:22-27
  - i. Saul anointed by Samuel. 10:1-8
  - j. Saul among the prophets. 10:9-16
  - k. Saul acclaimed by the people. 10:17-27
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- a. Jabesh-gilead attacked. 11:1-3
  - b. Jabesh-gilead delivered. 11:4-11
  - c. The kingship of Saul renewed. 11:12-25
  - d. Samuel reviews his career. 12:1-5
  - e. Israel's history reviewed. 12:6-15
  - f. Samuel rebukes the people. 12:16-25

## II. The Reign of Saul, 13:1—31:13.

1. The Early Days of Saul's Reign, 13:1—14:52.
  - a. Saul's campaign against the Philistines. 13:1-4
  - b. The counter-attack of the Philistines. 13:5-7
  - c. Saul's presumptuous sacrifice. 13:8-10
  - d. Samuel's rebuke of Saul. 13:11-16
  - e. The battle pitched. 13:17-23
  - f. Jonathan's surprise attack on the Philistines. 14:1-23
  - g. Saul's ill-advised oath. 14:24-46
  - h. Saul's other battles and his family. 14:47-52
2. The Lord's Rejection of Saul, 15:1-35.
  - a. Saul sent against the Amalekites. 15:1-6
  - b. Saul's incomplete obedience. 15:7-9
  - c. Samuel delivers the Lord's message of condemnation. 15:10-23
  - d. Samuel and Saul parted permanently. 15:24-35

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3. David chosen as Saul's successor, 16:1-23.
  - a. Samuel goes to Bethlehem. 16:1-5
  - b. Samuel anoints David. 16:7-13
  - c. Saul seeks a musician. 16:14-23
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  - a. Goliath's challenge. 17:1-11
  - b. David hears of Goliath's challenge. 17:12-27
  - c. Saul sends David to meet Goliath. 17:28-37
  - d. David slays Goliath. 17:38-54
  - e. Saul inquires about David's background. 17:55-58
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  - a. David's covenant with Jonathan. 18:1-4
  - b. Saul's jealousy of David. 18:5-9
  - c. David driven out of Saul's court. 18:10-16
  - d. David the king's son-in-law. 18:17-30
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  - a. Jonathan intercedes for David. 19:1-7
  - b. David driven out a second time. 19:8-17
  - c. David with Samuel. 19:18-24
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  - b. Jonathan's plan. 20:11-23
  - c. Saul's attack on Jonathan and David. 20:24-34
  - d. David's and Jonathan's parting. 20:35-42
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  - a. David at Nob. 21:1-9
  - b. David at Gath. 21:10-15
9. Saul's Reprisals against David and his Friends, 22:1-23.
  - a. The prophet Gad and David. 22:1-5
  - b. Saul's increasing jealousy. 22:6-16
  - c. Saul's slaughter of the priests. 22:17-23

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10. Saul's Pursuit of David to Keilah, 23:1-29.
  - a. Abiathar, the priest, with David. 23:1-6
  - b. David's and Jonathan's meeting. 23:7-18
  - c. Saul's pursuit of David. 23:19-29
11. Saul's Life Spared by David, 24:1-22.
  - a. David spares Saul's life. 24:1-7
  - b. David pleads for his life. 24:8-15
  - c. Saul accepts David's plea. 24:16-22
12. David's Continued Flight, 25:1—26:25.
  - a. The death of Samuel. 25:1
  - b. Nabal's shameful treatment of David. 25:2-13
  - c. Abigail appeals to David. 25:14-38
  - d. David's wives. 25:39-44
  - e. Saul pursues David again. 26:1-5
  - f. David again spares Saul. 26:6-20
  - g. Saul again repents. 26:21-25
13. David's Second Flight to Gath, 27:1-12.
  - a. David again in Gath. 27:1-7
  - b. David's pretended campaign against Judah. 27:8-12
14. Preparations for Saul's Last Battle, 28:1—29:11.
  - a. David with Achish in battle. 28:1, 2
  - b. Saul forsaken by God. 28:3-6
  - c. Saul seeks the witch of En-dor. 28:7-14
  - d. Samuel's appearance. 28:15-25
  - e. David challenged by the lords of the Philistines. 29:1-7
  - f. David departs from Achish. 29:8-11
15. David's Return to Ziklag, 30:1-31.
  - a. David's camp looted. 30:1-6
  - b. David's pursuit of his enemies. 30:7-20
  - c. David's goodwill towards Judah. 30:21-31
16. Saul's Last Battle, 31:1-13.
  - a. Saul's death. 31:1-6
  - b. Saul's burial. 31:7-13

PART ONE

THE  
JUDGESHIP  
OF SAMUEL

1:1—12:25

THE  
FIRST BOOK  
OF  
SAMUEL

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 1

Vv. 1- 8 *Samuel's simple surroundings.* The father, Elkanah, was a righteous and pious man. He went to the tabernacle regularly. Samuel's mother, Hannah, was despised by Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife.

The evils of polygamy are clearly seen in this situation. One wife, Hannah, was favored. Since she was childless, she was chided by the other wife, Peninnah. Although Elkanah tried to bestow other favors on Hannah, she was still unhappy with her lot. Unhappiness, jealousy and spite are all displayed.

Vv. 9-18 *Hannah's prayer.* Samuel's mother was faithful in her attendance at the house of God. She was sincere in her religious practices, and her prayer arose from such anguish of heart that she did not utter audible words.

The fact that the high priest saw her lips moving and heard no sound led him to believe that she was inebriated. His coming to this conclusion leaves us to wonder if he were accustomed to seeing people at worship in such a condition.

Vv. 19-23 *Samuel's birth.* God was faithful in answering Hannah's prayer. Eli, the high priest, had told her that her prayer would be answered. Samuel was a child of prayer.

Vv. 24-28 *Samuel presented to the Lord.* True to her promise, Hannah brought the child Samuel to God's house and gave him to the Lord. She was faithful in keeping her promise. Her gratitude for her blessings knew no bounds.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Problems call for prayers.* Some situations are more than men can cope with by themselves. Men and women of faith never hesitate to take their burdens to the Lord.
2. *Children are gifts from God.* Life itself is a gift which God has given to men to be passed on from generation to generation. Since they are given to parents as gifts of God, children ought also to be given back to God and His service in one form or another.

#### I. THE JUDGESHIP OF SAMUEL 1:1—12:25

##### 1. The Birth and Infancy of Samuel, 1:1—2:11.

###### *Samuel's Simple Surroundings.* 1:1-8

Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, 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:

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.

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.

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.

6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb.

# THE FAMILY OF KING SAUL

Aphiah (I Sam. 9:1)

—| Becorath

—| Zéror

Maacah = Abiel, or Jeiel (I Ch. 9:35) (Ner? I Ch. 8:33)

Ner

—| Kish

—| Others (I Ch. 9:36)

—| Ahimaaz (I Sam. 30:31) 14:50

Abner

—| SAUL

—| Ahinoam (I Sam. 14:50)

Jonathan, Ishui, Malchishua, Abinadab, Esbaal (Ishbosheth), Merab, Michal  
(I Sam. 14:49; I Ch. 8:33-40)

Meribbaal (Mephibosheth) (I Ch. 9:40-44; 8:34-40)

—| Micah





An air view of the northern section of Old Jerusalem.  
This view shows the north city wall and the Damascus gate \*

Melison Photo Service

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.

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?

1. *Who were the parents of Samuel? 1:1, 2, 20*

Elkanah was a descendant of Kohath, who was of the tribe of Levi. Levi, of course, was the ancestor of all who were eligible for the priesthood. Elkanah is also known as an Ephraimite. Ephraim became the name of all the country or the tribes north of Judah. Levi's descendants had no inheritance in the promised land. Their inheritance in the promised land consisted of cities assigned them by the other tribes. Elkanah lived in the land assigned to the tribe of Ephraim. Although he was a Levite, he was also known as an Ephraimite. Samuel's mother was named Hannah. *Elkanah* is from two Hebrew words meaning "whom God has acquired." *Hannah* is from the Hebrew word which means "grace" or "favor."

2. *Was Samuel a priest?*

Samuel was of the tribe of Levi. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites could be priests. The priests were taken from the descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses. Aaron was the son of Amram and Jochebed. He was thus descended from Kohath, who was also one of the ancestors of Samuel. Since Samuel was from the tribe of Levi, many Bible scholars conclude that he was a priest. It would seem better, however, to hold that Samuel was not a priest since he was not descended from Aaron. Samuel did serve as a priest, but his appointment seems unusual. He replaced Eli as the spiritual leader of Israel, but it would be better to think of Samuel as a judge and a prophet and not a priest in the fullest sense of the word.

3. *Where did they live? 1:1, 19*

They were from Ramathaim-zophim. The word *Ramah* means "hill." The word *Ramathaim* means "double hill." The word *Zophim* is a derivative of the word *Zuph*. Hence Ramathaim-zophim means "The double hill of the country belonging to the descendants of Zuph."

Mount Ephraim designates the hill country of Ephraim. Palestine was divided generally into four different sections—the hill country, the sea coast, the Jordan valley, and the Negeb, or the South. The center of the land was hilly, and the highest portion was known as the hill country of Ephraim. Here it is called Mount Ephraim.

4. *Who was Zuph, the Ephrathite?*

Zuph was an ancestor of Samuel's who gave his name to the home, Ramathaim-zophim. The fact that he was called an Ephrathite has led some to believe that his home was south of the land of the tribe of Benjamin and near Bethlehem. Bethlehem is sometimes known as Ephrath (Ruth 1:2). It is apparent from this reference and also the reference in I Kings 11:26, however, that Ephrathite is sometimes used interchangeably with Ephraimite. The importance of his place in the ancestry of Samuel has been lost to us; but when this was written, he was perhaps a well-known ancestor of Samuel.

5. *Who was Peninnah? 1:2*

Peninnah was one of the wives of Elkanah, Samuel's father. Her name comes from a Hebrew word meaning "coral." All we know about Peninnah is recorded here in these verses. No other mention is made of her in the Scriptures outside this place. We are left to wonder if she was the older wife since she is mentioned as having children before any children were born to Hannah.

6. *Was Hannah's barrenness a punishment? 1:2*

There are times in the Scripture when barrenness is called a punishment. Such was the case with regard to the people of Philistia in the days of Abimelech and Isaac. In

this case, however, it seems that barrenness was not a punishment for any wrong which Hannah or Elkanah had committed. It was rather a withholding of blessing.

7. *What was Elkanah's yearly custom? 1:3*

Elkanah went up to the tabernacle to worship and to sacrifice. The institution of the pilgrimage is as old as the existence of the institutions. Although it is not stated that this was the time of the Passover, the Passover was the one great feast of the Jews; and this is probably the feast he attended yearly. Simply because it is not stated that he went up thrice yearly is not grounds for saying that he did not observe the feasts as he had been commanded in the law. He would attend each given feast yearly.

8. *Where was Shiloh? 1:3*

Shiloh was also in the hill country of Ephraim. It was located east of the main road from Jerusalem to Bethel and Shechem. Shiloh itself was situated about five miles north of Bethel. This had been the site of Israel's center of worship from the time of Joshua. The tabernacle had been located here by Joshua, and the tribes had gathered here to receive their inheritance in the Promised Land (see Joshua 13-21). All in all, it was a good choice for a location for the tabernacle. It was centrally located, and quite accessible to all the tribes of the children of Israel. As a priest, Eli was directly descended from Aaron. Aaron had four sons—Nadab, Abihu, Ithamar, and Eleazar. Nadab and Abihu were slain when they offered strange fire before the Lord (see Leviticus 10). The priestly families were thence all descended from Aaron's two sons, Ithamar and Eleazar. Eli was descended from Aaron through Ithamar (Leviticus 10:1, 2, 12). This appears from the mention of Abiathar, who was a descendant of Eli (I Kings 2:27). This man had a son Abimelech, who is expressly stated to have been "of the sons of

Ithamar" (I Chronicles 21:3; cf. II Samuel 8:17). Eli is generally supposed to have been the first of the line of Ithamar to hold the office of high priest (Josephus, *Antiquities*, V, v, 2). His name means "God is high." His two sons were called Hophni and Phinehas, names without particular meanings in the Hebrew language. Phinehas was also the name of Eleazar, the son of Aaron.

9. *Who were the priests? 1:3*

Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's sons, were priests. It is necessary that Eli should be mentioned because he appears in the immediate sequel. By understanding that his sons were priests, we will refrain from indicting Eli for much of what afterwards happens. As priests, they should have been an example to the people of Israel.

10. *What indication do we have of Elkanah's love for Hannah? cf. I Samuel 1:4, 5, 8*

"Whenever Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah, his wife, and to all her sons and daughters, portions: but to Hannah he gave a WORTHY portion; for he loved Hannah." This, together with his statement that he meant more to her than ten sons, showed his love (cf. I Samuel 1:4, 5, 8). Various translations of this passage have been made, showing that Elkanah gave Hannah a double portion, or a portion equivalent to that which he gave to two other persons. All of this would express his love for her.

11. *Meaning of "double portion"? 1:5*

(cf. *Genesis 43:34; Deuteronomy 31:17; I Samuel 1:5*)

The meaning is that he gave more to Hannah because of his love for her. The custom of showing respect to distinguished guests by giving them the largest and best pieces (I Samuel 9:23, 24; Homer, *Iliad* II, 7, 321; 8, 162, etc.) is met with elsewhere. This is done by giving double portions (e.g. the kings among the Spartans, *Herod* 6, 57), and even by fourfold portions in the case of the Archons among the Cretans (Heraclid, *Polit.* 3). Among the Egyptians, the number five appears to have been preferred

to any other (see Genesis 41:34; 45:22; 47:2, 24; Isaiah 19:18). The double portion of Elijah is not the same as the double portion here and in the case of Joseph. This double portion is called a "worthy portion" in the King James Version.

12. *What was Peninnah's attitude toward Hannah? 1:6, 7*

When Elkanah gave Hannah a double portion as an expression of his love for her, Peninnah must have been jealous. Peninnah constantly taunted Hannah to irritate her. She was not necessarily interested in making her angry, but she was wanting to put Hannah into inward commotion and to excite her. Just as Elkanah showed his love to Hannah at every sacrificial festival, so did Peninnah repeat her provocation, the effect of which was that Hannah gave vent to her grief in tears, and did not eat. Peninnah's attitude may be called a habitually scornful treatment. She taunted Hannah about her barrenness. Her treatment was so shameful that she is called Hannah's "adversary" (verse 6).

13. *What effect did this have on Hannah? 1:7, 8*

She wept, and would not eat, and was sore grieved. Hannah no doubt reproached herself with her shortcoming, though it was not voluntary. Her husband exhorts her not to blame herself, which is precisely what she was doing. The Scriptural picture of Hannah is not that of one who with hysteria would continually berate herself and those about her, but rather of one who would carry a heavy burden with meekness. Those who were intimately acquainted with her would know of her grief, and she shared her burden in silent prayer to God. Casual acquaintances would hardly know the nature of her burden. It was very cruel of Peninnah to provoke her about it.

14. *What did Elkanah say to Hannah to comfort her? 1:8*

Elkanah asked a rhetorical question. The first question is followed by a second. All this was said to comfort her, but the very mention of the word "sons" must have started

the springs of grief afresh, because it was for his sake that Hannah wished to bear children. The answer would have been in the affirmative, and otherwise would have been no consolation. Although he asked the question without expecting an answer, he must have asked it in good humor. We smile when we think of a man who thinks he brings more happiness to his wife than a great number of children.

*Hannah's prayer. 1:9-18*

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.

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.

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.

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*.

15. *Was eating and drinking normally associated with worship? 1:9*

God had ordained a central sanctuary for Israel (Deuteronomy 12:5-12). He gave them instructions about the nature of their worship, and He said of the place where they were to worship: "There ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households" (Deuteronomy 12:7). They were forbidden to eat the tithe of their corn or of their wine or of their oil within their gates: that is, within the towns where they lived they were not to conduct their worship services. They were further instructed: "Thou must eat them before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose" (Deuteronomy 12:18). On many different occasions people enjoyed a sacrificial meal together (Genesis 31:54; Exodus 18:12). A holy feast was very much a part of Israel's worship. It was this kind of a feast that was enjoyed by Elkanah and his household.

16. *Why is the Tabernacle called the "Temple"? 1:9 b*

The temple proper was not built until the days of Solomon. The Tabernacle itself was more portable and less permanent than the Temple. It was intended to be a temporary place of worship which could be moved about in the wilderness. The Tabernacle was set up rather permanently in Shiloh. Excavations on the site indicate that there were some rather permanent walls erected around the court, and the fact that it was there for a long time made it seem less like a portable place of worship.

All of these rather permanent arrangements led to the Tabernacle being called the Temple. Notices are made in the Scripture that there was a post erected and a seat where the high priest could sit. References to these are made again in I Samuel 4:13 and 18.

17. *What was Hannah's attitude? 1:10*

Hannah is described as being "in bitterness of soul." She "prayed unto the Lord," She also "wept sore." We dare not describe her as being cynical, but she was bitter. Much of her time was spent in prayer. On other occasions she was seen to be weeping. The Hebrew word used to describe the bitterness of her soul is from the same root as the word which Naomi used to describe her condition when she came back from Moab. Naomi had lost her husband and her two sons in Moab. She had gone out as a happy wife and mother and came back to her home in Bethlehem alone except for her foreign daughter-in-law. When the people came out to greet her, she asked them not to call her anymore Naomi but Mara (Ruth 1:20). The word *Naomi* indicates pleasantness, the word *Mara* is best translated as "bitter." This is the same word used to describe Hannah.

18. *What vow did Hannah make? 1:11*

The vow of Hannah stipulated that she would give her son to Jehovah all the days of his life. She intended that he would become a servant around the house of Jehovah (see Numbers 8:19). A vow is a promise to give something to God, or to perform some thing for Him, in case He grants a prayer. An example of this is Jacob's vow (Genesis 28:20-22). She further vowed that he would be reared in a way that reminds one of the Nazarite vows of Samson. The regulations for a Nazarite are found in Numbers 6. He could not shave his head, neither was he to take strong drink or touch a dead body. Hannah mentions specifically the matter of not shaving the head. A married woman could vow a vow only if her husband

approved. Single women could make a vow only if their fathers approved (Numbers 30). Since these limitations prevailed, Elkanah must have known of Hannah's vow and concurred in it.

19. *Did Hannah pray often? 1:12*

The fact that the Scripture says she "continued praying" indicates that Hannah was often in the Tabernacle in prayer. The original language indicates that she multiplied her prayers. This brings to our minds the statement of Jesus that "men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). Jesus set the good example Himself when He went and prayed the same prayer three times in one night. The apostle Paul indicates that he prayed three times that the thorn in the flesh might be removed from him (II Corinthians 12:8). Hannah no doubt prayed repeatedly that God would give her a man child. Her prayer may also have been quite extended. All of this attracted Eli's attention. He noticed especially that she was not saying anything audibly. His attention was thus directed to her mouth. He saw that it was moving, but he heard no sound.

20. *Why would Eli think Hannah was drunk? 1:13*

It was no doubt not uncommon to see women drunken in that day. The specific reason was that "she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." Since he could see her lips moving and could not hear her voice, he supposed that she was drunken.

The fact that he supposed that she was drunk is an indication of the prevalency of intemperance. Had he been more accustomed of seeing women in deep prayer, he would have supposed she was praying silently. Hannah's attitude in prayer gives us an example of prayer that is silent. Even though we make no sound with our lips, we believe that God hears us.

21. *What light does Eli's accusation throw on the moral condition of the Israelites at this time? 1:14*

Eli was evidently so accustomed to seeing the wickedness around about him that he spoke the way he did to Hannah. This would imply that the moral condition of the civilization was bad. The conduct of his sons, the religious leaders of the time, would indicate that the corruption was very generally thorough. It had touched even the worship of God, and morality was not present in the place of public worship.

22. *What explanation did Hannah make? 1:15*

Hannah explained that she was not drunken but that she was of sorrowing spirit. She prayed Eli not to think of her as a vile woman. Greek translators render *men of Belial* by adjectives like *vile, ungodly, senseless, contrary*. It was her hope that Eli would not think of her as one who had fallen to the depths from which few arise.

23. *Who was Belial? 1:16*

The word "Belial" is used in the King James version as if it were a proper name. It seems better not to transliterate it this way but rather to translate it as indicated above. In the New Testament books, the term appears in the form *Belias*, and *Belial*. This term is used in II Corinthians 6:15 for example; and is generally understood as a reference to Satan as the personification of evil. This is a proper way to render this verse. Hannah is saying that she does not want to be counted as a daughter of Satan.

24. *How could Eli say that God would answer Hannah's prayer? 1:17*

No man has the power to forgive men their sins by himself alone. Neither does any man have the right to say what God will or will not do without a revelation from God. Those who know the Scriptures can rest assured that they are true. If they make a prophecy, man can say that it will come true. Eli was announcing what

he knew was right and true. He knew that God hears and answers prayers. He knew that Hannah was sincere in her prayers. Such prayers could not go unanswered. In addition, Eli was anointed of God as high priest. He had charismatic gifts which would enable him to make announcements beyond the normal, and this was also a prayer of his own. He sent Hannah away with his spirit united with hers. He would join her in praying that God would hear her petition. He firmly believed that her prayers would be answered; and as God's anointed high priest, he predicted that they would be answered.

25. *Why did Hannah call herself a handmaid? 1:18*

The term was used quite frequently by women who wanted to describe themselves as being a part of a household. The word does not indicate one who is a slave, but one who had something of the stature of Hagar in the household of Abraham (Genesis 16:1). The same word is also used to describe Zilpah, the handmaid of Leah (Genesis 29:24). Hannah felt that she found a friend in Eli. She did not want to make herself equal to him, but she did want him to look upon her as one of the household of faith, willing to do what the Lord commanded as might be directed by the high priest himself.

*Samuel's birth. 1:19-23*

19 And they rose up in the morning early, and worshiped 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.

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.

26. *Where was Ramah? 1:19*

Ramah was on the site of the present village Ar-Ram, a hill-top two hour's journey northwest of Jerusalem. People like to live on the tops of hills. This has been true throughout the history of the human family. It is especially true that cities were set on hills. Jesus makes reference to the fact that a city set on a hill cannot be hid (Matthew 5:14b). The word Ramah means "height." Samuel's home was on a high place evidently, and it was a unique place with a couple of prominent spots. For that reason it was called Ramathaim-zophim in the first verse of this chapter. Here it is called only Ramah.

27. *What does "Samuel" mean? 1:20*

There has been a great deal of controversy and doubt surrounding this name for generations. There have been theories proposed and definitions offered such as meaning "name of God" and "asked of God." Some of these are not satisfactory. These different interpretations are due to the falling of the word *samu* from the Israelitish tongue. The original meaning, as borne out by a student of ancient Assyrian dialect, is "name of God." Hannah may have named him this because she had asked him and received him from the Lord. Probably the name means "God-heard," the implication being that his mother realized that Samuel was a direct answer to her prayer.

28. *What were Elkanah's sacrifice and vow? 1:21*

Every Israelite was expected to go to the Tabernacle to make sacrifice. He might make a burnt offering, a peace

offering, a meal offering, a sin offering, or a trespass offering (Leviticus 1-6). In addition to offerings and sacrifices which he was to make, he might perform different vows. He could vow some of his land, his buildings, his servants, his children, or some of his animals (Leviticus 27). These were free and voluntary vows. We are not told what Elkanah's vow was, but he went to the Tabernacle to perform it. It may have been that he was making a sacrifice regularly until such time as he could join Hannah in fulfilling the vow to give Samuel to the Lord.

29. *How long was it before Samuel was weaned?* 1:22

Hebrew children were not weaned as early as modern American children. It was not uncommon for them to be nursed by their mother for several years. Some of these practices are carried over in more primitive civilizations today, and we are led to believe that Samuel stayed at home until he was able to take care of himself with very little help. This is the meaning of his being weaned. We doubt that he would be presented to Eli before he was able to care for himself, to wash, and to dress, and be content away from home.

30. *Why did Elkanah expect the Lord to "establish His word"?* 1:23

Elkanah evidently expected conditions to prevail in such a way that they would be able to fulfill their vow to present Samuel as the Lord's servant. They had only the word of Eli, the High Priest, that the prayer of Hannah would be heard. God had confirmed this benediction of Eli in that Hannah had conceived and borne a son. No doubt Elkanah was anxious that no misfortune befall Samuel and make it impossible for them to carry out their end of the vow.

*Samuel presented to the Lord.* 1:24-28

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.

25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

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:

28 Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshiped the Lord there.

31. *Why did they take a bottle of wine? 1:24*

The size of the offering given by Elkanah and his wife when they presented Samuel to the Lord is an indication of the sobriety of the occasion. Their bullocks would be used for burnt offerings (Leviticus 1). The ephah of flour would be used as a meal offering (Leviticus 2). The bottle of wine was not for human consumption but was to be poured out as a drink offering to the Lord (see Genesis 35:14; II Kings 16:13; Ezekiel 20:28).

32. *Why did they slay a bullock? 1:25*

When God described the various offerings to be offered by the children of Israel, He indicated that a burnt offering of the herd should be a male without blemish (Leviticus 1:3). The practice was for the worshiper to bring the bullock to the priest. The priest would then present the blood and sprinkle the blood round about the altar that was at the door of the meeting. They would then flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. The priests would then lay fire on the altar and put the pieces of the sacrifice in order upon the wood. The whole bullock was to be burned on the altar as a burnt offering. It was described as "a sweet savor unto the Lord" (Leviticus 1:9).

This solemn ceremony preceded their presentation of the child Samuel to the high priest, Eli.

33. *Did Hannah fulfill her vow? 1:26*

The vow was fulfilled when Samuel was presented to the Lord. Hannah remained at home and did not attend the yearly feasts until the child was weaned. Ancient custom among the Hebrew women kept the children unweaned until their third year. At that time Samuel was taken to the Tabernacle and probably cared for by one of the women who served about the Tabernacle and regularly worshiped there. When Hannah brought him, she made a sacrifice of three oxen, an ephah of meal, and a pitcher of wine.

The fact that it says she lent him to the Lord did not mean that she did not give him to the Lord. She fulfilled her vow in every sense of the word.

34. *Why did Hannah say that it was this child for which she had prayed? 1:27*

Hannah had no other children. She was not specifying Samuel as the child to be given to the Lord in distinction from any other child which she had. She was emphasizing the fact that it was this very child for which she prayed. On occasions people who had made vows to give children, houses, lands, or other possessions to the Lord might make a substitution (Leviticus 27:10). Hannah was giving the very child for which she had prayed earlier. Although Samuel was her first child and to that time her only child, she was gladly giving him to God.

35. *How could Samuel be loaned to the Lord "as long as he lived"? 1:28*

A man might be a Nazarite for a period of time. Sometimes those who were Nazarites broke their vows and had to begin all over again to live the life of a Nazarite. Samuel, however, was not to be the Lord's for a short time. He was the Lord's completely and wholly for the duration of his life.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### CHAPTER 1 IN REVIEW

1. What was Samuel's father's name? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was Samuel's mother's name? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was Samuel's home? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where was the Ark in Samuel's day? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was the high priest? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What were his sons' names? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Of what tribe was Samuel a member? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In which tribe's land was Samuel's home? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who was the other wife of Samuel's father? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which wife did Samuel's father love more? \_\_\_\_\_

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 2

Vv. 1-11 *Hannah's song.* This grand passage in the Old Testament finds a parallel best in Mary's "Magnificat" in Luke 1:46-55. Both women must have spoken as they were moved by the Spirit of God, and both were expressing their heartfelt thanks for God's blessings in their lives.

Vv. 12-17 *Eli's sinful sons.* A strange contrast is seen between the wicked ways of Eli's sons and the pious ways of Elkanah's household. Perhaps the contrast is greater because more is expected of religious leaders such as the high priests of Israel.

It is nonetheless true that piety can be displayed in the lives of any of God's people. A man does not have to be born into the household of a priest in order to live a godly life. Any man who is willing to trust God and keep his commandments can become a leader in God's kingdom.

Vv. 18-26 *Samuel's service in the tabernacle.* The child Samuel was able to perform many needful tasks around the house of God. Under Eli's direc-

## FIRST SAMUEL

tions he grew into manhood through years of toil at menial tasks.

Vv. 27-35 *Prophecy against Eli's wicked sons.* An unnamed man of God brought God's message of condemnation against the sinful sons of the old high priest.

Eli had learned of the impious ways of his boys, but his rebukes were not strong enough. Parental indulgences have been the undoing of many a son and daughter of doting mothers and fathers.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Man cannot outgive God.* Hannah might have been tempted to go back on her promise to give Samuel to God, but she did not do it. She faithfully performed her vow and brought the child to God. As a result, ". . . the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters" (I Samuel 2: 21). She who had no child at first was blessed greatly. She gave her first son back to God. God gave her additional sons and daughters as extra blessings.
2. *Unchastened sons are a heaviness of heart to mothers and fathers.* It may have been hard for Eli to correct his sons, but he would have been infinitely better off in the long run to have punished them more severely. His halfhearted rebukes made it possible for them to continue in their sinful ways and eventually led to Eli's being rejected as high priest.

*Hannah's song.* 2:1-11

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:

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

- because I rejoice in thy salvation.
- 2 *There is* none holy as the Lord:  
for *there is* none besides 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 borne 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 lifeth 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.
- 11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the  
child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest.

1. *What was Hannah's "horn"?* 2:1

Perhaps the figure is taken from the life of animals. An animal with a large horn is thought to be powerful. It is also a mark of full development and beauty. Deer, for example, are prized for their antlers. Other animals use their horns as they fight with others. If this is the meaning Hannah had in mind, she is saying that God has given her a mark of strength and excellence.

2. *Why did Hannah refer to God as a "rock"?* 2:2

Moses spoke of the Lord as the "Rock of his salvation" (Deuteronomy 32:15b). Isaiah chided Israel saying that they had ". . . forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength" (17:10). The steadfastness of God is like a rock to a soul tossed to and fro in the stormy seas of life. This conception of God has been constant among those who have feared Him in all ages. Moses also challenged the heathen nations saying, "Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted" (Deuteronomy 32:37). The Israelites knew that the Lord was not just one god among many. He was the one true and living God. Hannah thus could say: ". . . neither is there any rock like our God" (v. 2b). There was no god like Jehovah, the God of Israel. There was no anchor for the soul like the Lord.

3. *Whom was Hannah warning against arrogance?* 2:3

No doubt Hannah was remembering Peninnah's arrogant speeches against her personally, but her warning is always meaningful and timely for God's people. Too much proud talk is found among the servants of God as they take credit for what is achieved in Christian work. Too much arrogance is found among those whom God has blessed abundantly. All should remember that they will eventually be judged by God, and God knows their weaknesses.

4. *What is the meaning of the "bows of the mighty men being broken"? 2:4*

Hannah is simply suggesting that the first are now last. The last are therefore first. Underneath all this is her great joy over being blessed of God. Before she had been reviled by Peninnah because she had no children. Peninnah thought that she was one of the "mighty men." Hannah would consider herself as being among them that "stumbled." Now Hannah was girded with strength.

5. *Did Hannah have seven children? 2:5*

Personal references seem to abound through this poem of thanksgiving, but we have little evidence of Hannah's having seven children. In verse twenty-one of this chapter, we learn that Hannah did have three sons and two daughters. This would make a total of five children and lead us to believe that she uses the number seven in this reference as an indication that she had received an abundant blessing. The number seven is sometimes used to indicate fullness or completeness. What Hannah says may not only be applied to her own abundant blessing, but it is always true for all those who fully trust the Lord.

6. *What powers did Hannah attribute to God? 2:6-10*

Hannah attributed all power to God. She regarded the Lord as the one who gave life in the first place. She also believed that life ended at His command. Life and death are in His hands. In addition, by His providences man is made poor or rich. He is exalted or abased. Those of low estate are often made to sit in high places. Even the very foundations of the earth were laid by God. The paths of God's saints are directed by God Himself, and no man prevails by his own strength alone. Eventually the voice of the wicked will be silenced, and the Lord's adversaries will be destroyed. Once again Hannah returns to the figure of the "horn" as she speaks of the way in which God will give strength to His chosen leaders. She attributed the following traits to God:

1. The power over life and death
2. The control of wealth
3. Providences that either bring fame or disgrace
4. The rendering of fair judgments on rich and poor alike
5. The direction of the work of His people
6. The eventual judgment of the wicked
7. The creation of the physical universe

7. *In what way did Samuel "minister" before Eli? 2:11*

A lad like Samuel could perform many menial tasks about the Tabernacle. The priests and their Levites had their assigned duties, but others might also be of service. Mention is made in this same chapter of women who "assembled at the door of the Tabernacle" (v. 22; cf. Exodus 38:8). A part of the ministry might also have been in worship; such as a part of the way God's people "minister unto the Lord." Since mention is made of the "lamp of God" (3:3), we are left to wonder if this might not have been a part of Samuel's service. He may have tended this lamp, lighting it when it was to be lit; and extinguishing it when it was to be put out.

2. The Childhood of Samuel, 2:12—3:21.

*Eli's sinful sons.* 2:12-17

12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.

13 And the priests' custom with the people *was, that*, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;

14 And he stuck *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to

roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

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.

17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.

8. *What is the meaning of the term "sons of Belial?"*  
2:12

They were "base fellows," meaning "reckless, worthless, wicked." The term used is the masculine equivalent of the feminine form used in 1:16, where Hannah besought Eli not to count her as a wicked woman. The word "Belial" may be used as a proper name; but whatever its origin, it denotes extreme depravity. The wickedness of these men was not so much in what they stole from God, but in the leading of the people to be contemptuous of the sacrifices.

9. *Why did the sons of Eli not know the Lord? 2:12 b*

No doubt Eli's sons were well versed in the Pentateuch. Probably they could recite the Ten Commandments from memory. In order to be priests they were versed in the rituals of the sacrifices. They knew that God had given the Law to His people and must have been familiar with the past history of Israel. Their knowledge of God was "head knowledge." It was not "heart" knowledge. They did not personally follow the commandments of the Lord and thus caused many other people to go astray. They are like the people of Paul's day of whom he said "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28).

10. *What was "a fleshhook of three teeth"?* 2:13

No mention is made of the number of teeth in the fleshhooks when they were first fashioned (Exodus 38:3).

The mention of three teeth in this setting leaves us to wonder if a part of the sin of Eli's sons was greediness. Certainly a fleshhook with three teeth would enable them to secure more meat than a fleshhook with only one prong. We learn that it was customary for them to strike it into the pan, kettle, caldron, or pot. All that the fleshhook brought up was for the priest. We know that the men were of base appetites, for they would not receive the sacrificial meat in the form prescribed by law. They wanted their meat to be given to them before it was roasted on the altar. They wanted raw meat, perhaps to be prepared in a way that would better satisfy their appetites.

*11. Why did all the Israelites come to Shiloh? 2:14*

Shiloh was the location of the Tabernacle. It had been there since the days of Joshua. In keeping with the commandments of God found in Deuteronomy 12, the people brought their sacrifices to this central location. Here is historical evidence of a central sanctuary. Radical critics deny that religion would be developed enough at this early age for people to have one place of worship. It is not because of the lack of evidence that the radical critics make this charge, but it is because of their own religious and philosophical presuppositions. They believe that religion like everything else must have evolved. They think that man began as a nature worshiper and evolved to a worshiper of demons. From demons he went to the place where he did believe in God, but he was a polytheist. To find Israel with one central sanctuary as early as 1,000 B.C. throws their schedule of evolutionary development of religion out of order. Yet we find good solid historical evidence of the fact that all Israel did come to this one central location to worship.

*12. What is wrong with wanting flesh to roast? 2:15*

Eli's sons were so contemptuous of the sacrifices of God that they demanded raw flesh of those who sacrificed.

Evidently they wanted to take this and prepare it in a more tasteful way than would be possible if they followed the directions given to the people in Leviticus 1-6. To demand this raw flesh from the people was to cause them to despise God's ordinances.

13. *Why did some people refuse? 2:16*

Many Israelites must have been willing to stand up for what they knew was right. All had not gone astray. In the times of Judges there were still many who had not given up their faith in the ordinances of God. It was for the sake of these people that changes had to be made in Israel's priesthood. If such conditions were allowed to prevail over a long period of time, hardly any could be found to maintain the faith.

14. *What was the real gravity of the sins of the young men? 2:17*

Hophni and Phinehas were corrupt in their own lives. This is bad enough. They also refused to reason with the worshipers who came to the tabernacle. The gravity of their sin is seen in the fact that they were threatening to inflict corporal punishment upon the people (2-16 b). They threatened to take some of the sacrificial meat by force. When men stoop to force in situations like this, they admit that their reasoning is wrong. The greatest sin lay in the fact that they caused other people to abhor the offering of the Lord. It is a tragedy that man comes to the place where he rejects God's commandments and loathes God's ordinances.

*Samuel's service in the Tabernacle. 2:18-26*

18 But Samuel ministered before the Lord, *being* a child, girded with a linen 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.

20 And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The

Lord gave 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.

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.

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

24 Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress.

25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.

26 And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord, and also with men.

### 15. *What is a linen ephod?* 2:18

A welcome change comes in the narrative as we read about the child Samuel ministering before the Lord. Earlier we read that he ministered "unto the Lord" (2:11b). His ministry was "before Eli the priest" (2:11b). Here we read that he ministered "before the Lord." All of this would indicate that his real service was unto God and not unto men. At the same time he was under the direction of Eli the priest. Samuel must have ministered conscientiously as one who would minister "before the Lord." The linen ephod which he wore was the distinctive garment worn by the priests. It was a part of the apparel as commanded by God through Moses for Aaron, the first priest and his sons (Exodus 28:4). The ephod was to be made of gold, of blue, of purple, of scarlet, and of fine twined linen with cunning work. It was joined with two shoulder pieces at the edges of it. A band went around

it. On the shoulders of the garment were two onyx stones on which were engraved the names of the children of Israel. The names of six tribes were on one stone and the other six names on the other stone. This was the garment that the high priest was to wear (Exodus 28:6, 12). Eli probably wore this distinctive garment, but the other priests were given ephods to wear. These ephods were something similar to the garments which we call jumpers today. Samuel was given this distinctive garment to wear. It was the sign of the fact that he was ministering as a priest around the Tabernacle.

16. *What kind of a coat did Hannah make for Samuel?*  
2:18

The priests were also commanded to wear a coat. Moses was told to make coats for Aaron and his sons as well as girdles to bind them at the waist. In addition, they wore bonnets "for glory and for beauty" (Exodus 28:40). Since it is not said that Hannah made the ephod for Samuel, we presume that the coat she made was more of a token of her abiding love for him than an effort to equip him in the full regalia of a priest. Her motherly devotion is seen in the fact that she made him a new one each year. As he grew in stature, it would be necessary for him to have a new garment.

17. *What blessing did Eli pronounce upon Elkanah and Hannah?* 2:20

Eli pronounced a blessing upon this devoted couple as they came to the Tabernacle. He prayed that the Lord would give them additional children in exchange for Samuel whom they had "lent to the Lord" (1:28). God visited Hannah as we read in the next verse. She conceived and had three sons and two daughters (2:21).

18. *In what way did Samuel grow?* 2:21

In a later verse (v. 26) we read that "Samuel grew on and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men." This is suggestive in the way in which John the Baptist

grew. Of him we read "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit" (Luke 1:80). Of Jesus it was said "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

19. *Who were the women that assembled at the door of the Tabernacle?* 2:22

When Moses built the Tabernacle, he made the laver of brass out of the "looking glasses of the women which assembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation" (Exodus 38:8).

Jephthah may have devoted his daughter to perpetual service at the Tabernacle (Judges 11:29-40). If he did not actually sacrifice her on an altar as a burnt offering, he may have devoted her to service as long as she lived. Such a dedication to holy service would be reason for the daughters of Israel to go up yearly to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah in a feast for four days in a year (Judges 11:40). When Jesus was born, Hannah the prophetess who gave her whole life to service around the Temple, came up to see the Messiah (Luke 2:36-38). Evidently there were many of these women in the days of Eli. They probably did what they could in service around the Tabernacle. At least they spent their time in prayer and worship. The baseness of the sons of Eli is brought out in the mention of the fact that they committed adultery with these women.

20. *Did Eli rebuke his sons?* 2:23, 24

Eli rebuked his sons, but his rebuke was very weak. When the man of God came to him, he said that Eli honored his sons above God (2:29). When God told Samuel that Eli was to be punished, God said of Eli and his sons that "he restrained them not" (3:13).

21. *What did Eli mean by a "sign against the Lord"?* 2:25

Eli is saying that when one man steals from another there is an earthly judge who renders the verdict. When our transgressions are against our fellowmen, we might

expect that our fellowmen would judge us. If our transgression is against God, God has already pronounced judgment. It is inexcusable for us to sin against the Lord. It would not do for man to plead the case for another man before the Lord. Only the Lord Jesus Christ is our advocate (I John 2:1). Those living under the Old Testament dispensation did not have the hope of the Christian for an advocate before God. They could expect only a certain fearful judgment.

22. *Did God want to slay Eli's sons? 2:25b*

God is not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9). He has laid down certain rules and laws of life. For example, it is written, "correction is grievous unto them that forsaketh the way and he that hateth reproof shall die" (Proverbs 15:10). Since Eli's sons would not listen to the correction of their father, they were doomed to destruction. God would slay them, for they could not be allowed to continue in their rebellion.

*Prophecy against Eli's wicked sons. 2:27-35*

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?

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?

29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* habitation; and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

### 23. *Who was the man of God? 2:27*

Sometimes we labor under the false apprehension that only the men mentioned in the Scriptures are active in the service of God. In every age God has had a great host of people who do His bidding. Some of them are important enough to be mentioned by name; others are anonymous characters that move across the pages of the Scripture and fulfill their ministry without much recognition. Of such nature was this "man of God" who came to Eli and pronounced God's judgment upon Eli's house. He was an unnamed prophet, a servant of God.

24. *Was Eli's father in Egypt? 2:27b*

Eli's father would have lived in the age of the judges. The period of Judges itself covers some three hundred years, and prior to this era was the time of Joshua. Moses preceded Joshua and led the people out of Egypt. The use of the word *father* in this verse must indicate that it refers to an ancestor. Levi was the son of Jacob, the founder of the tribe of which Eli was a member. God spoke to the Levites as they were in bondage in Egypt. He led these predecessors of Eli out of Egypt.

25. *Who was chosen to be priest in Israel? 2:28*

God chose the tribe of Levi to be the priestly tribe. He further selected his priests to be the descendants of Aaron. Aaron himself was the first high priest. Aaron had four sons—Nadab, Abihu, Ithamar, and Eleazar. Two of the sons—Nadab and Abihu—were killed when they offered strange fire before the Lord (Leviticus 10). All the priests were thus descended from Ithamar and Eleazar, the sons of Aaron. These were the men whom God chose to be his priests. Eli was out of this priestly family.

26. *How did Eli kick at God's sacrifices? 2:29*

Eli himself may not have rejected God's sacrifices. We have no record of his making a complaint or "kicking" about what was provided for him. His sons were the ones who abhorred the offerings of the Lord. Since Eli was the high priest, he was responsible for the conduct of all the priests. He was especially responsible for the conduct of his own sons, and he is blamed for what was going on in the priesthood.

27. *What judgment was passed upon the house of Eli? 2:30-33*

God did not mean that he would literally cut off Eli's arms (v. 31), but he meant that the line of Eli would not expand. This would be the end of Eli's house. Those who were not actually to die in the flower of their youth would be removed from the priesthood and caused to beg

as poor people in the street. God had ordained that his priests would be supported through the tithes of the Israelites; but if the priests did not appreciate what He had done for them, He would put them out of their offices. They would then be wishing to have what they had rejected and would say "put me I pray thee in one of the priest's offices that I may eat a piece of bread" (2:36).

28. *What sign did God give Eli that he would be removed from the priesthood? 2:34*

God told Eli that both his sons would die in the same day. This explains partly why Eli took so seriously the announcement of the loss of the Ark and the death of his two sons. He knew that this was the end of his house. God had said that these things would come to pass and gave him a token of their being fulfilled. When the thing transpired, Eli knew that God was fulfilling His word.

29. *Who was the faithful priest? 2:35*

Some people believe that this was Samuel, but it is taken to be a reference to the other line of the priesthood. When Solomon put down the attempted usurpation of Adonijah, he took Zadok out of the priest's office and put Abiathar in his office (I Kings 2:35). Ezekiel makes reference to this change in the priesthood in his book (Ezekiel 44:15) and there is also a reference to it in I Chronicles 29:22. Samuel served as priest in the transition period. David had two priests (II Samuel 8:17; II Samuel 20:23-26) while the change was being made; but the word of God was fulfilled eventually nonetheless.

## CHAPTER 2 IN REVIEW

1. How many children did Hannah bear? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What figure did she use to describe God? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What instrument of war did she say was broken? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What was it that belonged to her and was exalted? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

5. What word was used to describe Samuel's service? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many teeth were in the fleshhook used by Eli's sons? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What was the distinctive garment worn by the priests? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What garment did Hannah make for Samuel each year? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who told Eli his house was doomed? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who was to be killed as a sign God's prophecy was being fulfilled? \_\_\_\_\_

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 3

- Vv. 1-10 *Samuel's call.* The call of Samuel to the place of leadership in Israel is comparable to the call of Moses (Exodus 3 and 4) and the call of Isaiah (Isaiah 6). His natural reluctance is typical of those who are given a vision of the tremendous responsibility laid upon God's servants; but his alacrity is also demonstrated in his response: "Speak; for thy servant heareth" (v. 10b).
- Vv. 11-14 *Doom pronounced on Eli's house.* The earlier message of the unnamed prophet is verified in the revelation given to Samuel. Eli is condemned because he knew of the wicked ways of his sons, but he did not rebuke them strongly enough.
- Vv. 15-21 *Samuel established as a prophet.* Samuel's first message was perhaps his most difficult to deliver. After Samuel had faithfully delivered the message of doom against Eli's house, all the people in Israel knew that God had indeed set Samuel aside in the office of the prophet. From time to time thereafter, God revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh.

## FIRST SAMUEL

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God's need for workers.* When the family of the high priest proved to be unfaithful, God had a need for someone else to lead His people. Through the ages, God has depended on men to carry His message and to perform His work.
2. *Man's need to respond to God's call.* When God calls, man should answer. Although all may be reluctant to take up the work which God has for them to do, they must accept the challenge or the work will go undone.
3. *Faithfulness leads to increased opportunity.* The master in the parable of the talents commended his servants who had been "faithful over a few things" (Matthew 25:21). He made them to be "ruler over many things" (cf. Matthew 25:23). This is a true principle in every day life. It is also true of those who work in God's vineyard.

#### *Samuel's call. 3:1-10*

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.

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*;

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.

6 And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst

3:1, 2

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

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

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.

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.

10 And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

### *1. Why was the word of the Lord precious? 3:1*

It was not easy for the people in Samuel's day to have a copy of the scriptures. Manuscripts were expensive. Some of them were made on vellum in ancient times. Others were made on papyrus. The copies were hand-made and generally they were kept at the center of worship. The copies were made in later times as kings were commanded to do so in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 17:18). In Samuel's day the Word was precious because not very many people listened to it. Not many prophets were active and as the scripture says, there was "no open vision."

### *2. What was wrong with Eli's eyes? 3:2*

One of the very common afflictions of old age is the dimness of eyes mentioned frequently in the scripture. Jacob's eyes became dim so that he could not see (Genesis 27:1). This dimness came quite a number of years before Isaac died. Eli seems to have been afflicted with this same weakness. Some commentaries suggested that this was the kind of affliction we notice when cataracts form. They

did not have the benefit of eye glasses nor surgery to correct this weakness. Eli's being in this condition must have thrown more responsibility on Samuel.

3. *When did the lamp of God go out?* 3:3

The lamp that was in the tabernacle outside the veil near the Holy of Holies was never to go out (Exodus 27:20). Some of the exterior lamps, however, would be put out as activity around the tabernacle ceased. Reference must be made of some of these lamps and it may have been a part of Samuel's responsibility to tend these lamps. This may be a part of his service "unto the Lord before Eli" (3:1).

4. *What vision did Samuel have?* 3:4, 10-18

Samuel had a vision in which the Lord called to him and revealed to him the coming destruction of the House of Eli. Samuel's reaction was that he was afraid to tell Eli. When we read "Jehovah came and stood," we understand that the revelation then was an objectively real affair and no mere dream of Samuel's. No doubt Samuel had first thought that the aged Eli had called him for assistance. Before the communication was over, however, he was undoubtedly sure of what he had heard and seen. A dream is not being described, for Samuel rose and ran to Eli after each call. The prophet heard a voice physically audible. This voice enunciated in articulate words the message which the prophet was to receive. The experience is not a parallel to Jacob who saw and heard God in a dream.

5. *Why did Samuel "not yet know the Lord"?* 3:7

Samuel had not had a personal revelation of the will of the Lord to him. He knew that God was the maker of the heavens and the earth. He must have known of how his mother had prayed to God for him. His own name meant "heard of the Lord." The last two letters of his name—e, l, were an abbreviation of the Hebrew word for God. Although Samuel knew that there was one true and living God, he had not yet been called of the Lord to His ministry.

6. *How many times did he go to Eli? 3:8*

Samuel went to Eli three times, during the course of the vision. On the third time when Samuel came to him, Eli spoke to him and told him that it was the Lord calling to him out of heaven and that he should answer him and say "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." On the fourth time, he came to him in the morning after he had opened the doors of the house of the Lord.

*Doom pronounced on Eli's house and  
Samuel established as a prophet. 3:11-21*

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel *was* established *to be* a prophet of the Lord.

21 And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

7. *Did Samuel want to tell Eli what the Lord had told him? 3:15*

Samuel was understandably reluctant to tell Eli the message that God had delivered to him; but when Eli threatened him, he told him all. The formula, "So may God do to thee," is an imprecation originally connected with the ceremony of slaying an animal at the taking of an oath. The parties pray that the fate of the victim may be theirs, if they fail to perform their vows. When Eli heard the message, he quietly resigned himself to the will of the Lord. Although he had been quite indulgent with his sons, we picture Eli as a man personally devoted to the Lord in heart.

8. *What doors did Samuel open? 3:15 b*

The doors of the house of the Lord would be the outer doors through which the people could pass. In later times when the temple was established, there was not only a court for the Jews, but there was a court for the Gentiles. There was also a court for the women. These outer courts could be frequented by many people. Only the priests would go into the tabernacle proper. Samuel must have had the responsibility of opening the gates of the Tabernacle area so that the people coming to worship would have access to the areas which were open to them.

9. *Why did Eli say, "It is the Lord?" 3:18*

Eli knew that what Samuel had told him was the truth. The unnamed man of God had told him these things earlier. He may seem anxious to us as he inquires about the vision given to Samuel. His anxiety would stem from

his realization that these things were to come to pass. No doubt he lived each day in fear and dread of the judgment of God. Eli still had the surrender of will and serenity of spirit to say, "let him do what seemeth him good." His faith in God caused him to realize that God would only be fair and just in His judgments.

10. *What is meant by "let none of his words fall to the ground."?* 3:19, 20

It shows that the people accepted Samuel as the prophet. His words were words of wisdom and truthfulness and they respected his advice and warnings. Jehovah was with him and left none of His words unfulfilled when He spoke through Samuel. By this all Israel from Dan to Beersheba perceived that Samuel was found trustworthy, or approved, as a prophet of Jehovah. These three verses form a transition between the call of Samuel and the account of his prophetic labors in Israel. Many would be the times that men would come to consult Samuel, and many were the times that he rode about throughout Israel to take the word of the Lord to them.

### CHAPTER 3 IN REVIEW

1. How many times did God call to Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who did Samuel think was calling him? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What physical infirmity did Eli suffer? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many times did Samuel go to Eli? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What doors did Samuel open? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Against whom did God pronounce a penalty when He spoke to Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What word was used to describe the word of God in those days? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Was this God's first revelation to Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
9. When did Samuel tell Eli about the revelation? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What two towns were used to describe the extent of Israel's territory? \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 4

- Vv. 1-11 *The loss of the Ark.* Israel's fortunes fell to a low ebb when the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines. This is a fulfillment of the prophecy made by the unnamed prophet (2:27-36) and by the young man Samuel (3:11-14). The things which were happening were enough to make the ears of those who heard to tingle.
- Vv. 12-18 *Death of Eli.* The bad news of the loss of the Ark was a shock to Eli. He had been waiting anxiously to hear news from the battle. When it came, he was overwhelmed by it.
- Vv. 19-22 *Sadness in Israel.* All Israel was affected by the sad news of the loss of the Ark. Typical of this sadness was the name, Ichabod, given to the son of Phinehas. Indeed, the glory had departed from Israel.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God does not abide in symbols.* The Ark of the Covenant was but a symbol of the presence of the Lord. The people of Israel thought that its presence would assure them of victory in battle. Their superstitious enemies, the Philistines also supposed that having the Ark on the battlefield was equivalent to God's being there. The Living God, however, does not dwell in temples made with men's hands. Moreover, He cannot be confined to a wooden box. His spirit is with those who worship Him in spirit and in truth.
2. *Disobedience breeds anxiety.* The aged high priest sitting in the gate of the Tabernacle area and worrying about the safety of the Ark is a pathetic picture of a man who has failed to take proper measures to guarantee

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

God's blessings. If Eli had rebuked his sons in their earlier evil ways, he would have been strong enough to resist their unholy desire to take the Ark of the Covenant to the battlefield. Since he had been lenient on them in former activities, he was in no position to resist them in their final, fatal follies. He was left sitting helpless while tragedy fell.

3. *National calamity brings personal heartache.* Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was caught up in the holocaust of Israel's national disaster. Left alone in the midst of the pains of childbirth which ultimately resulted in her own death, she used her last breath to give a very descriptive name to her son—Ichabod. What was true for the millions of Israel was true for each individual. God had departed from them, because they had departed from God.

The Loss of the Ark and End of Eli's House, 4:1-22.

### *The Loss of the Ark. 4:1-11*

And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ezenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

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.

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today 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.

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 cherubim: and the two sons

of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

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 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.

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.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

1. *In what way did the word of Samuel come to all Israel? 4:1*

The background of the verb translated *came* indicates that the words which Samuel spoke came to pass. If he predicted certain things would occur, they did occur. Certain judgments which he pronounced were judgments of truth. In this way it is known that Samuel was a prophet. All Israel saw that the things which he spoke were true. None of his prophecies failed. He was speaking as God spoke to him.

*2. Where is Eben-ezer? 4:2*

From later history we learn that Eben-ezer was a spot named by Samuel. It was located between Mispah and Shen. It is quite near the old Roman road that runs northwest out of the city of Jerusalem and is located in the hill country of the tribe of Benjamin. Aphek is farther north and west and was a rallying place for the Philistines whenever they came up to attack Israel. Aphek would be found in the edge of the hill country as it began to slope down towards the Mediterranean sea.

*3. Why did the elders of Israel send for the Ark? 4:3*

They were the old folk; they should have known better. This is an illustration of the old people leading the young people out of the right track. The older people were teaching them wrong. They were corrupt. They had come to trust in the Ark itself as a sort of graven image to deliver them. These elders were afraid of the enemy, the Philistines, and sent for the Ark, thinking that its presence would bring freedom and deliverance to them.

*4. What was this Ark? 4:3*

This was the Ark that went before the people at the invasion of the country and the siege of Jericho. Jehovah and the Ark were very closely identified. It was a chest and it contained the two tables of the Covenant. It was covered with gold and named the Ark of the Testimony. When the command was given for its construction, the following dimensions were laid out: "two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof" (Exodus 25:10b). The same word is used to describe the sacophagus of Joseph (Genesis 50:26) and of the box set by the side of the altar to receive the money contributions of the worshipers (II Kings 12:10). The Ark of the Covenant was made of acacia wood.

*5. What were the cherubims? 4:4*

The cherubims were angelic figures. It is not necessary to spell this word as it is spelled in the King James version.

The form cherubim signifies the plurality of the word. We do often speak of a cherub and think of a cherub as being a little angel. Two of these cherubim were on the mercy seat which was placed over the Ark of the covenant. These cherubim spread out their wings and covered the mercy seat with their faces one to another (Exodus 37).

6. *Why were the Israelites called Hebrews? 4:6*

The Hebrews were descendants of Eber. Eber was a descendant of Shem. Shem is described as the father of all the children of Eber (Genesis 10:21). After Lot was captured by the kings of the East, one of the Canaanites came and told "Abram the Hebrew" (Genesis 14:13). Thus the children of Israel had been known as Hebrews for centuries, and it may have been the favorite name of their enemies, although we find men speaking of the name without being ashamed of it.

7. *Why were the Philistines afraid? 4:7*

The Philistines thought that there was an unusual appearance of God himself. They had heard of the mighty act which God had performed as they mentioned later. They must have remembered that it was the God of the Hebrews who had shaken down the walls of Jericho. It was He who had parted the water of the Jordan and enabled His people to cross over in dry land. Now they found themselves face to face with this God. It was their superstition which brought fear to them.

8. *Did the Philistines think the Israelites had many Gods? 4:8*

They asked, "Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods?" They went on to say, "These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians." Whether they thought that Israel had many Gods or only one, we cannot determine from the wording of the verse. The Hebrew word for God is plural in form. It may be that they were saying, "Who shall deliver us out of the hand of this

mighty God? This is the God that smote the Egyptians." The Israelites had given them no reason to believe that they had many Gods.

9. *When had the Israelites served the Philistines? 4:9*

Israel had been beaten by the Philistines many times in their past history. These Philistines were the perennial enemies of Israel. Samson had brought some deliverance (Judges 13-16), but his deliverance had not been long lived. Sampson himself had died in the prison house in Gaza, one of the principal towns of Philistia.

10. *Were the expectations of the elders realized? 4:10*

The Philistines smote the Israelites, and every man had to flee. 30,000 men of the Israelites fell there. This was 26,000 more than were slain in the first movement, which is described in verse two. Moreover, the Ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli were slain. All of this was accomplished by the unexpected resurgence of courage into the ranks of the Philistines. If the elders of Israel had expected something of courage to come to the men of Israel, they were disappointed. Instead, the courage of despair surged through the Philistines.

*Death of Eli. 4:12-18*

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.

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.

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

16 And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of

the army, and I fled today 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.

11. *Who was the messenger from the battle? 4:12*

Rabbinical tradition makes him to have been Saul. All the Scriptures tell us is that he was a Benjamite. The rabbinical tradition tells quite a story of the manner in which Saul had rescued the tables of the Law from the hands of Goliath and then had run to tell Eli. This Benjamite, who is unnamed is, however, described. He was in deep distress, having his clothes rent and earth on his head. These were the usual signs of grief (see II Samuel 1:2; 15:32); but he still had a task to perform, that of bringing the tidings of the battle to the people at Shiloh and to Eli, the old priest.

12. *Where was Eli and why there? 4:13*

He was at the roadside watching because he was anxious for the safety of the Ark of God. The road would naturally be the one leading to the scene of the battle. Yet the fugitive apparently comes first to the town and afterwards to Eli. If we understand that the gate mentioned is the gate to the Tabernacle, at which he was accustomed to sit (I Samuel 1:9) then we can better understand his position. Though he was blind, his mind was intent upon the road along which news must come. When the bearer of tidings came first to the town, the people shrieked at the news: and Eli heard the outcry before the messenger reached him, although the messenger had not delayed.

13. *Why did Eli have to ask the meaning of the tumult?*  
4:14

As we have already read and as we read again in verse fifteen, Eli's eyes were dim. He could not see. As a man who was blind, he had to ask what the meaning of all the tumult might be. No doubt he was giving expression of his constant anxiety for the safety of the Ark and the fulfillment of God's judgment against his house.

14. *What effect did the news have on Eli and why?* 4:18

He was old and was blind. Eli must have known the Ark was going out, and he must have known that they had done wrong. He realized his own mistakes. Sitting there in the darkness of the so-called black cataract (for this is the description as given and generally is an affliction paralyzing the optic nerves of those who reach a great age) he was trembling for the safety of the Ark. He did not react so much to the news about the death of his two sons; but when he heard of the capture of the Ark, he fell back from his seat and broke his neck and died. The items of the news reach him in a scale of ascendancy: Israel had fled from before the Philistines, there was a great slaughter of the people, Eli's two sons were dead, and the Ark of God had been captured.

#### *Sadness in Israel. 4:19-22*

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.

20 And about the time of her death the woman that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast borne a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard *it*.

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.

15. *What is the meaning of the word Ichabod? 4:21*

The real meaning of the word is, "where is the glory." It is also translated "there is no glory." Phinehas' wife knew that the glory of Israel was gone when the Ark was captured. We can rest assured that the glory of God's people is gone whenever they turn their backs on Him. This is the sad story of many individual lives, many churches and many Christian schools. They have forsaken their first love. The glory of God has departed from them because they have departed from God.

16. *What was the fundamental error in taking the Ark into the battle?*

It was the error of idolatry. Simply because of the fact that the Ark of the Covenant was in the Holy of Holies, and because it had been with the children of Israel in the wanderings of the wilderness and had preserved them, seemingly, these people thought that the Power was in the chest covered with gold, when the strength was in the Lord, who had caused the great deliverance and even commanded the making of the Ark.

It is just the same now, when we take merely a historical Christ outside us for our Redeemer. If we had not Christ, we could never stand. For there is no help in heaven and on earth beside Him. But if we have Him in no other way than merely without us and under us, if we only preach about Him, teach, hear, read, talk, discuss, and dispute about Him, He will no more help us than the Ark helped the Israelites.

## CHAPTER 4 IN REVIEW

1. Where did Israel pitch her camp? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did the Philistines pitch their camp? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did the people take into battle with them? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

4. What name did the Philistines call the Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many Israelites were killed in the first battle? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many Israelites were killed in the second battle? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How old was Eli? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Of what tribe was the messenger who brought news of the battle? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What was the name of Eli's grandson? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To which of Eli's sons was the grandson born? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 5

- Vv. 1- 6 *The Ark in the temple of Dagon.* The Philistines treated the Ark of the Lord as if it were a part of the spoils of war. Since they worshiped the false god, Dagon, they took the Ark to the temple of Dagon. It was installed there as a trophy of war and as a sign of the superiority of their god over the God of the Israelites.
- Vv. 7- 9 *The Ark in Gath.* From the temple of Dagon in Ashdod, the Ark was carried to the city of Gath. This was one of the most important cities in Philistia and is famous in later times as the home of Goliath.
- Vv. 10-12 *The Ark in Ekron.* When an affliction from the Lord came on the inhabitants of Gath, they asked that the Ark be removed from their community. The men of Ekron were horrified when they saw the Ark had been brought to their city. They, too, asked to have it removed.

FIRST SAMUEL  
LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God alone is God.* Men have invented many false gods for themselves. All of men's inventions are sheer folly. They are nothing more than the figment of their imaginations or the products of their hands. The prophet Isaiah described the folly of making graven images and molten idols (Isaiah 44:9-20). This foolishness is borne out in the activity in the house of Dagon. God demonstrated His superiority over the god of the Philistines by throwing down the image of Dagon.
2. *Sinners cannot escape from God.* Though sinful men flee from God, their sins will find them out. Though they strive to drive God from their homes and communities, He will pursue them. The repeated afflictions in Philistia were sign enough that God was punishing the Philistines for their mishandling of the Ark.

The Captivity of the Ark, 5:1—7:17.

*The Ark in the Temple of Dagon. 5:1-6*

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.

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 of 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.

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.

1. *Where did the Philistines take the Ark? 5:1*

They thought they had captured the God of Israel, and they wanted to place this God by their god and glory in the triumph. As we should expect in the case of a remarkable trophy, they brought it to the temple of Dagon. Dagon was the national god of the Philistines, if we gather anything from his prominence here. The temple alluded to here existed until the time of the Maccabees (I Maccabees 10:83 ff; 11.4).

2. *Who was Dagon? 5:2 (cf. Judges 16:23)*

The nature and attributes of Dagon are not certainly known. He is a god of the Philistines in whose honor a great feast was held (Judges 16:23). If the name is Semite, it may be related either to the word for fish or to a word for corn. The adoration of a fish-god or corn would be at home in the fine grain-growing land of the Shephelah. A bas-relief in Khorsabad, Sargon's Assyrian capital, depicts a figure swimming in the sea. The upper part of the body resembled a bearded man, wearing the ordinary conical tiara of royalty and was adorned with elephants' tusks. The lower part of the body resembled the body of a fish. Since the whole scene is the picture of a battle between the Assyrian king and the inhabitants of the coast of Syria, this is in all probability a representation of the god of Ashdod, namely, Dagon.

3. *What happened while the Ark was in Philistia? 5:3-7*

Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the Ark of the Lord on the first morning. On the second morning, both the palms of Dagon's hands were cut off,

his head was cut off, and the remaining stump was lying upon the threshold of the temple. The visitation of God was not restricted to the demolition of the statue of Dagon, but affected the people of Ashdod as well. The desolation included diseases and also the withdrawal or diminution of the means of subsistence, the devastation of the fields, and such like. From Ashdod, the Ark was sent to Gath, thence to Ekron. There was a deadly panic. No part of the country wanted the Ark deposited in its borders, so they finally decided that something would have to be done about it. The tumult was not caused merely by fear or death, but it was a result of their actual suffering.

4. *Where was Ashdod?* 5:6

Ashdod was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. Together with Gaza, Gath, Ekron, and Ashkelon it formed what was known as the Philistine pentapolis. These cities were at the very height of their power at the time of Saul and continued to be important after the time of David. Ashdod was situated between Ashkelon, a seaport, and Ekron, the city inland on the caravan route east to Lydda and west to Joppa.

*The Ark in Gath.* 5:7-9

7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that *is 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*.

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.

5. *Where was Gath?* 5:8

Gath was also one of the cities of the Philistine pentapolis. The name means "wine press." The site has not been uncovered, and the city probably disappeared because of the disaster hinted at in Amos 6:2. Many archaeologists favor a site at Telles-Safiyeh; ten miles east of Ashdod and ten miles southeast of Ekron. The Crusaders stopped here, and Richard the Lionhearted made his raids on caravans near Beersheba from this point. The city was the nearest of the large Philistine towns to Hebrew territory. It is known as the home of Goliath (I Samuel 17). Achish was king of the city at the time of David and befriended him during Saul's persecution. David later captured the city (I Chronicles 18:1).

6. *What were Emerods?* 5:9

The Hebrew word signifies a tumor (Deuteronomy 28:27). An affliction of emerods was considered a painful disease. It was especially promoted by the sedentary habits of the Orientals and hence very common among them. Although the affliction is rather easily cured by the advanced skill of the Western people, the popular medicine of the East had no cure for it. It was therefore a very terrible visitation. The affliction struck the men in their secret parts and made them very uncomfortable.

*The Ark in Ekron. 5:10-12*

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.

7. *Where was Ekron? 5:10*

Ekron was about eleven miles from Gath. It had belonged at one time to Judah (Joshua 13:3). It was also possessed by the tribe of Dan (Joshua 19:43). The Philistines had jurisdiction over it in the time of Eli as we see here. The archaeologists have found its site at Akir, ten miles northeast of Ashdod. From what has been found, it has been concluded that the fly god was worshipped here. This is also brought out in the Scripture (II Kings 1:2).

8. *Why did the people say that the Ark would slay them? 5:10b*

Wherever the Ark had gone, the people had been afflicted. The men of Ekron therefore felt that they would all be killed. People are naturally afraid of deities. They may even fear the servants of God. This was the attitude of the widow of Zarephath when Elijah came to her. She felt that Elijah's coming had resulted in the death of her son (I Kings 17:18). The Philistine people were afraid that the presence of the Ark of the Lord in their midst would bring death to them.

9. *Who were the lords of the Philistines? 5:11*

The lords of the Philistines were the kings of the various city-states. One lord would rule in Gath. Another would have jurisdiction in Ashdod. Still another would be the ruler of Ekron. Some of them are known to us. Achish was king of Gath in David's day (I Samuel 21:10). These lords of the Philistines had come to Delilah to offer her money to deliver Samson into their hands. (Judges 16:5). They held a council to decide their strategy; and they were addressed on this occasion by the citizens of Ekron, who asked that the Ark be taken from their city.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 5 IN REVIEW

1. To what city did the Philistines first take the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did the Philistines put the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the name of the Philistine god? \_\_\_\_\_
4. To what city was the ark taken next? \_\_\_\_\_
5. With what affliction did God smite the Philistine men? \_\_\_\_\_
6. To what Philistine city was the ark taken? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What happened to the Philistine idol during the first night? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What happened to the idol during the second night? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What other cities formed the Philistine pentapolis? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which of the cities was nearest to Israel? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 6

Vv. 1-9 *The decision to return the Ark.* Although the Philistines had beaten Israel on the field of battle, they were themselves utterly defeated in their attempt to make a prize of war out of the Ark of the Testimony. As they had moved the Ark about from city to city, its trail had been marked by constant afflictions on the Philistines. In utter dismay, they gave up in their attempts to keep it and made preparations to return it to Israel.

Vv. 10-18 *The Ark returned.* An ingenious plan was devised by the Philistines. By it they were able to determine that God was indeed directing the path of the kine. They knew then that

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Jehovah, the God of the Israelites, had been the source of the plagues brought against Philistia.

Vv. 19-21 *Men of Beth-shemesh smitten.* When the Ark was returned to Israel's territory, the first spot it reached was Beth-shemesh. Some of these men did not have proper respect for the symbol of God's abiding presence; and God smote 50,070 men of Israel on account of this lack of respect.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God's hand is seen in the affairs of men.* The Philistines knew that there was something very unusual about the fact that trouble came wherever the Ark was located. This might have been coincidental if it happened only a time or two; but when it happened again and again, they knew that some supernatural power was behind the occurrences. Since they saw the hand of Almighty God in these events, they rightly decided that they should repent of their wrong actions and make restitution for their misdeeds.
2. *God guides even the beasts of the field.* The natural instinct of the kine was overruled. Naturally, these milk cows would want to stay close to their calves. When the calves were locked in the stall and the cows were hitched to the cart bearing the Ark of the Lord, the cows went directly away from their own calves. Nothing short of the interference of God in the natural instincts of these beasts would cause them to go against their habits. This was a sign to the Philistines that the hand of God was in the whole affair.
3. *Man should have reverence for the things of God.* Only Levites and priests were to bear the Ark of the Covenant. Their duties were assigned to them (Numbers 4).

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The men of Beth-shemesh were quite presumptuous when they "looked into the ark of the Lord" (v. 19). This lack of respect brought punishment upon the people, and the event should be a lesson in reverence for men of all times.

### *The Decision to Return the Ark. 6:1-9*

And the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

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.

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.

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?

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:

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.

1. *What was the final decision about the deposition of the Ark? 6:1*

The method of disposing of it was of rational order. They were to put a trespass offering beside the Ark. This was to be of five golden emerods and five golden mice. They there were to build a new cart; take two milk cows, upon which the yoke had never been; leave their calves at home; and see if the Lord would guide the cows to remove the Ark from their country. The natural inclination of the mother cows would keep them from going away. The behavior of the cattle would show whether God wished them to return to Israel. Their respect for God is seen in the fact that they prepared a new cart and they selected milk cows upon which no yoke had yet come.

2. *Who were the Diviners? 6:2*

Divination is practiced by many religious people who are without God's revelation. The king of Egypt had magicians whom he called to interpret his dreams (Genesis 41:8). Joseph pretended to divine by the use of a silver cup (Genesis 44:15). Generally speaking, divination was the art of obtaining secret knowledge, especially of the future. It may be considered as the pagan counterpart of Biblical prophecy. A careful study of Scripture reveals that divination is by demon power, whereas genuine prophecy is by the Spirit of God. Many passages in the Bible legislate against such activity as divination (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). The lords of the Philistines evidently had their diviners, and they depended upon them to help them to make decisions.

3. *How did the Philistines know about a trespass offering?*  
6:3

Many false religions contain parallels of the true religion. The trespass offering of the Philistine paganism is an instance of this. God had laid down rules and regulations for the making of a trespass offering (Leviticus 5 and 6). What the Philistines offered was a pagan counterfeit of the true trespass offering. The fact that it is not a Biblical trespass offering is seen from the nature of what they offered—golden emerods and golden mice. Unclean animals such as mice would be an abomination to Jehovah.

4. *Why did they send golden mice?* 6:4

The golden mice were images of the rodents which overran the land and added severity to the plague of boils which afflicted their persons. The pestilence which had accompanied the presence of the Ark was so severe that many of the men had died (5:12). The cry of the city went up to heaven. The men themselves were incapacitated and the pests added increased suffering and hardship to the afflicted people.

5. *How did the Philistines know about the Egyptian bondage?* 6:6

What happened in Egypt was well known throughout all the Mediterranean basin. Immediately after the people of Israel had crossed the Red Sea, they sang a song to celebrate the triumph. In one verse, they said: "The people shall hear and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine" (Exodus 15:14). This news did spread when Joshua led the people of Israel against Jericho. Rahab the harlot said: "We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when you came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites (Joshua 2:10). The people of Philistia also knew that the Egyptians had hardened their hearts. This statement throws some light on the repeated reference made to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

Although it is said in some references that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 10:27; 11:10; 14:4), it is also said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 9:34). The Philistines knew that Pharaoh was responsible for hardening his own heart, and they did not want to harden their hearts against God and be destroyed.

6. *Why were the heifers not broken?* 6:7

Heifers which were not broken would not naturally stand still while they were hitched to the cart. When their calves were penned up, they would not be expected to leave the area. All of this unnatural activity on the part of the kine indicated that God's hand was involved in this procedure.

7. *What were the jewels of gold?* 6:8

The jewels of gold were evidently the five golden emerods and the five golden mice. They are called here a trespass offering and identified as being the jewels. They were placed in the coffer by the side of the Ark. It is doubtful if the Philistines had removed the mercy seat from the Ark, and looked in it. If they had, they would have found the tables of stone and the pot of Manna which had been placed there in the days of Moses, along with the rod of Aaron which budded (Exodus 16:33, Numbers 17:10). All this trespass offering was carefully placed on the cart along with the Ark itself.

8. *Where was Beth-Shemesh?* 6:9

Beth-Shemesh is a place now called Aim Shems. The road to Beth-Shemesh from Ekron runs along a straight smooth bed of a valley in which a meandering brook makes a crooked line through the middle. The name of the town signifies "house of the sun." It was a priestly city (Joshua 21:16) in the tribe of Dan on the northern boundary of Judah (Joshua 15:10). The location would be on the northwest slopes of the mountains of Judah, and pottery remains found there indicate that the city was occupied from about 2000 B.C. through the seventh century of the

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same era. The town was evidently destroyed by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar II.

### *The Ark Returned.* 6:10-18

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 emerods.

12 And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, *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 Beth-shemesh.

13 And *they of* Beth-shemesh *were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*.

14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, 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.

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 Beth-shemesh 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 Beth-shemite.

9. *Was the plan successful?* 6:9-12

The plan was successful. The Philistines knew that it was because the cows took a beeline right through Beth-shemesh, never turning to the right hand or the left. The apparent redundancy is due to the author's desire to make the miracle plain. The lowing of the kine shows their natural desire to return to the calves. The cows stopped in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite. When the men of Beth-shemesh stood in unrighteousness and looked into the Ark, God smote them; the men of Kirjath-jearim were called to take the Ark to their land. It remained here for twenty years.

10. *What time of year was it when the Ark was returned?*  
6:13

It was the time of reaping in the wheat harvest when the Ark came back to Israel. This would be about the height of the growing season in Palestine, and would be in the time we mark as late June or early July. This would permit the people to be out in the fields where they would soon catch a glimpse of the strange sight.

11. *Who was Joshua the Beth-shemite?* 6:14

This man is unknown except for this reference. He is called Joshua the Beth-shemite to distinguish him from Joshua the son of Nun, who was the leader of the people of Israel following Moses (Joshua 1:1). The fact that he owned the field would indicate that he was not a Levite himself, but a farmer in Judah.

12. *What kind of offering did the men make?* 6:15

The fact that they offered the female animals would indicate that this was a peace offering. The specifications of the peace offering are found in Leviticus 3. It is stipulated there that the peace offering might be either

male or female, but it was to be without blemish. If these men offered this sacrifice in an acceptable way, they must have followed the regulations laid down in this chapter.

13. *What was the stone of Abel? 6:18*

The Hebrew word Abel is translated with the phrase "grassy place." We might define it as a meadow. The word is used as a prefix in a number of cases. Here it signifies the marker which located the spot where the offering was made as the Ark was returned. The fact that the stone remained unto the day of writing would indicate that it was there for a number of years—throughout the judgeship of Samuel and into the reign of Saul.

*The Men of Beth-shemesh Smitten. 6:19-21*

19 And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, 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.

20 And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you.

14. *Why did God smite the people of Beth-shemesh? 6:19*

The people of Israel were glad to have the Ark back within their border. They were evidently overly familiar with the sacred chest, and God smote them. The number slain at this instance for irreverently examining this holy shrine is recorded as 50,070. The fact that the 50,000 is separated from the threescore and ten has caused some to wonder about the total number. But the text enjoys very

good integrity. The sin they committed was very gross, and God punished them accordingly.

15. *Why was the Ark taken to Kirjath-jearim?* 6:21

Kirjath-jearim was not a Levitical city. It was the nearest large town on the road from Beth-shemesh to Shiloh. The people of Beth-shemesh were anxious to get it out of their community and evidently sent to a nearby town for help. The town was in the rugged wooded highland which looked down on the valley of Sorek. The exact site is not known with certainty, but some archaeologists believe it is the present Kuriet Enab to the north of Mount Jearim. Once the Ark was set in this new location, it was off the border line of the Shephelah, and within Israel's proper territory. Here in the fields of the woods it rested until the day David brought it up to Jerusalem (II Samuel 6:2, 3, 12; I Chronicles 15:1-29). cf. Psalm 132.

## CHAPTER 6 IN REVIEW

1. What offerings did the Philistines send back by the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
2. On what conveyance did they return it? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what point in Israel was the ark first brought? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What time of year was it when the ark came back? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the name of the man who received the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Of what tribe was he a member? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What kind of offering did the Israelites make when the ark came back? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What name was given to the place where the offering was made? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many men were smitten when the Israelites looked in the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what point was the ark taken after the tragedy? \_\_\_\_\_

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 7

- Vv. 1- 2 *The Ark in the house of Abinadab.* After the men of Beth-shemesh were punished for their lack of respect, they besought the men of Kirjath-jearim to come and get the Ark. This they did. They brought it into the hill country of Judah and placed it in the house of Abinadab. One of the sons of Abinadab, Eleazar by name, was appointed to take care of the Ark.
- Vv. 3- 8 *Israel purged at Mizpeh.* Periodically throughout their history the children of Israel found it necessary to take stock of themselves and give better direction to their lives. Even the patriarch Jacob himself found it necessary to purge his house of idols when he was returning from his sojourn with Laban in Haran (Genesis 35:2-5). When Joshua was bidding farewell to his people, he urged them to choose whether they would serve Jehovah or the false gods that they had learned about in other communities (Joshua 24:23). This same action was necessary before the people could be united behind the leadership of Samuel.
- Vv. 9-17 *Israel delivered under Samuel.* The judges were not mere interpreters and administrators of the law. They were men upon whom the Spirit of God came when the occasion demanded it. Quite often they were great military leaders who delivered the people when they were attacked by foreign nations. One of Samuel's first acts was to lead the people of Israel in a successful military campaign against the Philistines. When peace and quiet

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were restored to the land, Samuel went from place to place to assist the people in living in peace in the land.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Making peace with God precedes going to war for God.* Before Israel was ready to do battle for the Lord, her inhabitants needed to purge themselves of the graven images and molten idols which had crept into their society. Just as Isaiah did not feel that he was ready to deliver the Lord's message until after his unclean lips had been seared with coals from the altar (Isaiah 6), the soldiers of Israel were not strong enough to carry the battle for God until their weak faith had been bolstered. The individual Christian today feels that he is impotent when the besetting sins of his life have not been ferreted out and forgiven by the grace of God and the advocacy of the Son of God.
2. *God helps His followers to fight their battles.* God fought for Israel. He "thundered with a great thunder on the day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them" (v. 10). In a very real way, the abiding presence of God assists those who wrestle against "principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

#### *The Ark in the House of Abinadab. 7-1, 2*

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.

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.

1. *Who was Abinadab?* 7:1

Abinadab was a very interesting name. It signified "father of generosity." He was evidently a Levite of Kirjath-jearim. It was in his house that the Ark was deposited. Although the Israelites themselves did not gather together to anoint a new priest, the people of the community appointed Eleazar to take care of the Ark. This was not a change of the priesthood as prophesied by God (I Samuel 2:35), but it was the temporary arrangement made by the people to care for the Ark.

2. *Why did the people leave it there for such a long time?*  
7:2

The people of Israel were not very punctual about performing the Lord's duties. The fact that they left the Ark in this strange location for 20 years is an indication of how they failed to do the Lord's bidding. Such an arrangement left the tabernacle itself still at Shiloh, but the main part of the tabernacle furniture at this distant location. It was only when David came to the throne that he began to take care of such neglected matters.

*Israel Purged at Mizpeh. 7:3-8*

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.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only.

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.

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.

3. *Why did Samuel exhort the people to return to the Lord? 7:3*

God's people had strayed very far from the road that He wanted them to walk. The wicked priests, Hophni and Phineas, had been allowed to lead the people astray. Their defection ultimately resulted in the capture of the Ark. Once the Ark was back in the borders of Israel, Samuel began a campaign to lead the people back to God. Samuel was addressing the leaders who were in return responsible for spreading his borders throughout the length and breadth of the land.

4. *Who were Baalim and Ashtaroth? 7:4*

They were Mr. and Mrs. Baalim. Baalim is the plural of Baal. Ashtaroth is the plural of Ashtarah. The plural *Baalim* is a general term employed to denote all the false deities, and is synonymous with the expression "other gods." Baal was the chief male deity of the Canaanites and all the nations of Hither Asia and was worshipped by the different nations with peculiar modifications. Therefore, he was designated by various distinctive epithets. Baal was a sun-god, and as such, the vehicle and source of physical life. Ashtaroth is derived from the singular *Ashtoreth* (see I Kings 11:5, 33; II Kings 23:13). In connection with the Sidonian Astharte, this was the general name used to denote the leading female deity of the Canaanitish tribes, a moon-goddess, who was worshipped

as the feminine principle of nature, embodied in the pure moonlight, and its influence upon terrestrial life. It corresponded to the Greek Aphrodite.

5. *In what way did Samuel judge?* 7:6

The judges who governed Israel were strictly God's vice-regents in the government of the people. God himself was the supreme ruler. Those who were thus elevated to the office of judgeship retained the dignity as long as they lived, although no family enjoyed regular unbroken succession to the office. Individuals prompted by the impulse of God's spirit when they witnessed the depressed state of their country were aroused to achieve deliverance. They continued in their office as defenders of religion and avengers of all crimes, particularly idolatry and its attended vices. Edersheim in his work, *Israel and Canaan*, (p. 107), says that the judges ruled only over one or several of the tribes. In such cases as the instance of Samuel it is apparent that he had jurisdiction in all the tribes. The Hebrew word for *judge* signified the effort necessary to settle a dispute and to maintain justice both for the individual and for the people. In the case of the Biblical judges, it has the added idea of liberating or delivering. The judges might be considered to be akin to the Roman consuls. In this particular case Samuel was interested in cleaning idolatry out of Israelite society.

6. *Why did the children of Israel ask Samuel to pray for them?* 7:8

The people knew that Samuel was a man of spiritual strength. Even when they rejected the Lord and Samuel's advice, they wanted Samuel to pray to God on their behalf. It is typical of the conduct of sinful people that they still want God's righteous leaders to pray on their behalf. Men who will not pray for themselves want somebody else to pray for them.

*Israel Delivered Under Samuel. 7:9-17*

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, 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.

7. *Where was Mizpeh? 7:9*

Mizpeh was five miles northwest of Jerusalem. The site is on a conical hill overlooking all the surrounding territory. The Philistines would be able to see the children of Israel as they gathered themselves together at this point. Since the Lords of the Philistines had recovered from their

afflictions they were able to come up to battle against Israel. As the children of Israel saw the Philistines, they were afraid. They knew that they had sinned in looking into the ark at Beth-shemesh, and they were afraid to go to battle against the enemy.

8. *Why did Samuel offer a sucking lamb? 7:9*

A whole burnt offering was to be a male without blemish. It could be of the flocks or of the herds, (Leviticus 1:10). It could also be out of the fowls (Leviticus 1:14). Such an offering would indicate the total dependence of the people of Israel on God's mercy.

9. *What was unusual about a great thunder? 7:10*

Palestine had little or no rain during the time of the wheat harvest. This was the time when the Ark was returned, and it would be a source of amazement to the people of Israel. Probably the great thunder would also have been accompanied with a storm which made it difficult for the Philistines to attack. As a matter of fact, the Scripture indicates that it did discomfit the Philistines. God himself fought for men and helped to overcome the attack of the Philistines. Thus the Philistines were stricken before Israel.

10. *Where is Beth-car? 7:11*

The name indicates a sheep house. The fact that it says they came "under Beth-car" indicates that the place itself was on a height with a road at its foot. The situation is not known. This is the only reference to the place to be found in the Scriptures. No doubt the Israelites chased the Philistines back down into their own territory.

11. *What is the meaning of Eben-ezer? 7:12*

This word means "the stone of help." Samuel said, "Hitherto the Lord has helped us." God had brought Israel a long way under Samuel's direction. They themselves were returning to the Lord. God had given them victory over the Philistines. The Ark was returned to

them. Samuel believed that God would help them further along their way. This is a good motto for Christians today.

12. *How was the hand of the Lord against the Philistines?*  
7:13

God did not suffer the Philistines to gain the supremacy over Israel during the lifetime of Samuel. He brought such supernatural phenomenon upon them as the thunder which was a discomfiture in the battle at Mizpeh. On other occasions He indicated to the Israelites when it was time to go into battle. In every way by His good providence on the Israelites He was opposing the sinful ways of the Philistines.

13. *Who were the Amorites?* 7:14

The Amorites were the Canaanites. The two names are used rather interchangeably (Genesis 15:16; cf. Genesis 15:19-21). The word itself literally means "the high ones." It is generally supposed that these were the highlanders (Numbers 13:29; Deuteronomy 1:7). They were probably the most prominent of the Canaanite people and thus their name is sometimes used to signify the Canaanites in general. In the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, *amurri* is the name for Palestine-Phoenicia. This verse indicates that the people of Israel did not have any trouble from the Canaanite tribes dwelling in their land, but their war was against the Philistines who lived along the western border.

14. *How long was Samuel's judgeship?* 7:15

Samuel was a very young man when he came up to Eli at the tabernacle. He probably was not called until he had served some time as an apprentice to Eli. It took some time for him to become known among the Israelite people, but his judgeship was probably not very lengthy. The people soon rejected him, and they wanted a king. Samuel continued to live throughout most of the reign of Saul, and his death is not mentioned until near the end of Saul's reign (I Samuel 25:1).

15. *Where was Samuel's circuit? 7:16, 17*

Samuel did not make his home in Shiloh. He was evidently not a priest as such. He performed the function of a priest, but since Shiloh had lost the ark, Ramah became the center of his service as prophet and judge. The Ark of the Covenant was no longer the center of worship, and Samuel saw no reason to stay in Shiloh with the empty shell of the tabernacle. As has been indicated before, Samuel's home was in the highlands of Benjamin. He was centrally located to all the people of Israel at this point. From this home of his, he went out to Bethel on the north, Gilgal on the east, and Mizpeh on the west. His return was ever to his own home in Ramah.

## CHAPTER 7 IN REVIEW

1. Who was appointed to take care of the ark? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How long was the ark left with him? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What two generic names are given to false gods? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What office did Samuel fulfill in Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where did Samuel assemble Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who attacked Israel while they were assembled? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did the Israelites ask Samuel to do for them? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Samuel offer as a burnt offering? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What new name did Samuel give to the place? \_\_\_\_\_
10. At what places did Samuel judge Israel? \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 8

- Vv. 1- 5 *The people ask for a king.* God had long foreseen the day when Israel would have a king. He had told Abraham that kings would come out of his loins (Genesis 17:6). Moses had received instructions from God to pass along to the Israelites to guide them in the selection of a man to rule over them (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). The people of Israel, however, were presumptuous in demanding a king before it was evident in God's good providence to establish a king over them. Their motive was also quite bad inasmuch as they wanted a king over them ". . . like all the nations" (v. 5).
- Vv. 6- 9 *The Lord instructs Samuel.* God told Samuel to hearken to the request of the people. He also instructed him to protest solemnly and show them the essential nature of a king.
- Vv. 10-18 *Samuel describes a king.* This passage is a classic description of the nature of a monarch. His demands upon the lives of his subjects are spelled out in large letters. Much of what Samuel predicted was fulfilled in the very first king of Israel. Other succeeding kings only verified what Samuel had said.
- Vv. 19-22 *The people persist.* Regardless of the consequences, the people were insistent in seeking a king. They heard all that Samuel had to say, but they were not diverted from their intentions of changing their society from one that has been described as a theocracy to one that is best known as a monarchy.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The pull of the world.* A great deal of pressure is brought upon individuals, communities, and countries as social custom prevails. What others do matters a great deal to all of us. Style of dress is dictated by what everybody seems to be wearing. Moral standards in non-Christian countries fluctuate with the changing social scene. Christian doctrine may also be interpreted differently according to what seems to be the prevailing opinions. It was this desire to conform that led Israel to ask for a king.
2. *The patience of God.* Although God had not instigated this movement towards the monarchy, His great love dictated that the request of the people should be granted. Samuel thought that the people had rejected him from being their judge. God declared that in reality the people were rejecting Him. Still, God did not turn His back upon them and forsake them to flounder in their foolish ways.

The Installation of Israel's First King, 8:1—10:27.

### *The people ask for a King, 8:1-5*

And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.

2 Now the name of his first-born was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were* judges in Beer-sheba.

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

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.

4. *When Samuel was old, whom did he make judges over Israel?* 8:1

He made his sons judges over Israel. The reasons assigned for the appointment of Samuel's sons as judges stem from his own advanced age. The inference which we might draw from this alone is that they were simply to support their father in the administration of justice and that Samuel had no intention of laying down his office and still less of making the supreme office of judge hereditary in his family. This is still more apparent from the fact that they were stationed as judges of the nation in Beer-sheba, which was on the southern border of Canaan.

2. *What are the meanings of the names of Samuel's sons?* 8:2

Samuel chose very appropriate names for his sons. His firstborn's name means "Jehovah is God." The other one had a name which means "Jehovah is my father." This is some indication of the faith which Samuel had, and it should have been an encouragement to his sons to walk in Godly ways.

3. *What sort of men were they?* 8:3

The sons did not walk in the way of their father. They set their hearts upon gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. All of this was in opposition to the command of God (see Exodus 23:6, 8; Deuteronomy 16:19). One can only marvel that having witnessed the failure of Eli to train his sons Samuel failed to curb the lusts of his sons. It is not enough to say that this is just the common experience of the Orientals. This is just another instance of a good father without the blessing of faithful sons. It is this very failure on the part of Samuel that occasioned the Israelites' demanding a king.

4. *Who were the elders?* 8:4

The elders of Israel were the leaders of the people. They were not elders in the same sense as leaders of the New Testament church (I Timothy 3). Each tribe would have

its appointed leaders. These men represented the tribes as they came to Samuel.

5. *What request did the people make of Samuel?* 8:5

The request was for a king. They used the age of Samuel, and the iniquity of his sons as an excuse. The people were represented by their leaders; and although in I Samuel 5:20 the desire is grounded in a need for a leader in war, the express reason here is the maladministration of justice. Samuel viewed this request as a sinful demand. He knew that the theocracy was the divinely appointed constitution for Israel. The substitution of another form was treason to God.

*The Lord instructs Samuel.* 8:6-9

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

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 show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

6. *What was their real reason?* 8:6-9

They wanted to be like other nations. That is what many are saying today. We have to have a great association with offices and headquarters. Somebody is leading us around. Israel's request was based on a desire to follow the customs and institutions of other nations. These nations had been set aside for destruction when the people entered the land. These Israelites might have reminded

Samuel of his old age, which rendered him less able to attend to the duties of his office, and also of the avarice of his sons and the corruptness of the judges. They might have complained that his sons did not walk in his footsteps and asked God to choose suitable men. If they had done this, there could be no doubt that they would have received a gracious and suitable answer. They did not think of calling on God, however; they demanded that a king should be given them.

*Samuel Describes a King.* 8:10-18

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 oliveyards, *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 maid-servants, 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.

7. *What was the king to be like? 8:10-18*

With divine insight Samuel told the people that their king would demand of their best young men for his chariots and his horsemen. He knew that the king would need an army. Captains would be appointed from their midst over thousands and over fifties. Other men would be required to till the ground of the king and to make his instruments of war. Moreover the king would demand young women to serve as his cooks, bakers, and confectionaries. Their property would be confiscated by the king (I Kings 21). In addition to supporting the priests with a tithe, the people would also be required to give another tenth to the king. Samuel foresaw the day that they would cry out for relief, but God ordained that once they had committed themselves to such a form of rule, they would have no chance to return to the former times. God had ordained the theocratic form of government. Their rejection of His ordinances was the same as the rejection of Him, the Author of the ordinances (v. 7). It is rebellion against God to rebel against God's form of government. Church people should be very careful not to make such moves.

*The People Persist. 8:19-22*

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.

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, Harken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

8. *In what way had they rejected God? cf. I Samuel 8:20*

They had rejected God in that they wanted to be like all the nations. God had delivered them by judges. Samuel as a judge had delivered them, but they took it upon themselves. They were now saying, "We must have a king." In rejecting the judges, they were rejecting God. God was King. This is the verdict of God. In declaring Samuel incapable, they were founding their arguments upon mistrust in the Lord. In the person of Samuel they rejected the Lord and His rule. They wanted a king, because they imagined that Jehovah their God-King was not able to secure their constant prosperity. Instead of seeking for the cause of the misfortunes that had befallen them in their own sin, they searched for it in the constitution of the nation itself. In such a state of mind their desire for a king was a contempt and rejection of the kingly government of Jehovah.

9. *Why did Samuel rehearse the words of the people in the ears of the Lord? 8:21*

Samuel evidently went before the Lord again and again about the problem. This would be a rehearsal of these things in the ears of the Lord. Samuel's heart was heavy, and he found release in prayer. He was anxious about his people, and he wanted to be sure that he was doing the will of God in this matter. This demand of the people and the subsequent anointing of a king mark a turning point in the history of the people of Israel.

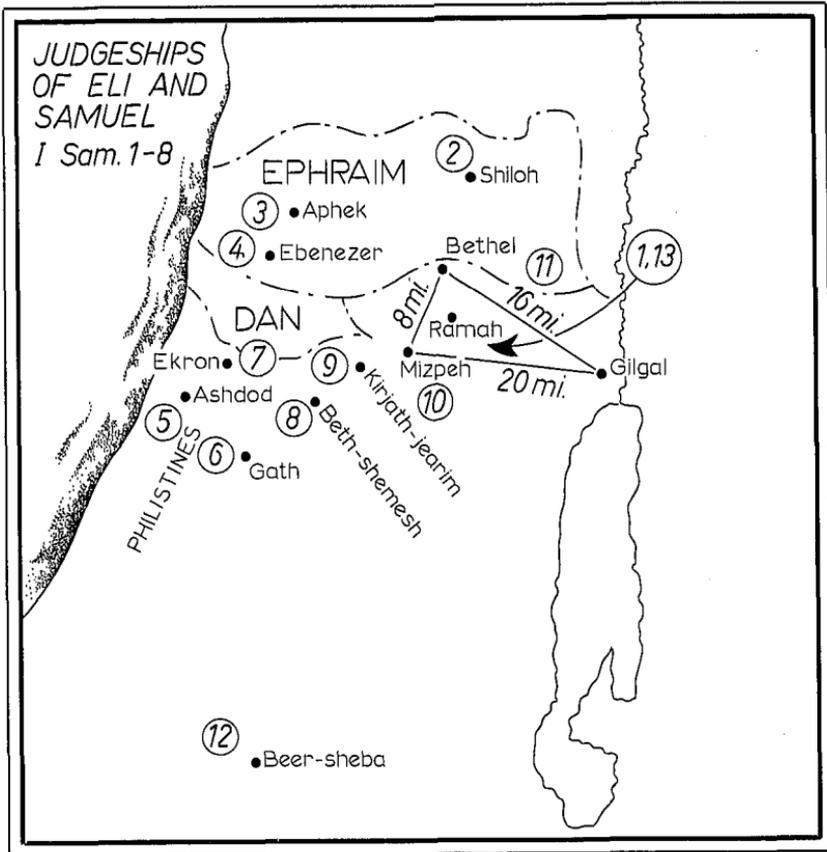
10. *Why did Samuel send the people back home? 8:22*

The elders of the people of Israel had come from various tribes. Some of them had come from across the Jordan in Gilead. Some had come from the far north near the Sea of Galilee. Others had no doubt come from Beer-sheba, the southern city half way down the length of the Dead Sea. Samuel was awaiting the will of the Lord in this matter, and he wanted time for this will to be made known to him. He would call the people again when a

king was picked out for them. The people evidently had respect for Samuel, and were willing to wait until the time was right. We find none of them rebelling openly against this dismissal, but they must have returned with thoughtful steps. What they were doing had brought sadness to the prophet. It had brought a statement from the Lord that forced them on in spite of the warning which Samuel had given them. Some of them may have entertained doubts about their actions as they waited in their home tribes to see what would happen. Much discussion must have transpired. All Israel was agog. The monarchy was about to be born.

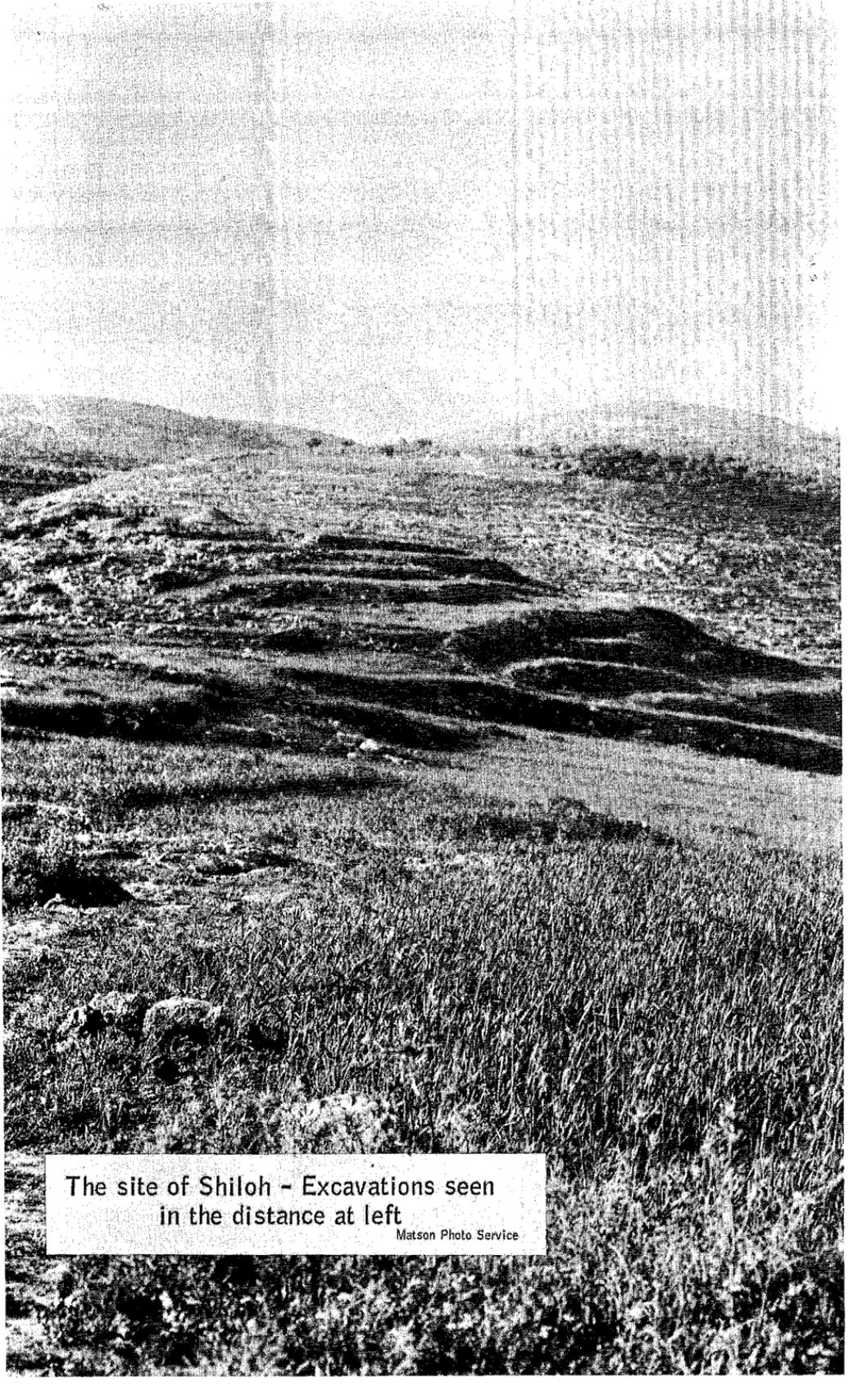
## CHAPTER 8 IN REVIEW

1. Whom did Samuel appoint as judges in Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did these judges reside? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What were the names of Samuel's sons? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What reason did the people give for asking for a king? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the real reason? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What did Samuel say the king would do with Israel's young men? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did Samuel say the king would do with with Israel's young women? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Samuel say the king would do with Israel's land? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What portion of their income did Samuel say the people would have to give to support their king? \_\_\_\_\_
10. When Samuel said the people had rejected him, whom did God say they had rejected? \_\_\_\_\_



**JUDGESHIPS OF SAMUEL AND ELI**  
**I Samuel 1-8**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Ramah<br>Birth of Samuel 1:1-20                                    | 8. Beth-shemesh<br>Ark sent to Israel 6:1-20         |
| 2. Shiloh<br>Dedication of Samuel 1:21-2:11                           | 9. Kiriath-jearim<br>Ark remains 20 years 6:21—7:2   |
| 3.-4. Aphek and Ebenezer<br>Defeat of Israel by Philistines<br>4:1-22 | 10. Mizpah<br>Samuel defeats Philistines 7:3-14      |
| 5. Ashdod<br>Fall of Dagon 5:1-7                                      | 11. Bethel-Gilgal-Mizpah<br>Samuel's circuit 7:15-17 |
| 6. Gath<br>Ark there 5:8-9  | 12. Beersheba<br>Samuel's sons judges 8:1-3          |
| 7. Ekron<br>Ark there 5:10-12   | 13. Ramah<br>Israel requests a King 8:4-22           |



The site of Shiloh - Excavations seen  
in the distance at left

Matson Photo Service

FIRST SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 9

- Vv. 1- 5 *Saul's search for his father's asses.* God knew of Israel's demand for a king. He also knew where to find a man who would meet the people's requirements as a leader. His background was one of humble nature, but his appearance was impressive. As the reader of the Bible meets him, he is on an expedition to find the lost animals of his father.
- Vv. 6-10 *Saul seeks the seer.* A man who was called a prophet in Israel had formerly been called a seer. The seer was the kind of man who would be able to give answers to all kinds of hard questions. The servant who was with Saul was especially insistent that they employ the services of such a man. They thought he could help find the asses.
- Vv. 11-21 *Saul and Samuel meet.* God had told Samuel that Saul would come to him. The two met as Samuel was in a nearby city to lead the people in a sacrifice. Samuel announced to Saul that he should become king of Israel, but Saul could hardly believe it.
- Vv. 22-27 *Samuel honors Saul.* Samuel gave Saul a place of honor at the sacrifice. The best portion of the sacrificial animal had been set aside. Samuel ordered this to be put before Saul.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Life situations often demand the counsel of a man of God.* God's ministers are servants of all. Like the Master Himself, they should seek to serve and not to be served. Those who are men and women of faith will often seek out these men of God for their good offices. No burden is so great that they cannot be of some

assistance, and no problem is so small that they will not stoop to help.

2. *God exalts the humble.* Saul described himself as being “. . . of the smallest of the tribes of Israel” (9:21). He was amazed that Samuel had intimated that the desire of all Israel was upon him. If he had remained as humble as this, he might have been a great leader. When he lost this humility and disobeyed God, he was rejected as king. When he was humble, God’s prophet exalted him by giving him a place of honor at the feast and prophesying good about him.

*Saul’s Search For His Father’s Asses. 9:1-5*

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.

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.

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.

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.

1. *Whose son was Saul? 9:1*

Saul was the son of Kish. The elaborate genealogy of

Kish, the Benjaminite, and the minute description of the figure of his son, Saul, are intended to indicate at the very outset the importance to which Saul attained in relation to the people of Israel. Kish was the son of Abiel (cf. 14:51). I Chronicles 8:33 and 9:39 give Ner as the ancestor of Kish; but the difference there is in naming not the father but the grandfather. *Kish* means a man of property (see Ruth 2:1). The town of Kish was Gibeah of Benjamin. We conjecture that he was a man of some important position in the community.

2. *What was the appearance of Saul?* 9:2

Saul was in the prime of life and strong. He was not in his adolescence nor immature. So long as his father lived, he would be under his authority; and there is no necessary contradiction between the language used here and the later account, according to which Saul had a son already grown. The name of Saul is probably abbreviated from a longer form meaning *Asked-of-God*. In contrast with his father, he would be, of course, a "young man," i.e., in the full vigor of youth. It may even be said that no one equalled him in beauty. "From his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." Such a figure as this was well adapted to commend him to the people as their king. Size and beauty were highly valued in rulers as signs of manly strength.

3. *What occasioned Saul's first meeting with Samuel?*  
9:3-10

Kish's she-asses had strayed, and Saul went with his servants through the mountains of Ephraim in search of the animals. Saul was ready to leave the fruitless search when his servant suggested that they consult Samuel, "the man of God," who was in the vicinity.

4. *Where is Shalisha?* 9:4

Nothing is given to indicate the meaning of the name of the town or its exact location. The context indicates that it would not be right to consult a prophet without a gift

to give him; and he knew that their supplies were exhausted and was without knowledge of what present they might take him. The servant replied that he had a quarter of a shekel of money, a small coin containing about sixty grains of silver. The objection was met, and Saul consented to go to Samuel in the nearby town. Their supplies had been exhausted, but they may have been circling around without going far from home. It was probably near Mt. Ephraim, and the name means "triangular." Reference is made to Baal-shalisha (II Kings 4:42).

5. *Where was the land of Shalim? 9:4 b*

The word Shalim means "foxes." A place is mentioned by this name only with regard to Saul's passing through it in looking for his father's animals. Many commentaries consider this to be a reference to the land of Shual, which was near Ophrah (13:17). Ophrah was the home of Gideon (Judges 6:11), and would be located in the tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan and six miles southwest of Shechem. Suggestions are therefore made that this Ophrah is another form of Ephraim and located in the land of Benjamin (II Chronicles 13:19). The mention of the name meaning "foxes" reminds the Bible reader of the incident of Samson's catching foxes down in Philistia near the territory of Dan (Judges 15:3-6). Although we cannot be sure of the exact location of this place, we are impressed with the fact that Saul wandered back and forth through the center of Palestine looking for his father's lost animals.

*Saul Seeks The Seer. 9:6-10*

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?

8 And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: *that* will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way.

9 (Beforetime in Isarel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *be that is now called* a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)

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

6. *Who was the man of God? 9:6*

Saul's servant must have known of Samuel's being in the area. His reference was to Samuel himself, for it was he whom they met when they looked for the "man of God." Evidently they had confidence in his ability to give advice and direction in all kinds of life's situations. To speak of a "man of God" was to refer to a prophet. They were true men of God. Many unnamed prophets are known only in this way (I Samuel 2:27; I Kings 13:1). Even Moses is described by this phrase (Deuteronomy 33:1) as if there were no more honorable title.

7. *Why did they want to bring a present to Samuel? 9:7*

Saul knew that he did not have any kind of victuals to give to the man of God. He evidently did not have any money, for he took the fourth part of the shekel of silver which his servant had to give to Samuel. Such concern indicates that it was customary for the Israelites to give a little something to their prophets. Such a practice helps us to understand the meaning of the priest in Israel who told Amos to go on back to Judah to prophesy and "there eat bread" (Amos 7:12). It has ever been God's ordinance that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. It was not right to muzzle the oxen which tread the grain (Deuteronomy 25:4; I Corinthians 9:9; I Timothy 5:18).

8. *What is the meaning of the two words for a prophet?*  
9:9

The Hebrew word used most often to describe a prophet is a word that means "to announce" or "to declare." The primary idea of the prophet is one who utters a communication. A popular definition of a prophet is "one who speaks for another." Two other Hebrew words are used to name the prophet. Both of these mean "one who sees." In this verse one of these other two words is used and is translated "seer." The three words occur together in I Chronicles 29:29, where they seem to be in contrast with one another. When the book of Samuel was written, the word prophet was most common, but earlier the other word had been used quite often. Radical critics take this to be an indication of the fact that the book was not written until a long time after the events had happened. A man's lifetime is long enough for different words to come into popular use. In less than a generation a word may fall into disuse, and this is not evidence enough to take the authorship of the book away from Samuel and give it to a later author. The two words help us to understand the functions of a prophet. Saul evidently went to the man whom he thought could "see" and tell him where he could find his father's asses.

*Samuel and Saul Meet. 9:11-21*

*Samuel and Saul Meet. 9:11-21*

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

12 *And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you; make haste now, for he came today to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people today in the high place:*

13 *As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straight-way find him, before he go up to the high place to eat:*

for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him.

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.

15 Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

16 Tomorrow 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.

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

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 today, and tomorrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart.

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?

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?

9. *Did Samuel know Saul was coming? 9:11-17*

On the day before the meeting, Jehovah had told Samuel that the man whom he was to anoint as captain over his people was coming to him. God in His overruling provi-

dence directed Saul's way so that he came to Samuel. God's displeasure at the desire of the people was really a displeasure with the state of their heart from which the desire had sprung. Since the Philistines were making fresh attacks upon Israel, God was directing the affairs of His kingdom so that a strong deliverer would be raised up from among them.

10. *What was the high place? 9:12*

The name of the town Ramah means "a high place." About three miles north of Gibeah and six miles from Jerusalem a high hill rises from the right side of the road. This is crowned with the village called Er Ram. This is taken to be the site of ancient Ramah. Israel's Canaanite neighbors had high places where they planted groves and set up images and idols. There is no evidence that Israel was falling into these idolatrous practices, but no doubt they would build an altar in a prominent place. It thus would be known as "high place."

11. *What city was this? 9:14*

Samuel evidently did not live in the town where Saul met him. He had only come to it in order to hold a sacrificial feast as he did in Bethlehem (I Samuel 16:1). This is true even though Samuel did honor Saul by having him as his guest. They appeared to sleep under the same roof, but both were probably guests in another man's home. Some commentators assume that he had a house at his command for any time that he might be in the area, such as was provided for Elisha (II Kings 4). The town where Saul met Samuel was probably southwest of Bethlehem.

12. *Why was Saul anointed king? 9:16*

God had told Samuel that he was sending a man to him. This man was to be anointed "captain" over Israel. God was doing this in order to save His people out of the land of the Philistines. This makes Saul's call to the office of king similar to the call of Moses to be the leader of his people when they were in captivity in Egypt.

13. *Why was Samuel in the gate of the city?* 9:18

The prophet was evidently greeting the people who came to the city for the sacrificial feast. The custom of the people was to congregate in the broad area near the entrance of the city. Much of their business was conducted here, and many incidental and providential meetings have occurred here (Genesis 19:1).

14. *How did Samuel prepare Saul for the anointing?*  
9:18 ff.

At the feast that night, Saul was Samuel's guest and greatly honored. As they retired, Samuel promised that on the morrow he would tell Saul all that was on his heart. This included more than the safety of the animals for which he had been seeking, inasmuch as Samuel told Saul all these things immediately. As they talked, Samuel asked a perplexing question that brought a humble answer from Saul. Samuel said, "To whom belong the desirable things of Israel? It is not to thee and to thy father's house?" Saul replied that he was a member of the least of Israel's tribes and that his clan was least among his tribesmen. All this must have caused Saul a sleepless night pondering all that had taken place.

*Samuel Honors Saul. 9:22-27*

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them in the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which *were* about thirty persons.

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.

25 And as they were come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

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.

15. *Why did Samuel reserve a piece of meat for Saul?*  
9:23, 24

Samuel had already addressed Saul as the most outstanding Israelite of his time. To signify his honor for Saul he had reserved the best part of the sacrificial animal for Saul. Some understand this reference to that "which was upon it," to that broth which was poured over it. No doubt it was that which was attached to it. A strange interpretation has made this to be the kidney and that which was over it, but the kidney was to be burned upon the altar in the case of all the slain sacrifices (Leviticus 3:4). Only the flesh of the animals offered in sacrifice was used in the sacrificial meal. What was attached to the leg must have been the fat upon the flesh. The leg is the largest and best portion and was a piece of honor for Saul (Genesis 43:34).

16. *Why were they on the top of the house?* 9:25

Palestinian houses had flat roofs. They were places for retirement for private conversation (Deuteronomy 22:8). It was while he was on the housetop that Peter received a vision to go to the Gentiles (Acts 10:9), and many other references are made to activities of this kind on the roof of the houses.

17. *Why was Samuel secretive about anointing Saul?* 9:26

Samuel wanted Saul to get away early in the morning. Boaz had urged Ruth to leave his threshing floor "before one could know another" (Ruth 3:14). Samuel did not allow Saul's servant to hear the conversation. Samuel may have entered into private conversation concerning the moral degradation of the people, their clamor for the king, the oppression of the heathen, the inability of the Israelites to stand against their foes, the necessity for a conversion of the people and the need for a leader who was devoted to God. Such discussions are best conducted in secret when they concern only two particular individuals.

## CHAPTER 9 IN REVIEW

1. Whose son was Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Of what tribe was Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was Saul's home? \_\_\_\_\_
4. For what was Saul searching when he met Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the old name for a prophet? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did Samuel know Saul was coming to meet him? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Was Samuel in his home when he anointed Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who was with Saul when he met Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
9. On what kind of occasion was Saul anointed? \_\_\_\_\_
10. In what part of the house were Samuel and Saul when they conversed? \_\_\_\_\_

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 10

- Vv. 1- 8 *Saul anointed by Samuel.* The priests were anointed (Leviticus 8:10). The prophets of Israel were also set aside to their office by this solemn ceremony (I Kings 19:16). The king was also to be set aside to his office by a divine service.
- Vv. 9-16 *Saul among the prophets.* This saying became a proverb in Israel, and is used often to express amazement at a person's being in unusual company: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (I Samuel 10:12 b). His meeting the band of prophets and the change of heart which came upon him had been foretold by Samuel when the two parted company. His change of heart was typical of those charismatic leaders upon whom God's spirit came as they entered into their offices.
- Vv. 17-27 *Saul acclaimed by the people.* Samuel called the people to a solemn assembly. He issued grave warnings to them about the nature of a king, even writing the manner of the kingdom in a book and laying it up before the Lord to be preserved for future generations (v. 25). He proceeded then to implement the establishment of the king in his office. In prayerful spirit, the people shouted: "God save the king" (v. 24 b). As in most political situations, there was not complete unanimity of opinion; but it was only the "worthless fellows" who opposed Saul's coronation (v. 27).

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The blessing of the spirit of God.* When God raised up judges to deliver His people, He sent His spirit upon

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them (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19). When the Spirit of God came upon Saul, he prophesied among the prophets. Although Christians today are not to expect miraculous manifestations of the Spirit of God in their lives, each Christian has the gift of the Holy Spirit to rest and abide in his life as he becomes an obedient child of God (Acts 2:38). God's Spirit bearing witness with his spirit enables him not only to begin a Christian life but to bring forth the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-26).

2. *The fellowship of the faithful.* Hardly any situation in everyday life finds a great number of people to be of unanimous opinion. The sharpest division of opinion and purpose occurs between good men and evil men. Those who are in a position of leadership in God's work ought not to grieve too much that there are wicked opponents of their good work, but they ought to give thanks daily for those who join with them in the good work they are doing. When Saul was anointed king, ". . . there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched" (10:26). Those whose hearts have been touched by God will uphold God's leaders today.

### *Saul Anointed by Samuel.* 10:1-8

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?

2 When thou art departed from me today, 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 Beth-el, 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 shall be turned into another man.

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

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 show thee what thou shalt do.

### 1. *When was Saul anointed king at first? 10:1*

On the morrow after the feast which Samuel and Saul celebrated together, Samuel called Saul from his bed early in the morning. As they went toward the edge of the town, Samuel told Saul to send the servant on ahead. Samuel then took a vial of oil and poured it upon Saul's head and kissed him. This anointing with oil was a symbol of endowment with the Spirit of God. Hitherto there had been no other anointing among the people of God than that of the priests and the sanctuary. Thus the monarchy was inaugurated as a divine institution. Now the king was set apart from the rest of the nation as "anointed of the Lord." The kiss bestowed by Samuel must have been only a mark of personal affection, for kissing is nowhere an act expressive of fealty to a king.

*2. Where was Rachel's sepulchre? 10:2*

According to Genesis 35:16, Rachel's sepulchre was on the way from Bethel to Bethlehem, only a short distance from the latter place. Jerome mentions a tradition of the tomb being located here. This traditional site is northwest of Bethlehem, and west of the road between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Saul's passing by the tomb is another indication of the fact that he was not anointed by Samuel in Ramah. If he were southwest of Bethlehem when he met Samuel, he would naturally pass near Rachel's tomb on the way to Gibeah in Benjamin. He would have no need to pass by Rachel's tomb down in Judah if he were in Ramah when he was anointed. To go from Ramah to Gibeah, he would pass only through the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.

*3. Where was Zelzah? 10:2 b*

The expression "in the border of Benjamin" does not make it impossible for Saul to be traveling from near Bethlehem to his home. The traditional site of Rachel's tomb is several miles away from the southern border of Benjamin. The mention of Zelzah helps us to understand what is meant by the mention of the border and would be superfluous otherwise since Rachel's tomb was unquestionably a well-known place. Zelzah must have been up between Rachel's tomb and the south border of Benjamin. It is otherwise an unknown location, but it should not be translated by the phrase "in great haste." It is undoubtedly a reference to a place and not a Hebrew word to describe Saul's manner of traveling.

*4. Where was the plain of Tabor? 10:3*

Elsewhere the word translated plain in this verse is translated with the word *oak*. It is simply mentioned here as one of the points on the homeward journey of Saul. The place is nowhere else mentioned, and nothing further can be determined concerning it other than it stood by the road leading from Rachel's tomb to Gibeah. It no

doubt meant a great deal to Saul as a point of reference, but it has little meaning for us today.

5. *What was the hill of God? 10:5*

This is not a high place of God, a place dedicated to God's worship, but rather a reference to Gibeah, the native place of Saul. Gibeah is sometimes called the high place of Saul (11:4; 15:34; II Samuel 21:6). It is called the hill of God here because of the sacrificial height which rose within or near the town (10:13), and which may have possibly have been more famous than any other such heights. Here the Philistines had a military post. It was a seat for the school of the prophets (II Kings 2:3).

6. *Who were the company of the prophets? 10:5 b*

"Bands," or "schools," of the prophets were the men of God. They were active in Israel from this time forward to the time of Amos, who said he was not a prophet nor a "son of the prophets" (Amos 7:14). No definite reason is assigned to their going in the direction opposite to Saul at this time, other than that they had been in the high place for worship.

7. *Did they use instrumental music in their worship? 10:5c*

These prophets had with them a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe, and a harp. As far back as we have any record of music in worship, we find reference to instruments connected with the worship. God has never prohibited the use of these instruments, and there is even indication of different kinds of music in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:19)—both accompanied and unaccompanied.

8. *What signs were given to Saul to substantiate his appointment? 10:2-7*

Saul was told that he would meet two men in the vicinity of Rachel's tomb, and these men would tell him of his father's concern for his safety. This would substantiate the seer's announcement concerning the animals and also

raise Saul's thoughts to concern for his new work. The second sign was his meeting three men going up to God to Bethel, carrying three kids, three loaves of bread, and a bottle of wine. Saul was told to accept their inquiry concerning his welfare and their proffered gift of two loaves. The third sign concerned Saul's meeting a group of prophets who were to be coming down from Gibeah, his home town. As Saul met these men, it was prophesied that he too would be filled with the spirit of God and begin to prophesy as did the prophets.

9. *Where was Gilgal?* 10:8

Gilgal was one of the towns on Samuel's circuit (7-16). The people of Israel had been circumcised there immediately after they had crossed Jordan into Canaan under Joshua's leadership (Joshua 4:19). The spot was located in the border of the tribe of Benjamin and would be found between Jericho and the Jordan river. Some evidence is seen for there being another location by this name in the hill country of Ephraim (Joshua 9:6; 10:15), but the former location seems more appropriate to the narrative here. No doubt Samuel wanted to meet Saul at Gilgal as he made his next appointed visit on his circuit.

*Saul Among the Prophets.* 10:9-16

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.

11 And it came to pass, when all that knew him before-time saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What *is* this *that* is come unto the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets?

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

13 And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

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* no where, 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.

#### 10. *What is the meaning of the proverb? 10:13*

Saul was known as the son of Kish, the man of Benjamin. He was evidently acquainted with rural life, and his father had sent him out to look for his lost she-asses. To find Saul among the prophets of God was an unexpected experience. Those who knew Saul were surprised to find him in such company. They asked, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Whenever we find someone in a group to which he is not accustomed, we often ask the same question. This is especially true when one is found in the company of those who are generally considered to be of a higher class. The proverb was evidently used this way in Israel in ancient times.

#### 11. *Who was Saul's uncle? 10:14*

Saul was introduced as the son of Kish (9:1), the son of Abiel (14:51). Abner became Saul's captain, and they were very closely associated throughout the reign of Saul. This constant association would indicate that they might have been reared in the same community. Such a condition would point to Ner's being the uncle mentioned in this account of Saul's return to his home.

12. *Why was Saul's uncle anxious to know what Samuel said? 10:15 b*

Here is an indication of how the people did not let any of Samuel's words "fall to the ground" (3:19). Whatever Samuel had to say was of interest to the people of Israel. It would be hard to imagine that Ner would have any idea that his nephew would be chosen king. His inquiry undoubtedly was one of general curiosity and wholesome interest in any pronouncement of the man of God. Saul did not mention anything about his being anointed king of Israel or his relationship to the kingdom which the people were wanting to see established. The latest developments along the line of setting up the monarchy may have been a part of the uncle's interest; but Saul did not divulge what had happened to him in this respect. Josephus indicates that Saul kept this secret because he did not want to arouse unbelief or envy. Others believe that it was probably because of his unambitious humility.

*Saul Acclaimed by the People. 10:17-27*

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.

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 inquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

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.

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.

26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

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

13. *Where was Saul anointed a second time? 10:17-27*

Saul was anointed publicly at Mizpeh. It is quite appropriate that the anointing take place here, because it was at Mizpeh that the Israelites repented and defeated the Philistines. It was here also that the judges had met to make many decisions and to worship. Here at Mizpeh Saul was chosen by lot. First the tribe from among the twelve tribes was selected, then the family from within the selected tribe, the household within the family, and finally the man from within the household. God thus guided them in the selection. When Saul was singled out, he hid

from the people because of his modesty. Had he only kept this attitude, his affairs would have had a different ending.

14. *Who was Matri? 10:21*

Matri is a Hebrew name meaning Rainy. He was evidently a Benjaminite and head of the family to which Saul, the king of Israel, belonged. The mention here is the only mention in the Scripture, but this would place him considerably earlier than 1020 B.C. The fact that he was so unimportant has caused his name to drop out of the genealogies. First Chronicles gives evidence that many of the genealogical lines may be incomplete. As has been generally concluded before, the genealogies in the Scriptures list only the important people in most cases.

15. *Why did Saul hide? 10:22*

Saul spoke very humbly of himself when he first met Samuel. He said that he was a member of the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest in all the land. He also said that his family was the least of all the families within this tribe (9:21). The task of reigning over the people may have seemed overwhelming to him. In his humility he ran and hid. Without accusing Saul of mistrusting God, we can believe that he was not willing to step out and take God at His word. He need not trust in his own strength alone, and this reluctance must have been largely born out of humility.

16. *How could Samuel say that God had chosen Saul?*  
10:24

God had told Samuel that He would send a man to him to be anointed king. God indicated that the man was Saul as he came to Samuel seeking information about his lost animals (9:17). In this way God had chosen Saul and sent him to Samuel. The people were the ones who were anxious to have a king, yet God had chosen the man to fill the office. He met the qualifications given in the Law (Deuteronomy 17:14-20), and in addition he was bigger

than any other man in all the land. He made a striking appearance and was a popular choice.

17. *What was the meaning of the shout? 10:24*

In the Authorized Version, the phrase is translated: "God save the king." The American Standard Version has this: "Long live the king." The literal meaning of the original language is as follows: "Let the king live." It is typical English usage to make the phrase to be the equivalent of the idiom, "God save the king." It is really a prayer that the king might enjoy long life and prosper as the leader of God's people. By this shout the people acclaim Saul as their ruler and pledge their allegiance to him.

18. *What opposition did Saul have? 10:27*

None seemed to oppose the monarchy on the grounds that it was against God's will. The people had rejected God's will. The people had rejected God, but in His mercy He led them to select and appoint an acceptable ruler. As in every major crowd, there were some who were unwilling to see Saul in the office of king. They are described as worthless fellows, sons of Belial. Satan was at work even in the early days of the monarchy. The fact that these evil men did not bring presents to Saul indicates that the other people did bring tokens of their love and esteem. Some of their presents may have been to support him through the critical years of the infancy of the monarchy.

## CHAPTER 10 IN REVIEW

1. With what was Saul anointed? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What mark of personal affection did Samuel bestow on Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
3. By what memorial did Samuel tell Saul he would meet two young men? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What kind of musical instruments did they have? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How many men going up to Bethel was Saul to see? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What items of offering were they to have? \_\_\_\_\_
7. To what town was Saul to go to meet Samuel again? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what unusual activity was Saul to participate after God's spirit came upon him? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who was Saul's uncle? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where was Saul anointed a second time? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 11

- Vv. 1-3 *Jabesh-gilead attacked.* Israel was seldom free from oppression and opposition. This may have been the meaning of the spies who said, "The land, . . . , is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof" (Numbers 13:32). Many of the attacks came from neighbors nearby, and the Ammonite people were such neighbors.
- Vv. 4-11 *Jabesh-gilead delivered.* The Spirit of God came upon Saul, and he took immediate steps to rescue the Trans-jordan residents of Jabesh-gilead from the clutches of their attackers. His kindness on their behalf made them his lifelong friends.
- Vv. 12-25 *The kingship of Saul renewed.* Samuel called the people to an assembly at Gilgal. Saul was again presented to the people, and some called for the punishment of those who had rejected the kingship of Saul when he was first crowned king. Saul's magnanimity prevailed, and the worthless fellows who had opposed him at the first were spared. This happy solution to the situation caused all Israel to return to their homes with joy.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Christian living is never easy.* The Israelites may have thought that their life in the promised land of Palestine would be without hardship. It was, indeed, often described as a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8). The land, however, was a political football; and from the south the Egyptians often attacked it. From the north came the Assyrians. From the east came the Ammonites and Moabites. Besides these hostile peoples, there were the Edomites, Amalekites, and Philistines. These are typical of the enemies of Christians—the materialists, secularists, atheists, and hedonists.
2. "*There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*" (Proverbs 18:24 b). When the tribes of Israel demanded that the men of Benjamin deliver up the criminals of Gibeah, the Benjaminites refused (Judges 20:13). As a result, a civil war was fought; and Benjamin was nearly destroyed. The remnant of the men of Benjamin found wives in Jabesh-gilead (Judges 21:14). We are left to wonder if Saul might have been descended from one of these. At any rate, he moved swiftly to deliver the inhabitants of the city in his day. As a result, these people were ever after indebted to him. They showed him the final kindness of taking his gibbeted body from the walls of Beth-shean (I Samuel 31:11-13). Christians today should be grateful for their lifelong friends in the church and especially thankful that they can sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus."

Samuel's Retirement from the Judgeship, 11:1—12:25.

#### *Jabesh-gilead Attacked.* 11:1-3

Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

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.

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.

1. *Who was Nabash? 11:1*

Nahash was the king of the Ammonites. The Ammonites were descendants of the younger daughter of Lot by Lot himself (Genesis 19:38). These people settled in the land east of the Jordan near the north end of the Dead Sea. They became a very idolatrous people and worshiped a false god named Molech. Although the people of Israel had been told not to fight against them when they came out of Egyptian bondage, these people were quite often among Israel's warring neighbors and enemies (Judges 11:12).

2. *Where was Jabesh-gilead? 11:1 b*

Jabesh-gilead was an Israelite town east of the Jordan river and north of the Jabbok river. It was an important town in Gilead, somewhat closer to the Sea of Galilee than to the Dead Sea. Wives had been found among the citizens of Jabesh-gilead for the men of Benjamin after the other tribes had nearly exterminated the Benjamites (Judges 21:8-15). It may have been that some of Saul's ancestors were citizens of this community.

3. *Why would Nabash's cruelty be a reproach on Israel? 11:2*

For all the men of one city to be maimed in such a terrible way would be a sign of reproach to any people. They would be looked upon as rather helpless cripples. The fact that an enemy had been able to do this to them would also indicate that they were weak and unable to

defend themselves. The loss of the right eyes of all the men in the town would be a terrible price to pay for peace. No honorable group of people would allow such a penalty to be exacted from them. It would be quite a victory for Nahash if he were able to exact this ransom from the men of Jabesh-gilead, but a reproach on Israel.

*Jabesh-gilead Delivered.* 11:4-11

4 Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

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.

6 And the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

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.

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

9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, Tomorrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and showed *it* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

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.

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.

4. *Why did Saul return to the farm? 11:5*

There was no kingdom as such; that is, there was no army, no court, no palace. Saul again demonstrates a very wholesome attitude inasmuch as he was content to return to his father's house and to his former way of life. When he heard of the oppression of the Ammonites, his anger was aroused; and it is even connected with the Spirit of God, inasmuch as he was rightly indignant that such an act was to be committed. He sent word to Nahash, as the custom of war would be; but it would further take Nahash off his guard, making it possible for the Israelites to attack unawares while the enemy was lax with its night guard.

5. *In what way did the Spirit of God come upon Saul?*  
11:6

Nothing is said about the manner in which the Holy Spirit came upon Saul. On the Day of Pentecost the coming of the Spirit was attended by certain outward signs which were visible and audible (Acts 2:3, 4). God's spirit came upon the judges throughout their three-hundred-year history, but nothing is said in any of their cases to indicate that there were such manifestations to be tested by the senses. Generally, it was stated that "the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him (Judges 14:6). The coming of the Spirit in such a case enabled Samson to perform feats of unusual strength. In the case of Saul it appears that God's spirit helped him to have the courage he needed to take the necessary action. The spirit of God incited him to such righteous indignation that he determined not to let the king of the Ammonites go unpunished for his threatened cruelty.

6. *Why did Saul dissect his oxen? 11:7*

By sending a piece of his oxen to each of the twelve tribes of Israel, Saul demonstrated in a dramatic way that their help was needed in the war against Nahash. He told them that if they did not come forth to fight with him and Samuel against Nahash, their oxen might well be hewn into pieces by the enemy. It was in this way that the Levite had called all Israel as one man to punish the sinners of Gibeah after they had misused and killed his concubine (Judges 19:29, 30). The dramatic action served its purpose in Saul's case, and the fear of the Lord came upon the people. They came out to battle with a unified purpose.

7. *Where was Bezek? 11:8*

Bezek was one of the first towns conquered by the Israelites after the death of Joshua (Judges 1:4). The location is indefinite, but it must have been near the border of Benjamin and Judah. This was a good place for the men of Israel to meet before they crossed over the Jordan to attack Nahash.

8. *Why was a difference made between Israel and Judah? 11:8*

Judah had been given the preeminence by his father Jacob (Genesis 49:8-12). Judah had been the leader as the people marched through the wilderness under Moses' guidance. In many ways he was always separate from the rest of the people of Israel. Saul's numbering revealed that there were 30,000 men of war ready to go up to battle out of Judah. The other eleven tribes totaled only 300,000. Judah had been the largest tribe in both the numberings in Moses' day (Numbers 1 and 26). Since there were only 330,000 between the two at this time, only one-half of Israel's fighting force must have been involved in this campaign. At the first numbering in the wilderness, there were 603,550 men twenty years of age and over, thus able to go to war (Numbers 1). At the second numbering

there were 601,730 (Numbers 26). The fact that there is a division made between Judah and the rest of Israel is not an indication of this book's being written after the schism in the days of Jeroboam (I Kings 12).

9. *Why did the men of Jabesh-gilead send a message to Nahash? 11:10*

The men of Jabesh-gilead said that they would come out to Nahash on the following day. They indicated by this that they were coming out in order that he might put out their right eyes. Such a message of seeming surrender would throw the king off his guard and make him less watchful. It would also give the necessary time for Saul's army to make a forced march all night and come upon the Ammonites by surprise.

10. *What was Saul's strategy? 11:11 .*

Saul divided his people into three companies. They would thus be able to attack from both sides of the city and from the front or the rear. Since he came on them in the morning watch, it was before the heat of the day when the Ammonites were expecting the men of Jabesh-gilead to surrender. Such strategy took the Ammonites completely by surprise. They were separated from each other and could not join forces to do battle. The victory was complete for the men of Saul.

*The Kingship of Saul Renewed. 11:12-15*

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.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for today 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.

*11. How did Saul demonstrate his wisdom? 11:12, 13*

After the rout of the Ammonites, many of the people of Israel thought they should punish those evil men who had opposed Saul's becoming king. Saul had now demonstrated that he was an able military leader and the populace thought that those who distrusted him should not be allowed to continue their propaganda against him. Saul was very wise in not seeking vengeance. He decreed that there would not be any man put to death in Israel during the time of victory celebration. He would do nothing to mar the complete victory which belonged to the people. Saul was also very wise in attributing the victory to the power of the Lord. He said it was the Lord who had wrought salvation in Israel.

*12. In what sense was the kingdom renewed? 11:14*

Samuel called the people to go again to Gilgal. He wanted to emphasize the fact that the kingdom was now firmly established. Saul had proved himself to be a capable leader, and Samuel thought it was wise that the people reaffirm their allegiance to the new king. The place that he chose was very significant. At this place the covenant of circumcision had been renewed by the people of Israel when they crossed the Jordan under Joshua (Joshua 5:1-9). It was necessary to renew the kingdom because it was much firmer after the united effort against the Ammonites than it had been at any previous time. Now, too, the people of Israel were ready to give thanks for the victory and the many blessings they had received from God's hand.

*13. Why did they offer sacrifices at Gilgal? 11:15*

The sacrifices mentioned here are peace offerings. In a sense they were thank offerings and were usually connected with a sacrificial meal. People offered these on

joyous occasions, for they were feasts of rejoicing. Israel had many things for which to be thankful, and it was quite appropriate that they offer such sacrifices. Samuel again demonstrates that he is serving as a priest in leading the people to make such offerings.

## CHAPTER 11 IN REVIEW

1. Who was the king of the Ammonites who died? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What town of Israelites did the Ammonites attack? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In what area was the town located? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What influence came to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What animal did Saul dissect and distribute? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did Israel assemble to go to battle? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many men of Israel went to fight? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many men of Judah went to battle? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who won the battle? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where did Israel meet for a sacrifice? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 12

- Vv. 1- 5 *Samuel reviews his career.* Although Samuel had many more years of service to give to his people, they had rejected him as being their most prominent leader. They had demanded and received a king. Samuel took advantage of an opportunity to rehearse his manner of life among them. It is a man of sterling character who can say, “. . . ye have not found ought in my hand” (v. 5).
- Vv. 6-15 *Israel's history reviewed.* While Samuel was speaking to the people, he reminded them of their heritage. God had been with them throughout many thrilling experiences. In no

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

case had they found God to be unfaithful to them. They had been unfaithful to God.

Vv. 16-25 *Samuel rebukes the people.* God worked a wonder among the people that caused them to tremble. They realized that they had been ungrateful to God and to His chosen servant, Samuel. As they repented, they asked Samuel to pray for them; and the unswerving love of Samuel for his people prompted him to reply that he would without fail remember them in prayer.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The blessing of good leaders.* Debates rage over the question as to whether times make men or men make times. Great leaders are demanded in perilous times. Opportunities and occasions may bring out the best in great men. In this passage of scripture, however, the emphasis is laid on the true value of faultless leaders. Samuel was one of these, and his career had been a blessing to his people.
2. *The challenge of a rich heritage.* People dare not rest on their laurels. To do so is to decay. They can take courage from what has been accomplished. Israel should have done this. God had amply demonstrated that He was with them. This fact should have encouraged them to remain faithful to God.
3. *The power of prayer.* When the people asked Samuel to pray for them, Samuel replied that it would have been a sin against God for him to cease to pray for them. Regardless of their attitudes toward him, Samuel ever had the best interests of his people at heart. Nothing could cause him to stop praying for them. Good leaders of God's people must always be in prayer for God's blessings to be upon both people and their leaders (I Timothy 2:2).

*Samuel Reviews His Career. 12:1-5*

And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

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

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.

4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand.

5 And he said unto them, The Lord *is* witness against you, and his anointed *is* witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness.

*1. How could Samuel speak to all Israel? 12:1*

Samuel could not find a place where all the millions of Israelites could gather. His message must have been given to leaders from various tribes. His message would then be carried back to the many thousands in each tribe. On occasions great numbers did gather at one place. They were expected to come to the Tabernacle on the three annual feast days. Samuel's address may have been given at one of these times.

*2. What was Samuel's appearance? 12:2*

Samuel describes himself as being gray-haired. He must have been a venerable man. His appearance would have commanded respect. The dignity that goes with a venerable, silver-thatched man was his; and in addition his godly life would have won him the admiration of all good men.

3. *Was Samuel without fault? 12:3*

Samuel asked a series of questions which, perhaps purposely, are cast in rhythmical form with assonance at the end of each question in the Hebrew forms. These are the questions:

1. Whose ox have I taken?
2. Whose ass have I taken?
3. Whom have I oppressed?
4. Whom have I maltreated?
5. From whose hand have I taken a gift that I might blind mine eyes with it?

The tendency of the prophets to cast their oracles in poetic form is illustrated elsewhere. The questions asked by Samuel all refer to judicial honesty which has always been rare in the East. Samuel was not without sin, but his work was irreproachable.

4. *Who was the Lord's anointed? 12:5*

The king was the Lord's anointed. Samuel himself had anointed Saul to be king, and Samuel knew that Saul was not taking over the leadership in Israel because he found fault with Samuel's judgeship. God Himself could testify to the good work of Samuel, and the people were impressed with the sacred testimony which they were bearing to him on this occasion.

*Israel's History Reviewed. 12:6-15*

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.

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 forgat 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.

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.

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.

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.

5. *Why did Samuel rehearse Israel's history? 12:6-9*

History is a great teacher. It has been facetiously said that the only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn from history. Many people forget their past history and make the same mistakes that their forefathers made. Those who are wise will look into their past and see mistakes which have been made. They will profit by good examples which have been set for them. In review-

ing their history they learn how to live in the present and to lay plans for the future. Samuel's use of Israel's history was of such nature as to remind them that their forefathers turned their backs on God. God sold them into the hand of such people as Sisera and into the hand of the Philistines, as He did in the days of Samson. When Israel was reminded of these things, they would learn from the experiences.

6. *When had Israel been delivered into the hand of the king of Moab? 12:9*

The Moabites were descendants of Lot's older daughter by Lot himself. Israel had only recently been engaged in a war with the Ammonites, descendants of Lot by his younger daughter (11:1). The Moabites had afflicted Israel in the days of Ehud, a judge from the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 3:12). Since Saul, their new king, was from Benjamin, this reminder of how they were oppressed in the days of a Benjamite judge would be a particularly helpful lesson to the Israelites.

7. *Who was Bedan? 12:11*

Bedan is a name of one of Israel's former leaders. His name is not given in this form in any of the canonical history. Jerubbaal is another name for Gideon. Jephthah is a later judge in the history of Israel. Since Bedan occurs between the two names, it is generally concluded that this is another name for Barak. Barak had helped Deborah in their war against Sisera (Judges 4:6). The earlier mention of Sisera by Samuel in this passage lends credence to the belief that this is a reference to Barak.

8. *What additional reason does Samuel give for their asking for a king? 12:12*

The reason emphasized the most by the Israelites was that they wanted to be like all the other nations. They had excused themselves by saying that Samuel was old and that his sons were not following in his good ways.

The ascendancy of Nahash to a place of prominence on Israel's eastern border evidently aggravated their request for a king. Nahash threatened the national security of the people. They had this added reason for asking for a military and political leader under whose authority they might unite.

9. *What was the condition of their future prosperity?*  
12:14, 15

Samuel solemnly threatened the people that they would prosper only if they obeyed God, served Him, and feared Him. God's voice would be made known to them through those prophets who spoke for God. Israel already had many ordinances and statutes to keep as they served God in regular worship. Their fear of the Lord would be reverence for Him and His appointments. Samuel warned them that if they rebelled against the commandments their national existence would be threatened. The king was not exempt from these conditions. He was another man in the sight of God and would be subject to the same frailties as the others. He would be expected to fear God, serve Him, and obey His voice.

*Samuel Rebukes the People.* 12:16-25

16 Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes.

17 *Is it* not wheat harvest today? 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.

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.

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.

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:

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.

10. *Why did Samuel ask for a sign? 12:16-18*

Miracles were performed throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament in order to attest either the message or the messenger. When a truth pronounced by a prophet was in doubt, God often vindicated it by a sign. On other occasions a sign was given to authenticate a messenger of God. As Samuel was bidding farewell to his people, he asked them to stand still and see the great thing which the Lord would do for them.

11. *What was the effect of the sign? 12:17, 18*

Very little rain fell in Palestine during harvest time. Seasons were marked by dry periods and wet periods. The temperature did not vary a great deal. Rain falling in harvest time would be very unusual. The people realized this. The thunder they heard and the rain that fell caused the people to fear the Lord greatly. They also stood in awe and reverence of Samuel.

12. *Why did the people think that they would die?* 12:19

A great number of the people had died when they had shown improper respect for the Ark as it was brought back to Beth-shemesh (6:19). When Manoah saw the angel of the Lord, he said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (Judges 13:22). One of man's natural reactions upon the realization of his own guilt and the complete holiness of God is to realize that sin cannot abide in the presence of God. Since he is a sinner, he wonders that he is able to stand in God's presence (Psalm 24:3). As the Israelites realized their sinful nature they believed that they would perish in the presence of the Holy God.

13. *Why did Samuel reassure the people?* 12:20-22

God will not reject the broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). The people of Israel had repented completely of their iniquity. They admitted that they had the wrong motives for asking for a king. Samuel sensed this repentant spirit and reassured the people that God would pardon them. Throughout the ages God had not forsaken His chosen people. He had threatened to destroy them in the days of Moses when they made a golden calf and Moses had interceded for them asking God to blot his name out of the book of life, but to spare the people of Israel (Exodus 32:32). Moses prayed that God would not forget His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (32:13). God did not forget His covenant, and Samuel reassured the Israelites that the Lord would not forsake His people.

14. *Why would it be a sin to cease praying for them?*

12:23

Samuel would have demonstrated a reprehensible degree of selfishness if he had prayed only because he was an official. Once he was not serving as a judge, he assured the people that he would be faithful in remembering them in prayer. He would be concerned for them as long as he

lived. In addition to praying for them, he would continue to teach them as a faithful prophet. Samuel stands as a good example for a model preacher.

15. *How is this a tribute to Samuel?*

Every local minister could study Samuel's Farewell Address with profit. Every leader of any congregation in quest of a preacher might well use him as an example. This is the sermon outline which has been suggested by this chapter:

### THE IDEAL PREACHER

#### I. Blameless in character (Vv. 1-5)

##### A. He speaks concretely of besetting sins

1. He knows well the pitfalls
2. He knows the misdeeds of his own ministerial sons, as well as those of Eli's boys

##### B. He has not otherwise abused the powers

1. He has never yielded to the lure of money
2. He doesn't have to assure his friends that he has never stolen any man's wife, or dallied with any woman's affections

##### C. He is free from the following:

1. Ambition
2. Greed
3. Lust

#### II. Gifted as a teacher (Vv. 6-18)

##### A. The ideal preacher teaches all day

1. Cherishes the ideal of a teaching
2. Like Ezra, he set his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances

##### B. He wants these things for his hearers:

1. To get every hearer right with God

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2. To lead everyone in doing the will of the Most High

C. His sermon is a model

1. He uses facts, facts, facts

2. He makes clear what they mean

3. He appeals to the head and to the heart

D. He speaks with authority—"Thus saith the Lord"  
*ill.* George Whitefield, upon being asked for a copy of the sermon that had made such an impact, said that he would upon one condition—the hearer and inquirer must supply the lightning and thunder that had driven home the message of the hour.

III. Mighty in prayer (Vv. 19-25)

A. He was the son of a woman who prayed and the pupil of a man who interceded

1. He relied chiefly on prayer

2. He had also taught the most spiritual-minded of them to pray

3. Many are fearful of the future, but not a true man of God

B. In the hour of dread concern about the unknown morrow the eyes of those deluded mortals were opened

1. They could see their sin

2.. They understood why their asking for a king made Samuel grieve

### Conclusion

1. A test of the minister's work is in seeing how many of them seek him out to ask for prayer

2. The secret lies largely in learning to pray

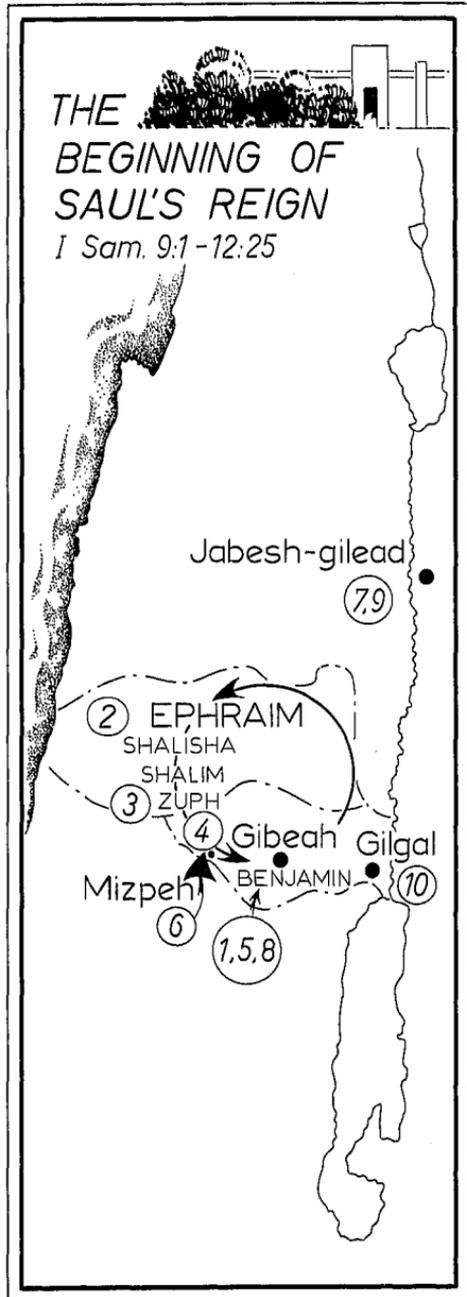
3. This is the ideal-blameless in character, gifted in teaching, mighty in prayer!

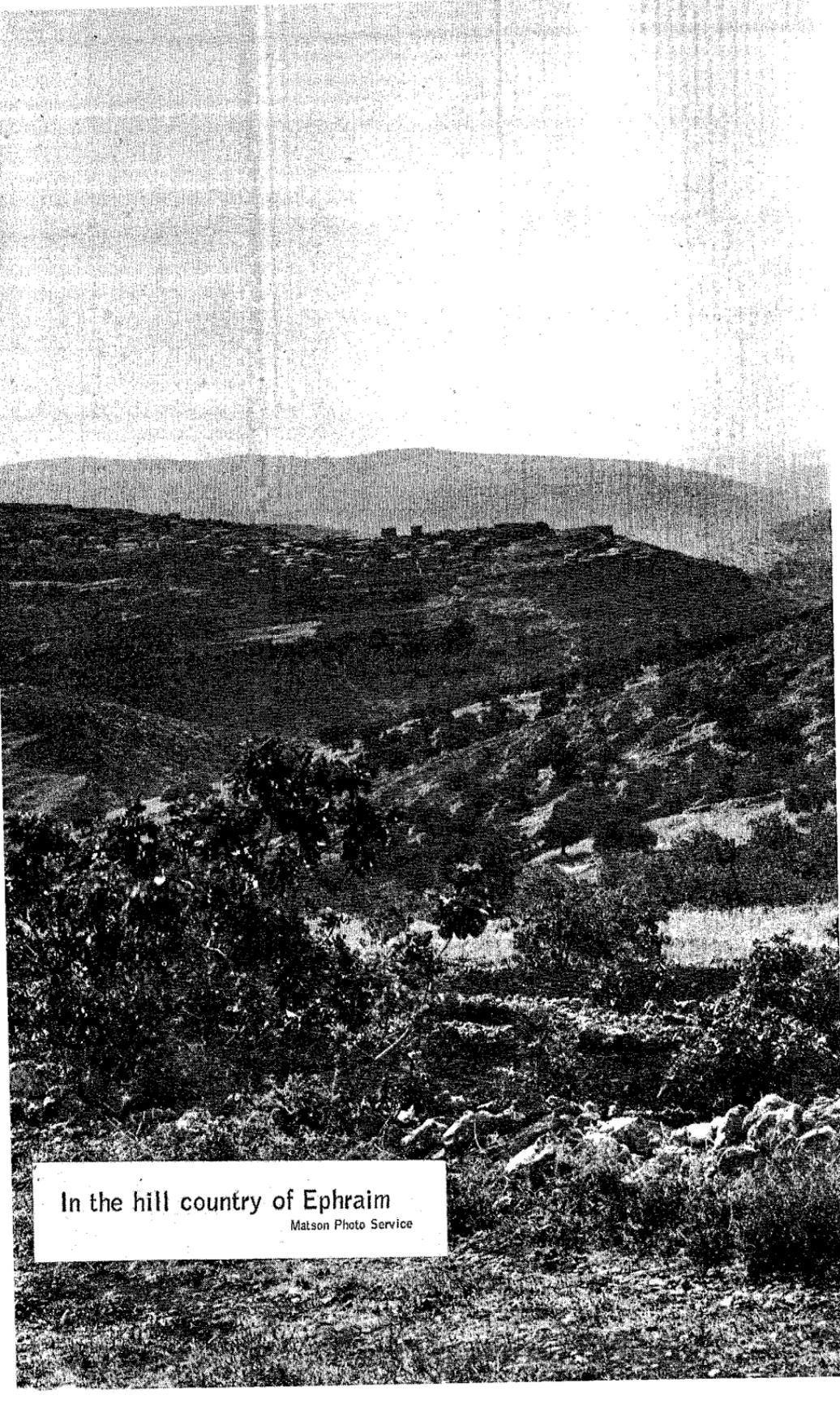
STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 12 IN REVIEW

1. How many questions did Samuel ask the Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What color was Samuel's hair when he stood before them? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What two leaders did Samuel mention as leading Israel out of Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is another name for Jerub-baal? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is another name for Bedan? \_\_\_\_\_
6. The rise of what king had prompted Israel to ask for a king? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What three things was Israel to do in order to receive God's blessings? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What sign did Samuel call for to substantiate his word? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What time of year was it? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What did they ask Samuel to continue to do for them? \_\_\_\_\_

**THE BEGINNING  
OF SAUL'S REIGN**  
I Samuel 9:1 - 12:25

1. Gibeah  
—Saul sent to seek asses;  
9:1-3
2. Ephraim, and lands of  
Shalishah and Shaalim;  
—seeking asses; 9:4
3. Land of Zuph  
—Meeting with Samuel,  
and anointing of Saul;  
9:5-8
4. Between Zuph and Gibeah  
—Saul meets three groups  
of men.  
—fulfilling Samuel's  
prophecies; 10:9-13.
5. Gibeah  
—Saul is questioned by his  
uncle; 10:14-16
6. Mizpah  
—Saul publicly proclaimed  
king; 10:17-27
7. Jabesh-Gilead  
—Attack by Nahash the  
Ammonite; 11:1-5
8. Gibeah  
—Saul gathers army;  
11:6-10
9. Jabesh-Gilead  
—Saul defeats Ammon;  
11:11-13
10. Gilgal  
—Samuel's address to  
Israel; 11:14—12:25





In the hill country of Ephraim

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PART TWO

THE  
REIGN  
OF SAUL

13:1—31:13

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 13

- Vv. 1- 4 *Saul's campaign against the Philistines.* The initial victory over the Ammonites at Jabesh-gilead must have given the Israelites courage to go against their chief oppressors, the Philistines. Jonathan won the first battle, and the Philistines were infuriated.
- Vv. 5- 7 *The counter-attack of the Philistines.* The weapons of war used by the Philistines indicate that they enjoyed a rather highly developed civilization. To this point in history, we know of Israel having only weapons for foot soldiers, there being no references of their use of chariots and other military equipment. At this particular time, they were largely subjugated by the Philistines and had hardly any weapons at all.
- Vv. 8-10 *Saul's presumptuous sacrifice.* Samuel had made arrangements to meet Saul at Gilgal and to lead the people in a sacrifice to God. Saul tarried a minimum amount of time and then took things into his own hand. He had no right to do this. He was not a priest in any sense of the word. He committed a grave sin.
- Vv. 11-16 *Samuel's rebuke of Saul.* Once again it was Samuel's task to pronounce judgment against Israel's leader. As he had received a message of doom to pronounce against Eli, he now pronounces God's judgment against Saul, Israel's first king.
- Vv. 17-23 *The battle pitched.* The Philistine policy was to divide their host and attack the two companies of Israelites. Their superiority in equipment is brought out in the fact. ". . . that

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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" (v. 22).

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *A minimum is not enough in God's service.* It is evident from the text that Saul waited until the seventh day for the arrival of Samuel. He did not wait until the seventh day was completed. He was not patient in waiting for God's servant to perform his part of the covenant. His failure to be thorough brought the announcement that his dynasty would not be long-lived.
2. *The folly of trusting in man's strength.* The history of Israel is filled with examples of God's people going out to battle against their enemies with overwhelming odds in favor of their foes. In many of these instances they were nonetheless victorious. When they trusted in God, they found that they had nothing to fear.

### THE REIGN OF SAUL. 13:1—31:13

The early days of Saul's reign, 13:1—14:52.

#### *Saul's Campaign Against the Philistines, 13:1-4*

Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

2 Saul chose him three thousand *men* of Israel; *whereof* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

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.

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.

1. *How old was Saul when he began to reign? 13:1*

Saul already had a son Jonathan who commanded a division of the army. Saul himself was hardly less than forty years of age, and Jonathan hardly less than twenty. Israelites did not go to war until they were twenty (Numbers 1:3). No number is in the Hebrew text in the first part of this verse, and the translation in the authorized version is a bit awkward. It is hard to understand the impact of such a statement as is made here. All we learn from it is that he reigned one year and then he reigned another year. The normal way of introducing a king was to give his age and then to tell how long he reigned (II Kings 15:1-5). We are left to wonder if this is the intention of the author here.

2. *What was the purpose of the 3,000 men chosen by Saul? 13:2*

Saul was attempting to check the advance of the Philistines. He took the advance position himself in Michmash, a prominent overlook in the mountains of Ephraim near Beth-el. Beth-el was the famous spot where Jacob had seen a vision of the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder set up on the earth (Genesis 28:10-22). A thousand men were with Jonathan back in Gibeah, the home of Saul. Saul evidently felt that it was not necessary to keep the 330,000 men away from their homes and normal occupations. He sent the rest of the army home and manned the outposts with only a few soldiers.

3. *Where was Michmash? 13:2 b*

Michmash is the present village of *Mukbmas*. The village is in ruins and lies on the northern ridge of the *Wady Suweinit*. Although it is only some ten miles north

## FIRST SAMUEL

of Jerusalem, it is difficult to reach and takes a person some three hours and a half to make the journey on foot. Beth-el is northwest of this point, and it is some two hours' journey away by the road if one were to walk. The mountain of Beth-el cannot be identified exactly. Beth-el itself was located on a very high ground, but the location is surrounded by heights.

### 4. *Why did Jonathan make his attack? 13:3*

Jonathan was closer to the garrison which the Philistines kept in Gibeah. Jonathan was a very brave man and won the respect and admiration of all the Israelites by his daring exploits. By winning this initial skirmish, Jonathan gave courage to the rest of the people. Saul took advantage of the situation and publicized the victory widely.

### *The Counter-attack of the Philistines. 13:5-7*

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 seashore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven.

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.

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.

### 5. *Why were the people so alarmed? 13:6*

The armies of Israel were caught in a trap. The Philistines came against them with their 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and innumerable foot soldiers. Caves, thickets, rocks, high places, and pits afforded the people the only safety. Some of them even went across the Jordan into

the land of Gilead in order to get as far away from Philistia as possible.

6. *Why did Saul go to Gilgal? 13:7*

Gilgal was on the very eastern border of western Israel. It was the farthest rallying point from Philistia. In addition to being rather inaccessible to the Philistines, the spot was hallowed by the many events which had transpired here in Israel's earlier history. Moreover, Samuel had told Saul that he would meet him there when Saul was anointed by Samuel (10:8).

*Saul's Presumptuous Sacrifice. 13:8-10*

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.

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

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.

7. *What was Saul's first act of disobedience? 13:8-14*

Samuel had made an appointment with Saul when Saul was anointed king (10:8). It was Samuel's intention that Saul should call the people together at Gilgal again and keep them there until he could arrive. Saul impatiently took matters into his own hand and sinned greatly by offering sacrifice himself. Since he was not a priest, he was openly disobeying the Law of God. At that time, Samuel told Saul that there would be one chosen who would obey God. There was no personal conflict between the two men other than that which comes when God's representative is treated disrespectfully. Saul's refusal to heed Samuel's injunctions was tantamount to rejecting the commands of God.

*Samuel's Rebuke of Saul.* 13:11-16

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

8. *What was the purpose of the offering?* 13:12

No doubt the Israelites were wanting to beseech God for His help in the battle. Saul said that he had not made supplication unto the Lord. The Hebrew original gives the idea of entreating the face of the Lord. Saul may have been wanting to know the will of the Lord with regard to this battle. No doubt it was the custom of these people to make a sacrifice before they went into battle. Before Jephthah went into battle he vowed a vow to the Lord (Judges 11:30, 31).

*9. In what way had Saul done foolishly? 13:13*

It was not wrong to make a sacrifice. Saul had sinned in that he had not kept the commandment of the Lord. Samuel had told Saul to wait until he came to him before he made a sacrifice (10:8). To disobey the commandment of the prophet, was to disobey the commandment of the Lord. Saul had sinned against God. As a result the kingdom was not to be longlived.

*10. What is the meaning of "after his own heart"? 13:14*

Saul had been a very popular choice. He was in effect a man after the peoples' hearts. Saul had failed. He had rationalized and depended upon his own strength in such a way as to make him unacceptable to God. The man who was to be after God's own heart was David. David is described in this way in Acts 15:22. David was not perfect; when he sinned he repented. He was more completely devoted to God and was thus a man after God's own heart.

*11. Why did Samuel go to Gibeah? 13:15*

Gibeah was a well-known assembly place for the people. In addition, it was Saul's home. Jonathan had stayed with the garrison here and made the first attack against the Philistines. It was a high place, a place where Samuel could offer an acceptable sacrifice to God.

*12. Why did Saul return with such a small army? 13:15 b*

Saul had not accomplished his avowed purpose in sacrificing. He had said that he thought the people would be scattered from him and for this reason had forced himself in offering a burnt offering. When he was at Michmash, he had 2,000 men with him. Jonathan had another 1,000 with him. Now Saul had only 600. The people themselves must have revolted against Saul's impertinence in offering a whole burnt offering. They must have known of the judgment of Samuel and were unwilling to follow Saul.

*The Battle Pinched. 13:17-23*

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* Beth-horon: and another company turned *to* the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

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:

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.

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.

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.

23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

*13. Where was Beth-horon? 13:18*

Two towns bear the name of Beth-horon. One is known as the "upper," and the other "nether" (Joshua 16:3, 5; I Chronicles 7:24; II Chronicles 8:5). They lie off the road from Gibeon to Azekah (Joshua 10:10, 11) on the way to the Philistine plain. These locations lay on the boundary lines between Benjamin and Ephraim (Joshua 16:3, 5; 18:13, 14). They were assigned to Ephraim and given to the Kohathites as Levitical cities (Joshua 21:22). Reference is made to an enlargement of these locations in later Israelite history (I Chronicles 7:24). The building referred to was not the establishment, but the rebuilding and enlarging. Sherah was no doubt an heiress who had

received these places as her inheritance. The road running between the two Beth-horons is one of the roughest and steepest in Palestine, but is still used as the road from the coast. In effect, the road is a key to the country. The Philistines naturally used this road as an access against Israel.

14. *What had become of the smiths? 13:19*

The Philistines had made it illegal for a blacksmith to practice his art. Many of them had no doubt been taken out of the country. Some may have been slain. The Philistines forced an Israelite to go down into their country to sharpen his plowshare and the coulter of his plow. Even his ax and his mattock had to be sharpened by the Philistine lords. The only tool left for the Israelite to use was a file. He could use this instrument to keep an edge on his mattocks, coulters, pitchforks, axes, and goads. When the edge was worn away, however, he had to depend upon his captors to repair his tools and implements. This kind of regulation would keep an Israelite from forging swords and spears.

15. *How were Saul's men armed? 13:22*

Only meager implements were in the possession of the Israelites. They could defend themselves only with such tools as were normally used in peaceful pursuits. Some of them probably had axes; others used goads and forks. Only Saul and Jonathan were equipped with normal weapons. These verses describe a people that are completely beaten. It explains why the loss of the Ark was such a catastrophe and indicates how low Israel had been brought by the Philistines. As a matter of fact, this period in Israel's history is known as the "captivity of the land" (Judges 18:30). This condition prevailed all the time until Saul began to win some decisive and permanent victories. The victories were not complete in the days of David, and it was left to him to be a man of war and firmly establish the Israelite kingdom in Palestine.

FIRST SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 13 IN REVIEW

1. How old was Saul when he began to reign? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many men did Saul take into battle? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many were with Jonathan? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where were Saul and his men? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where were Jonathan and his men? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where were the Philistines whom Jonathan attacked? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many chariots did the Philistines have? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Where did Saul go to make a sacrifice? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How long did he wait for Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who were the only two men who had spears in Israel? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 14

- Vv. 1-23 *Jonathan's surprise attack on the Philistines.* Jonathan and his armor-bearer devised a startling plan of going against the enemy by themselves. Evidently the Philistines thought that their position was impregnable and that the Israelites were so poorly equipped that they had nothing to fear. The skirmish started by Jonathan and his armor-bearer started such confusion that the Philistines attacked their own men, and a great victory was won for Israel.
- Vv. 24-46 *Saul's ill-advised oath.* King Saul had ordered that his men were to fast as they went into battle. Although Jonathan was unaware of his father's order, Saul threatened to punish him for tasting a little honey. Only the intercession of the people saved Jonathan.
- Vv. 47-52 *Saul's other battles and his family.* Saul was a great warrior, and his campaigns took him against Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria, as well

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

as Philistia. His wife, sons, daughters, captain, and father are all mentioned at this point in his career.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Trust in God overcomes fear of men.* Although Israel was in a dire strait, Jonathan was not afraid to do what he knew was right. With a full trust in God and using the good common sense with which he was endowed, he devised a strategy that gave victory to God's people.
2. *Rash oaths should not be kept.* Under ordinary circumstances, an oath should be very sacred and kept if at all possible. When oaths are made in rashness, however, it is better to repent for making the oaths rather than to keep them. Herod beheaded John the Baptist, although he was "exceeding sorry" (Mark 6:26). He went ahead and performed the dastardly deed ". . . for their sakes which sat with him" (Mark 6:26 b). He was afraid of what the people would think of him if he went back on his oath. Saul was evidently determined to go ahead and carry out the penalty he had pronounced against any soldier who ate anything, even though it meant the slaying of the hero of his own army, even his own son.

#### *Jonathan's Surprise Attack on the Philistines. 14:1-23*

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.

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;

3 And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh,

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wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

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.

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 have by many or by few.

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.

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; they we will go up: for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand: and this *shall be* a sign unto us.

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.

12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will show 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.

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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.

14 And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were a half acre of land, *which* a yoke of oxen might plow.

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.

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*.

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*.

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.

19 And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that *was* in the host of the Philipines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand.

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.

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.

23 So the Lord saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven.

1. *Why did Jonathan fail to tell Saul of his plan? 14:1*

Saul would probably have opposed such a daring enterprise. In the first place, he would be reluctant to see his son risk his life in such an expedition. In the second place, he had lost a great deal of his courage because of the stunning announcement of judgment which Samuel had made to him. The same fear and trembling which had come upon the people had affected their leader.

2. *Where is Migron? 14:2*

Migron is a locality which has been lost to modern geographers. Indications in the narrative would point to a place on the north side of Gilbeah and a different place from the Migron on the northwest of Michmash (Isaiah 10:28). Saul felt this was a good place to wait and observe the activities of the Philistines. Since it is called the uttermost part of Gibeah, it is taken to be in the vicinity. Saul still had only 600 men with him.

3. *Why was Abijah not at Shiloh? 14:3*

When the Ark was taken from Shiloh, the place was no longer regarded as the center of worship. Later David fled from the presence of Saul, and the Tabernacle itself was at Nob (21:1). The Ark was still in the house of Abinadab in Kiriath-jearim on the west side of the border of Judah near Philistia. A priest would hardly be safe at that point, and his services were needed by Saul.

4. *What was the advantage of the two campsites? 14:4*

Israel was on one crag, and the Philistines were on the other. The site of this valley is almost impenetrable. One can hardly go down into the valley on horseback. About a mile eastward of the line between these two promontories the valley is so narrow and so deep that the opposite heights are less than a mile apart. The two armies would

keep each other under observation without fearing a frontal attack at this point.

5. *On what did Jonathan rely? 14:6*

Jonathan was convinced that Israel was the nation of God's own choosing and that God would preserve them in every situation. He did not know for sure that God would give them success in the particular venture that they had in mind, but he hoped that He would. He knew that it did not make any difference whether there were a few men or many in an army. As he said: "For there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few" (v. 6 b).

6. *What was so frightening about Jonathan's attack?*

14:7-15

Things in Israel were rapidly coming to a sorry state. Samuel had returned to Gibeah because Shiloh had been forsaken. Saul came with just a few men because all the people were of a mind to desert and many had done so already. There were no smiths for making of weapons since they required iron work. The two enemy armies were at the time separated by a mile-long valley between two high crags, one some 50 feet of sheer rock, the other about 100 feet of sheer rock. Jonathan relied entirely upon the guiding hand of Jehovah, not even mentioning the expedition to his father. More than likely his father would never have permitted him to go. Hence when he suddenly appeared in the camp of the Philistines it was terribly unexpected and actually frightened them beyond measure. If the Philistine soldiers were really valiant, they would come down after Jonathan and his armor-bearer; if they said, "Come up," they were lazy, cowardly, and careless. This would indicate to Jonathan the advisability of continuing his attack.

7. *Why is mention made of what oxen might plow? 14:14*

Rural people would measure things by standards to which they were accustomed. A "furrow" of land was what could be plowed with a yoke of oxen in one day. It is

like the Roman *jugum*, or *jugerum*, containing some 28,000 square feet. The area where the battle was fought is described as the furrow of an acre of land, because the length only of an half-acre was to be given and not the square footage.

8. *Why did the Philistines tremble? 14:15*

The situation was reversed. The Israelites had trembled when they saw the mammoth Philistine host coming out against them. After Jonathan and his armor-bearer surprised the Philistines, the Philistines were afraid. The very fact that they did not expect two men to climb the cliff alone led them to relax their vigil. Two men coming upon them in an unexpected way confused them and frightened them.

9. *Why did Saul call for the Ark? 14:18*

The Ark had led the Israelites into battle on a number of occasions. Priests carried the Ark into the Jordan River when Israel crossed over into Palestine (Joshua 3:6). Moses refused to send the Ark into the ill-fated battle against the Canaanites (Numbers 14:44). When Israel was walking in God's paths, the Ark was a symbol of His presence. When they were rebelling against God, the fact that the Ark was with them did not guarantee a victory for them. This truth was demonstrated in the days of Eli's sons as the Ark was captured by the Philistines. Saul could hardly have forgotten this lesson, and he surely would not have risked losing it again. His decision to call for the Ark must have been prompted by his desire to find out the Lord's will with regard to the battle. He must have thought his having the Ark with him would have helped him to learn this will.

10. *Was the ark again brought into the camp? 14:19*

Saul commanded Ahijah the priest to fetch the Ark; but while he was conversing with the priest, the noise and confusion in the Philistine camp was brought to his attention. The way was then clear. It was up to the Israelites to pursue the enemy and there was no need to command,

"Withdraw thy hand." There would be no need for the priest to give any further order or to make any further move towards fetching the Ark. Even though there is mention of some Israelites who had not joined with the men of Saul but rather had joined with the Philistines, the Israelites won a victory and pursued the Philistines first to the north and then to the west.

11. *Who were the Hebrews with the Philistines? 14:21*

These men were defectors and captives. Notice that they are called Hebrews, while the people of Saul were called Israelites. Living had become so difficult in Israel that these people had sought asylum with the enemy even at the risk of calling down the wrath of their own people upon them. David fled to Achish, king of Gath, in order to escape the murderous intentions of Saul (I Samuel 21:10).

12. *Where was Beth-aven? 14:23*

Beth-aven was near Ai. Ai lay near Beth-el on the road which ran from Jerusalem to Shechem. It was east of Michmash. The Philistines fled westwards from Michmash to Aijalon (v. 31). If we bear in mind the fact that the camp of the Philistines was on the east side of Michmash before Beth-aven (13:5), the fact that the Israelites attacked it from the south explains the extent of the battle. As the main body of the Philistines fled as far as Ajalon, they were pursued to that place by some of the Israelites.

*Saul's Ill-advised Oath. 14:24-46*

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.

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.

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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 a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.

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.

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 today 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 faint.

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.

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.

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.

35 And Saul built an altar unto the Lord: the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord.

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 whatso-

ever seemeth good unto them. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 on the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.

46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

13. *What was the purpose of Saul's prohibition? 14:24*

To forbid a fighting man to eat is to cut down his efficiency. Saul must have been more interested in demon-

strating kingly zeal than to care for his men. Fasting had its place as a man is disciplining his spirit but it could hardly serve a useful purpose in the field. The only possible practical reason for the prohibition would be to save time, but this value would be lost in the decreased efficiency of the soldiers.

14. *What is the meaning of "his eyes were enlightened"?*  
14:27

Partaking of a little food gave increased energy to Jonathan. Honey is a well-known quick-energy food. Jonathan was strengthened physically; and since the loss of strength is noticeably reflected in the eyes, this was the primary center of the resurging energy. His eyes would be keener and his hand would be stronger.

15. *How had Saul troubled the land?* 14:29

Saul had disobeyed Samuel and brought a pronouncement of judgment on himself. He had issued a foolish order to his troops in the midst of a situation which might have resulted in total victory for Israel. The king had demonstrated a lack of courage in staying behind in the battle. In all these things Saul had caused trouble among his people.

16. *Where was Aijalon?* 14:31

Aijalon was on the west slope of the hill country of Judah. A modern spot named *Yalo* (see Joshua 19:42) is pointed out as the most likely location. This site is about three miles southwest of Michmash. Joshua had been fighting the armies of the southern coalition at this point when he prayed for the sun to stand still and give the Israelites the needed extra hours (Joshua 10:12).

17. *Why were the people so faint?* 14:31

The people were weak from hunger since Saul had forbidden them to eat until evening (v. 24). The sight of the booty was too much for them and they seized sheep, oxen, and calves. Without proper care for dressing the animals, they devoured them where they were. Animals

which were slain were left lying on the ground and were saturated in their own blood. The famished soldiers ate the flesh along with the blood which adhered to it. By doing this they sinned against the law in Leviticus 19:26 and the earlier prohibition given by God to the post-diluvian world (Genesis 9:4).

18. *Why did Saul call for a stone? 14:33*

Saul requested a stone to be provided as a place for slaughtering the animals. In this way the blood would run off properly on the ground. The flesh would be separated from the blood, and the people could eat without committing sin. The hungry people could thus satisfy their overwhelming appetites.

19. *Why did he build an altar? 14:35*

Saul had learned his lesson about offering sacrifices when he was ineligible to act as a priest. His purpose in erecting an altar was hardly to provide a place for a sacrifice. This altar was to be a memorial of the presence of God. If this is the first altar he ever built, it is evidence of his irreligion. More devoted people, such as Abraham, build altars on many occasions and never allow their devotion to lag (Genesis 12:8, 18).

20. *Why did Saul think that someone had sinned? 14:38*

Saul had asked counsel of God about going down in pursuit of the Philistines. He wanted to know if God would deliver the enemy into his hands, but God did not give him an answer. He concluded that someone had sinned and prevented God from giving him an answer.

21. *Why was Saul willing to slay Jonathan? 14:39*

When the breach of a commandment such as that given by Saul is revealed, the guilt has to be expiated. The law of the ancient Oriental kings was inviolable, and no law-breaker was exempt from the wrath of the monarch. Saul had proudly boasted, "though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die" (v. 39). When he found out it was Jonathan who had violated his prohibition, he was forced

to carry out his threat to prevent losing prestige among the people.

22. *What prompted Saul to exact such a penalty?*

Although the king had made a decree that no one was to eat during the time of the battle, Jonathan had put forth the rod that was in his hand and dipped a little honey to his mouth to eat. When Saul asked God to direct him in his activities, there was no answer; and Saul concluded that someone had sinned. When the lot was cast, it fell upon Jonathan. Jonathan confessed his crime; and Saul was willing to exact the penalty by slaying his own son. He knew that as a ruler he was setting an example. He was also exerting the authority that was his, and those who witnessed would have greater respect for his authority. The people, when they saw this, were willing then that Jonathan be spared; and by their earnest entreaty Saul was led to withdraw his order. Thus it is said that the people rescued Jonathan that day.

23. *How did the people rescue him? 14:45*

The objection of the people was so conclusive that Saul was obliged to yield. Justice would demand that Jonathan be spared. He had done nothing wrong in itself. Jonathan had not heard the oath which his father had imposed on the people. He did not consciously or intentionally go against his father's commandment. The divine lot had revealed to Saul that Jonathan had tasted a little honey. The sentence of death was not thereby pronounced by God. Judgment was in the hands of Saul, and he was wise to listen to the desire of the people to spare Jonathan.

*Saul's Other Battles and His Family. 14:47-52*

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*.

48 And he gathered a host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.

49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchi-shua: and the names of his two daughters *were these*; the name of the first-born 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.

24. *Over what kingdoms did Saul have victory? 14:47, 48*

Saul won victories over practically all of the surrounding kingdoms. Those specifically mentioned include Moab, the land just east of the Jordan river; Edom, the kingdom of the descendants of Esau, being the land lying in the south of the Dead Sea, Philistia, the land bordering along the Mediterranean Sea, and extending from the River of Egypt to the Bay of Acre along the west of the land allotted to the twelve tribes; Zobah, the land lying in and around the Lebanon Mountains; and the Amalekites, the land lying in the wilderness to the west of the land of Edom. The people could with propriety sing, "Saul has slain his thousands" (18:7).

25. *How many sons did Saul have? 14:49*

Only three sons of Saul are mentioned in this early part of his reign—Jonathan, Ishui, and Melchi-shua. From later history and references in genealogies, we learn that he also had a son named Ish-baal (Esh-baal in I Chronicles 9:39) or Ish-bosheth. It was Ish-bosheth who was made king over Israel with his capital at Mahanaim in Gilead

after Saul's death (II Samuel 2:8). Ishui is called Abinadab in I Chronicles 9:39 and in I Samuel 31:2. The three older sons of Saul were killed with him in the battle on Mount Gilboa, leaving only Ish-bosheth as a survivor and a claimant of the throne.

26. *How many daughters did Saul have? 14:49b*

Daughters are not often mentioned in the Bible unless they enter into important events. Of Adam it was written that he begat sons and daughters (Genesis 5:5b), but only the sons—Cain, Abel, and Seth—are named. Jacob's daughter, Dinah, was named along with his twelve sons (Genesis 30:21); but probably this was because she occasioned the unhappy experience at Shechem (Genesis 34). Two of Saul's daughters are mentioned. Merab was the older of the two. She should have been given to David as his wife; but when the time for the marriage was fulfilled, Saul gave her to be another man's wife (I Samuel 18:19). Michal, Saul's younger daughter, loved David, and Saul did give her to be David's wife (I Samuel 18:27).

27. *Who was Saul's wife? 14:50*

Saul's wife was named Ahinoam. As far as the Scripture narrative describes his marital relations, there is mention of only this one wife. He did have a concubine whose name was Rizpah (II Samuel 3:7). Ahinoam is identified as the daughter of Ahimaaz, but nothing more is known of her father or the other members of the family. Ahimaaz is a rather common name for a man in Israel, and in later history the name was given to one of the sons of the priests (II Samuel 17:17). Saul called his wife a perverse and rebellious woman (I Samuel 20:30), but we do not have any knowledge of why he should call her this except our understanding that Saul was almost insanely jealous and selfish. Probably she was a good woman.

28. *Who was the captain of Saul's army? 14:50b*

Abner, the son of Ner, was the leader of Saul's army. He was a cousin of Saul, since Kish and Ner were brothers.

In I Samuel 9:1 Kish is identified as also being the son of Abiel. Ner, the father of Abner, was the son of Abiel (I Samuel 14:51). The family appears to have been rather closely related to one another, since it was Saul's uncle who made inquiry about the search for the asses of Kish when Saul and his servant returned from their meeting with Samuel (10:14). Abner remained with Saul throughout his reign and upheld the honor of the family after Saul's death by placing Saul's son on the throne of Israel (II Samuel 2:8). He entered into negotiations with David in an attempt to put David on the throne of all the tribes; but he was killed by Joab, who thought Abner should have spared Asahel (see II Samuel 3:27). David respected Abner and called him a prince and a great man (II Samuel 3:38).

29. *What was the nature of Saul's reign?* 14:52

Most of Saul's time on the throne was spent in battle. The war against the Philistines was described as being "sore"; and when he ascended to the throne, he went out to battle against the Ammonites (I Samuel 11:1-15). His failure to slay the Amalekites had brought about his being rejected as king (I Samuel 15:1-35). Samuel had warned the Israelites that the king would take their sons to fight in his army (I Samuel 8:11); and this had come to pass as "when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him" (v. 52b).

## CHAPTER 14 IN REVIEW

1. Who went with Jonathan to make a surprise attack on the Philistines? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where was Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the name of the priest with him? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Whose son was the priest? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where were the other priests? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What did the priest have with him? \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

7. What did Saul ask the priest to fetch? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What had Jonathan eaten? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What did Saul threaten to do to him? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What was the name of Saul's wife? \_\_\_\_\_

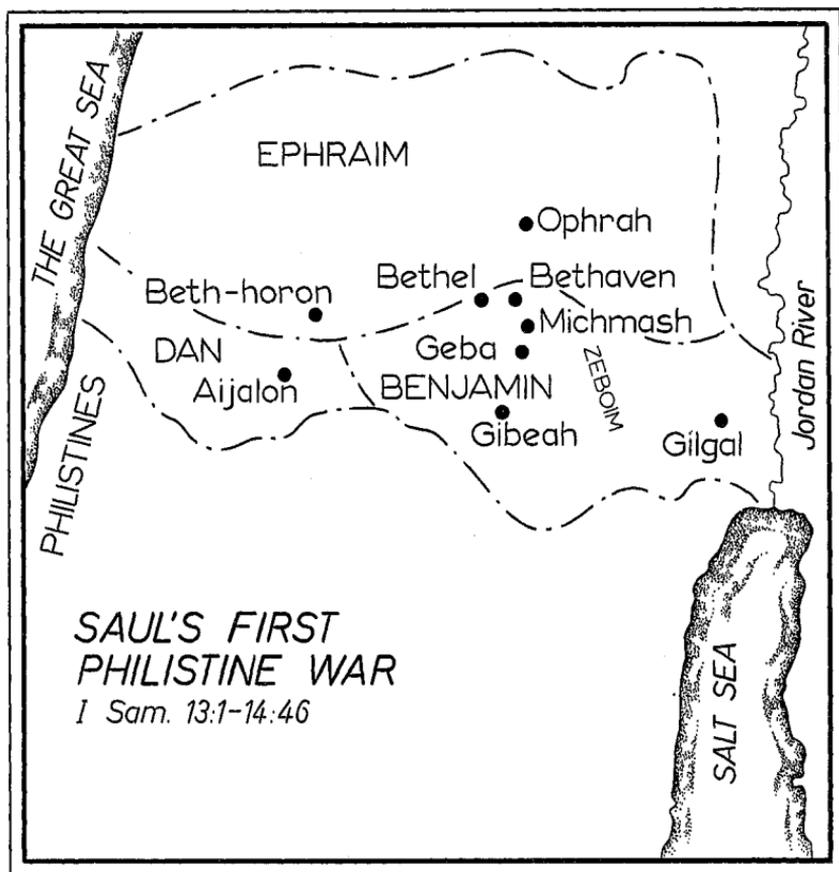
### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 15

Vv. 1- 6 *Saul sent against the Amalekites.* The children of Amalek had been constant aggressors against the Israelites. They were the first nation to attack Israel when they left Egypt (Exodus 17:16). At that time God instructed Moses to write an account of the conflict in a book and note that their aggression would not go unpunished. Saul was thus ordered to utterly destroy the Amalekites.

Vv. 7- 9 *Saul's incomplete obedience.* Saul destroyed most of the men of Amalek, but he spared the king. He also spared some of the best of the animals. He excused his failure by saying that they were to be used as sacrificial animals.

Vv. 10-23 *Samuel delivers the Lord's message of condemnation.* Once again it was Samuel's hard lot to deliver a message to judgment from the Lord. This time the message was one of complete rejection. When Saul had presumptuously offered sacrifice, Samuel announced that Saul's kingdom would not continue for long. After Saul failed to destroy the Amalekites, Samuel announced that God had rejected Saul himself.

Vv. 24-35 *Samuel and Saul parted permanently.* Saul begged Samuel to stay with him, even seizing Samuel's robe and ripping it. Samuel did stay with Saul long enough for Saul to summon



## SAUL'S FIRST PHILISTINE WAR

### I Sam. 13:1-14:36

1. Saul gathers 2000 men at Michmash, and Jonathan 1000 at Gibeah. (13:1-2)
2. Jonathan smites Geba. (13:3)
3. Saul goes to Gilgal and makes a foolish sacrifice. (13:4-14)
4. Saul goes to Geba with 600. (13:15-16)
5. Philistines camp at Michmash, and send out raiders toward Beth-horon, Ophrah, and Valley of Beboim. (13:17-23)
6. Jonathan and armorbearer climb the pass between Geba and Michmash, and smite Philistines. (13:24-14:15)
7. Saul's troops join in and smite Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon. (14:16-23-31)
8. Jonathan is saved from Saul's curse about eating. (14:24-30, 32-46)



## The village of Michmash

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## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

Agag. Samuel then slew Agag, after first worshipping with Saul. Finally, Samuel left Saul, never to see him until the day of his death.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Sin cannot go unpunished.* Israel defeated the Amalekites in battle when they first met, but the defeat was not complete. Though the Amalekites might have thought they had escaped rather intact, God had declared that He would “. . . utterly put out of the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” (Exodus 17:14). Men today who resist God and His word should expect no happier end.
2. *“To obey is better than sacrifice”* (v. 22). This eternal principle needs to be burned into the hearts of men today. It is better to do God’s will in the first place than to expend great amounts of time, money, and energy in an effort to make atonement for failure to follow God’s leading.

#### The Lord’s Rejection of Saul, 15:1-35.

##### *Saul Sent Against the Amalekites.* 15:1-6

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.

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.

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.

4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.

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 showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

1. *Why did Samuel remind Saul that he had anointed him 15:1*

Samuel wanted Saul to place current events in the proper perspective. Saul had seemingly lost his way. He had presumed to offer a sacrifice when he had no right to serve as a priest. He had grown fainthearted in battle and placed a useless curse on his people. Samuel must have felt that he could not help Saul unless Saul were to return to his former humble self. By remembering his origins, Saul might be able to understand the error of a proud man's way.

2. *How could the Amalekites be doomed to destruction? 15:2*

There was a quarrel that Israel had with the people of the Amalekites. It was this quarrel that was to be avenged and since the Amalekites were completely reprobate, they were appointed of God to utter destruction. The Kenites who were ordered out were kinsmen of Moses' wife. They had come along with Judah into Canaan; but when the land was allotted to the children of Israel, the Kenites had returned to the desert. We are unable to locate Havilah and Shur with certainty, but they were quite evidently the two extremities of the country of the Amalekites. God had predicted the fall of Amalek when they first attacked Israel in the days of Moses (Exodus 17:14).

*3. Was God cruel in ordering the slaughter of all? 15:3*

The people of Amalek had been given more than 400 years in which to repent of their opposition to God's people. They had attacked Israel when Israel first came out of Egypt, around 1447 B.C. While Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness, Amalek made no effort to make amends for her senseless attack. As Israel had settled in the promised land, there were still no overtures from Amalek. In fact her opposition to Israel had been constant. While the judges led Israel through a three-hundred-year period, Amalek still made no attempts to live at peace with God's people. God had finally called a halt to the rebellious ways of the Amalekites. It is an eternal principle that any nation who falls to the depths in which Amalek was wallowing must perish before a people who are roused by a vision of a higher destiny. To allow even the women to continue in such a life would not be mercy. Infants growing up in such a society would have no hope beyond that of a reprobate. God was attempting to work an act of mercy through the sword of Saul.

*4. Where was Telaim? 15:4*

Telaim comes from a Hebrew word which means, "young lambs." A form very close to this is a word *Telen*. Telen is a town in the southern border of Judah (Joshua 16:24). It lay between Ziph and Bealoth. The gathering of Saul's army at this point is the only important event which transpired there according to Bible history. Once again the men of Israel were separated from the men of Judah. The proportion was still ten to one, with Judah making up one-tenth of the number of soldiers in Israel.

*5. What kindness had the Canaanites shown Israel? 15:6*

Hobab was a Canaanite. He is known as Moses' brother-in-law. As the people of Israel departed from Mt. Sinai, Moses invited his brother-in-law to accompany Israel through the wilderness. He promised Hobab that they would share their blessings with him and his people. At

first Hobab declined to go along with them, but as Moses insisted he must have yielded and served as a scout for the hosts of Israel (Numbers 10:29-32). No doubt this is the kindness which the Canaanites showed Israel in the wilderness as mentioned here.

*Saul's Incomplete Obedience 15:7-9*

7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah *until* thou comest to Shur, that *is* over against Egypt.

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.

6. *Where are Havilah and Shur? 15:7*

Shur was in Negeb, the land lying south of Beer-sheba. Generally speaking it is territory to the west of the south end of the Dead Sea. Havilah was on the edge of the Negeb. Another region by the same name was encompassed by the Pison branch of Eden's river (Genesis 25:18) and reached into north Arabia (Genesis 2:11).

7. *Who was Agag? 15:8*

Agag is the common name for all the Amalekite kings similar to the name of Pharaoh, the name of the kings of Egypt, or like Caesar, the common name of the rulers in Rome. Balaam makes mention of Agag in his prophecy (Numbers 24:7). His reference implies that the king was a leading monarch at that time or else that he was the first one to attack Irsael when they came out of Egypt. This particular ruler was evidently no better than his predecessors and he was to be slain, but Saul spared him.

8. *What else did Saul spare? 15:9*

Saul spared the best of the sheep, the oxen, and the lambs. As a matter of fact, he did not destroy that which was good. Only that which was vile and refuse was destroyed. Saul was senseless in disobeying God's commandment in this way, but he gave a feeble excuse when he was confronted with his sin.

*Samuel Delivers the Lord's Message of Condemnation.*

15:10-23

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.

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.

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.

14 And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

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.

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.

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?

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

23 For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou has rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

9. *Why was Samuel grieved at Saul's action? 15:11*

Samuel loved Saul. Those who try to make Saul's being rejected a jealous act of Samuel miss the gist of the entire story. Samuel regretted the action which Saul had taken. What Saul had done was nothing small; he had completely changed from the humble fellow he was when he was chosen king. He had elevated himself and the people had elevated him until he had lost his modesty. When he disobeyed, he was unfaithful to God. In one sense, he had almost carried out God's orders; but yet he had failed to carry out the order directly and was certainly culpable. The narrative shows how he tried to shift the blame from himself to the people, and his whole unmanly character comes out.

*10. Where was Carmel? 15:12*

The most famous Carmel is Mt. Carmel, the mountain which juts out into the Mediterranean Sea on the west coast of Israel along the northern border of the tribe of Manasseh. Samuel was not usually in this area, and it is doubtful that this reference here is to this northern Carmel. The name itself signifies a "fruitful field." Another Carmel is a name given to a town in the hill country of Judah (Joshua 15:55). This was the home of Nabal (I Samuel 25:2). One of David's wives is known as "Abigail, the Carmelites" (I Chronicles 3:1). It was doubtless here that Saul set up a marker for his partial victory over Amalek.

*11. How could Saul say he had performed God's commandment? 15:13*

Saul had evidently lost his understanding of truthfulness as well as humility. He had partially fulfilled the commandment of the Lord, but he had openly and blatantly disobeyed God's commandment to destroy utterly the Amalekites. This loss of his ability to discern between truth and falsehood is indicative of the sad condition into which Saul had fallen.

*12. What was Saul's excuse for his disobedience? 15:15*

As Saul had excused himself for offering a sacrifice by saying that he was afraid the people were going to leave him, so he once again blamed the people for his disobedience of God's commandment to destroy the Amalekites. He said the people had spared the best of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord. He took partial credit for having destroyed the rest, but he took no blame for saving the best.

*13. Why did he call the Lord Samuel's God? 15:21*

Saul had a great deal of impudence to argue with Samuel with regard to his disobedience. Samuel reminded him of how God had blessed him when he was little in his own sight. He reviewed the circumstances which had led to

the giving of the commandment to destroy the Amalekites. Samuel openly confronted Saul with his disobedience, but Saul persisted in excusing himself. When he made reference to the Lord, he called him Samuel's God. Saul may have come to the place where he could not accept God as his own personal God. He was completely reprobate.

14. *What is the meaning of Samuel's question? 15:22*

Samuel clarified the issue. He drew a distinction between burnt offering and sacrifices and the obeying of the voice of God. Saul was excusing himself for sparing the best of the flocks and herds by saying that he was going to give them to God as a sacrifice. Saul was attempting to reason that it was all going to be given to God in the end and that it really made no difference whether he had obeyed God's voice or not. Samuel made it clear that it is far better to obey than to sacrifice. It is better to hearken to God than to offer Him the fat of rams.

15. *What added penalty was pronounced on Saul? 15:23*

Samuel taught Saul that rebellion against God is the sin of witchcraft. Saul put out the witches from the borders of the people of Israel, but he himself rebelled against God (I Samuel 28:9). Saul's stubborn heart was an iniquitous heart. Although he had not openly worshipped another God, he had made himself God and was as sinful as if he were an idolator. As a result, God rejected Saul personally from being king. This was a much more severe sentence than was passed on him when he offered his presumptuous sacrifice. At that time God simply said that the kingdom would be taken away from Saul's house and given to another. On this occasion, Saul himself was personally rejected as being fit to rule. On other occasions of rejection, God tempered His judgments by announcing that what He had predicted to come to pass would not come to pass in the lifetime of the one who had sinned. This might have been the penalty for Saul.

If he had not sinned again, Saul might not have lived to see the end of his dynasty. He himself might have been allowed to die in a good old age, but now he himself is to be punished.

*Samuel and Saul Parted Permanently.* 15:24-35

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.

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.

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.

29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he *is* not a man, that he should repent.

30 Then he said, I have sinned: *yet* honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God.

31 So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshiped the Lord.

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.

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.

16. *What was Saul's final confession? 15:24*

Saul finally came to the place where he said, "I have sinned." Before, he had tried to pass all the blame onto the people. At last he admitted that he was a transgressor. He said that he had transgressed the commandment of the Lord. He apologized to Samuel for disobeying his commandments, saying that he had transgressed the words which Samuel had spoken to him. He still blamed the people partially and excused himself by saying, "I fear the people and obey their voice." As far as the record is concerned, we have no evidence that the people caused Saul to spare Agag. Neither do we have any notice of their demanding that some of the best of the flocks of the herds be spared for sacrifice. This is a rationalization of a man's sin by the man himself.

17. *Why did Saul want Samuel to worship with him? 15:25*

Perhaps Saul wanted to offer a trespass offering or a sin offering. He was not eligible to offer the offering himself. He knew that Samuel was God's spiritual leader, and he wanted his presence with him. His repentance was too late. If he had been totally sincere about it, he could have gone to the Tabernacle and offered a sacrifice there under the leadership of the priests. His plea seems to be more of an outpouring of the spirit of the moment. It was not a longlasting nor deepseated repentance.

18. *Why did Saul tear Samuel's skirt? 15:27*

In his desperation Saul grabbed the skirt of Samuel's mantle and tore it. This is typical of the action of a man who is beside himself with emotion. Had he learned self-

control in other matters, he might not have gone to this extreme in his demonstration of his grief. Joel found the Israelites making a great show of their repentance in his day and he told them to "rend their hearts" and not their garments (Joel 2:13). Samuel seized upon this drastic action of Saul's and used it as a sign of God's judgment. He said that God had torn the kingdom of Israel out of Saul's hands on that day and had given it to a neighbor of his. He describes the neighbor as being better than Saul, but he does not identify him by name.

19. *Who is the Strength of Israel? 15:29*

Samuel used the title, the Strength of Israel, to describe God himself. Many different names are given to God throughout the Old Testament. Abraham described him as the Judge of the whole earth (Genesis 18:25). God told Moses to tell the people of Israel that his title was "I Am" (Exodus 3:14). The everlasting God is the strength of His people.

20. *Why did Samuel finally yield to Saul's entreaty? 15:31*

Samuel did turn again with Saul, and Saul worshipped the Lord. Samuel did not do it for Saul's sake. When Saul asked him to honor him before the elders of his people and before all the people of Israel, Samuel acquiesced. Samuel yielded, but not for the personal entreaty of Saul himself.

21. *Why did Samuel slay Agag? 15:32*

Agag came into Samuel's presence "delicately." Agag thought that he had been spared for good. He evidently thought that he was safe and the danger of dying was past. He walked with a spring in his step. His gait was mincing. He may have even been flippant, but Samuel brought upon Agag's head a punishment similar to that which he had brought upon others. He hewed him in pieces. Some critics of the Bible accuse Samuel of being sadistic and unnecessarily cruel. If Samuel took only one swing of the sword and decapitated Agag, the Amalekite's body was

hewed into pieces—two pieces at least. Samuel at least showed alacrity and thoroughness in executing God's command, qualities which Saul did not demonstrate.

22. *What prompted God's repentance? 15:34, 35*

The action of Samuel in slaying Agag did not stimulate this feeling on the part of God. Because of his extreme wickedness, Agag was slain by the prophet. Samuel thereafter looked upon Saul as one in whom God had found only that which was displeasing and visited him no more. We understand that it repented God that He had made Saul king when we look upon the act as man would look upon it. This is what we call an anthropomorphism—putting things in the form that man can understand. Most certainly we do not look upon the occurrence as a mistake on God's part. God was grieved on account of Saul's failure. Inasmuch as grief is a part of our repentance, God's attitude resembles this part of repentance.

## CHAPTER 15 IN REVIEW

1. What people was Saul sent to destroy? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What people lived among them? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what place did Saul gather Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many men did Saul have with him? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many men were from Judah? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who was the king of the people Saul attacked? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Where did Saul meet Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
8. With what sin did Samuel compare rebellion? \_\_\_\_\_
9. With what sins did he compare stubbornness? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What title did Samuel give to God? \_\_\_\_\_

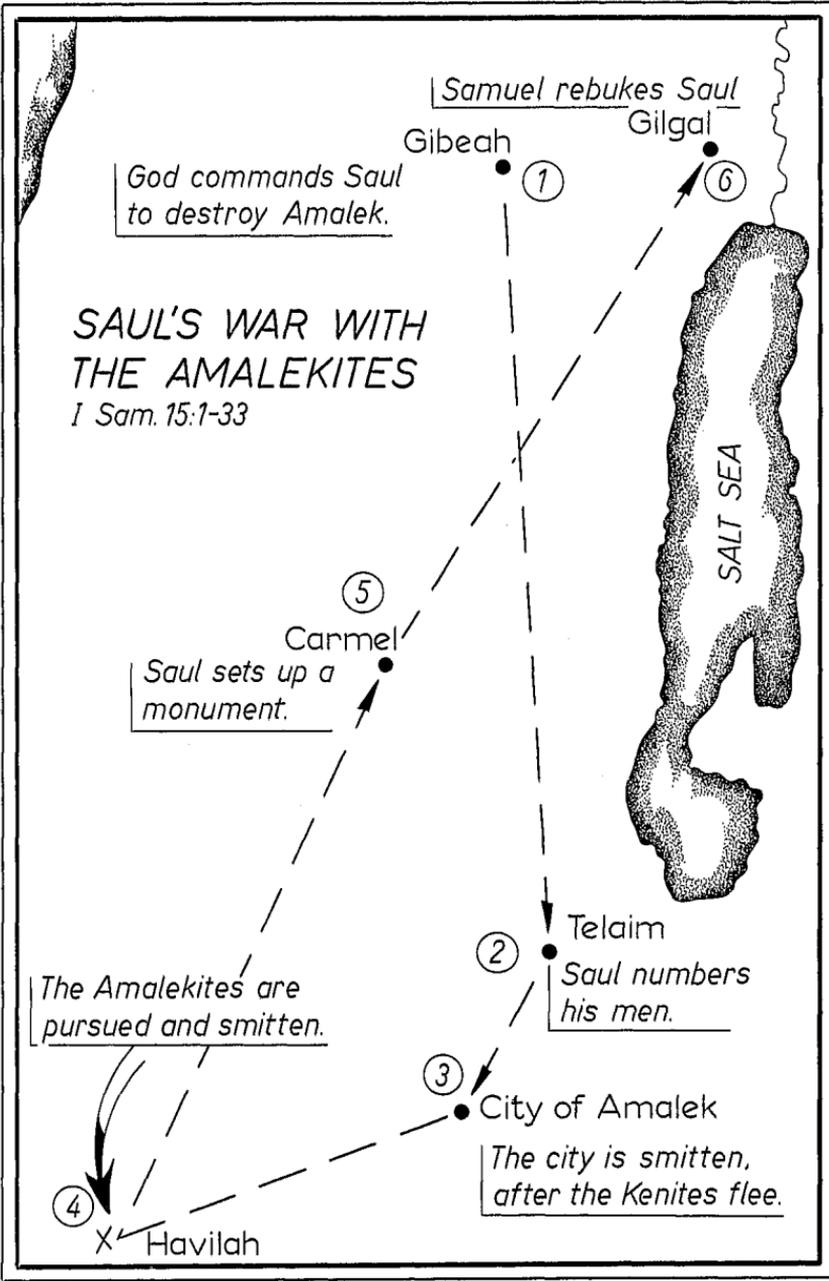
## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 16

- Vv. 1-6 *Samuel goes to Bethlehem.* Bethlehem was south of Samuel's home in Ramah, and located in the heart of the land of the tribe of Judah. His arrival in the city aroused the curiosity of the people and might easily incite the wrath of the king, but he informed the people that he was on a mission of peace and summoned them to a sacrifice.
- Vv. 7-13 *Samuel anoints David.* Jesse, a man of Judah and a resident of Bethlehem, was called to the feast. Samuel sought a replacement of Saul from among his sons, but it was only when David was called from the fields that the Lord made known to Samuel that David was to become the Lord's anointed. Samuel then poured oil from his anointing horn, thus signifying that David was God's chosen vessel.
- Vv. 14-18 *Saul seeks a musician.* In fits of acute melancholia, afflicted as he was with an evil spirit, Saul sought the soothing effects of music. His courtiers knew of David's ability in this realm and suggested that he be summoned to the king's court.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Man looketh on the outward appearance*" (v. 7a). Eliab, Jesse's oldest son, made a striking appearance. This was one of Saul's chief qualifications for the office of king. Saul stood head and shoulders above all the other men in Israel (I Samuel 9:2). When Samuel saw Eliab, he thought surely this was the man for the job. Samuel did not know Eliab's nature (see 17:28). He did not know that he was not suited to the task.





A stream from Elisha's fountain  
close to ancient Jericho

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2. "*The Lord looketh on the heart*" (v. 7b). God knows a man's motives. He can know his thoughts. These count much more than the size of his physical frame. Often God chooses things that the world would despise to be vessels of His power and grace (I Corinthians 1:27-29). For that reason, man must be careful lest he be found fighting against God when it is evident that the choice has been made.

David chosen as Saul's Successor, 16:1-18.

*Samuel Goes to Bethlehem.* 16:1-6

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 Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.

3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.

4 And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

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.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed *is* before me.

1. *Why did Samuel mourn for Saul?* 16:1

Samuel loved Saul. Samuel had addressed Saul with love when he first saw him (I Samuel 9:19 ff). He had des-

cribed Saul as the one for whom all Israel desired (I Samuel 9:20). The very coronation of Saul was filled with emotion. Samuel had felt rejected by the people. God had assured Samuel that the people had rejected God himself. Samuel had promised to pray for the people. He had anointed Saul, and it was very natural that he should be grieved at the ignominious failure of the first king.

2. *Whose son was David?* 16:2

David was the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite. The name, Jesse, belongs to this man alone in the Old Testament. Its etymology is obscure. Bethlehem is a well-known town of Judah, and it was located five miles south of Jerusalem on a site where a town still flourishes under its ancient name. David had seven brothers, all of whom were considered by the prophet as he came to select one for anointing king over Israel. At the close of the Book of Ruth, a note is made that David was a great-grandson of Ruth. In this passage we note that Boaz, the husband of Ruth, begat Obed; Obed begat Jesse; Jesse begat David (Ruth 4:18-22).

3. *Why was Samuel afraid of Saul?* 16:2

Saul was still king and could execute his enemies. His nature had changed. He was no longer the humble young man who had hid himself in the baggage when the people came to anoint him king. He was more like King Herod, whose nature was such that all Jerusalem was afraid when the wise men had caused the king to fear (Matthew 2:1 ff).

Saul might be possessed of evil spirits and seek to kill Samuel even as he later threw his javelin a number of times at David. Samuel loved Saul, and Saul had clung to Samuel when they parted. There was no way for Samuel to know, however, if Saul would be kindly disposed towards him.

*4. Did God tell Samuel to lie? 16:2b*

Samuel was afraid of going to Bethlehem to anoint David as king. He was afraid that Saul might try to kill him as he later tried to kill David. Edward J. Young, in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, says that it might appear that the Lord (16:2) commanded that Samuel tell a lie as to his purpose in going to Bethlehem, but Samuel was, as a matter of fact, going to Bethlehem to sacrifice. There was no need to tell the entire truth upon this occasion. If Samuel had been asked, "Are you going to Bethlehem in order to anoint David as king," and in answer had said to Saul, "I am going only to sacrifice, then Samuel would have been guilty of dissimulation and so also would be the Lord. Such, however, was not the case. There is a vast difference between dissimulation or acting under false pretenses and not telling the entire truth. There was no point in Samuel's revealing at this time the principal object of his mission. Dr. Young goes on to quote a passage from Calvin's *Commentary* where Calvin said that there was no dissimulation or falsehood in this since God really wishes his prophet to find safety under the pretense of the sacrifice. The sacrifice was therefore really offered, and the prophet was protected, thereby so that he was not exposed to any danger until the time the full revelation arrived. Once we admit, as we are compelled to, the genuineness of the Lord's intention for Samuel to sacrifice, the difficulty disappears. It is of the very nature of God not to lie. God himself cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18), and God never commands any of His servants to lie. God can kill and has on a number of occasions struck people dead. God may command His servants to kill their enemies, but He never will command His servants to lie. God himself does not lie, and He does not wish those who believe in Him to lie.

*5. Where was Bethlehem? 16:4*

Bethlehem was in the hill country of Judah. It was about ten miles south of the city of Jerusalem. It lay on a hill that made it visible for miles around as travelers came to it. Later it was the place of the inn where Mary gave birth to the Christ-child. It was the home of Naomi, who had gone with her husband, Elimelech, to the land of Moab when it was a time of famine in their own land in the days of the judges (Ruth 1:1 ff).

Bethlehem was the home of Boaz, who married Ruth, the widow of Mahlon, and daughter-in-law of Naomi. It was Ruth who gave birth then to Obed by Boaz, and Obed was the father of Jesse. This is the old home of the family of David.

*6. Why were the elders afraid? 16:4b*

The elders of the city came out to meet Samuel, and they were trembling. They asked him if he were coming in peace. These elders would be afraid because a visit from the judge of Israel might mean that there was trouble stirring. When Elijah went to the widow of Zarephath, she accused him of coming to bring her sins to remembrance (I Kings 17:18). This is a natural reaction of sinful people when they stand in the presence of one who is righteous and holy. Quite often the judge or the prophet would come to a community to pronounce judgment upon them. This must have been the thought of the elders of Bethlehem when they came out to meet Samuel.

*7. In what ways did Samuel sanctify Jesse and his sons?*

16:5

God's people never enter lightly into an act of worship. When the people of Israel came to Mt. Sinai under the leadership of Moses, they were given three days to prepare for the receiving of the law. On that occasion we read, "And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third

day: come not at your wives" (Exodus 19:14, 15). Not every occasion would be as filled with meaning as the receiving of the Ten Commandments, but every act of worship is a time to meet the Holy God; and it should not be entered into lightly. No doubt Samuel urged the men of Jesse's house to prepare their hearts, minds, and bodies for the sacrifice which they were to offer. The preparations may well have included the washing of their garments and even the abstaining from connubial relations. When the people of Israel were preparing to cross over into the promised land under the leadership of Joshua, they were given a similar three-day period in which to prepare vic-tuals themselves (Joshua 1:11). Of course, it would be necessary for the household of Jesse to prepare the sacri-ficial animals as they were getting ready for the sacrifice. All of this would be a part of "sanctification" of Jesse and his sons.

8. *Who was Jesse's oldest son?* 16:6

Eliab was the name given to Jesse's oldest son in the book of Samuel. In the book of I Chronicles (27:18), however, he is called *Elibu*. The word *Elibu* means, "He is my God," and the name is given to a number of different people in the Old Testament, including one of Job's friends (Job 32:3). *Eliab* is a word meaning, "God is father." It is generally supposed that the name Elihu is given to him after he became known and officially recognized as the head of the tribe of Judah. This is noted in the passage of Chronicles.

This oldest brother of David made such a good appear-ance that Samuel thought surely this one was the one whom God had chosen. He is quite active in the later history recorded in the Bible. He was contemptuous of David when David went down to the camp of the army (I Samuel 17:28). His daughter, Abigail, married her second cousin, Rehoboam, and bore him three children (II Chron-icles 11:18, 19).

9. *What is the meaning of the "Lord's anointed"?* 16:6b

The Greeks translated this word with the word which is the background for the English word *christ*. It would not be amiss to say that this is the Lord's christ. God had exalted the kingship by anointing the kings as the priests had been anointed earlier. Later we find that the prophets were anointed. These are the chosen men of God, and point forward to Him who is indeed the Lord's Anointed—Prophet, Priest, and King.

*Samuel Anoints David.* 16:7-13

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.

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.

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.

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.

10. *Who were Jesse's seven sons? 16:10*

Eliab was the first to pass before him, and in I Chronicles we learn that Abinadab and Shammah were also sons of Jesse. So were Nethanel, Raddai, Ozem, and David himself. These are listed in I Chronicles 2:13-15. According to I Samuel 17:12, Jesse had eight sons. This count in Chronicles, which agrees with that in I Samuel 16:8-12, may be reconciled with the enumeration in I Samuel 17:12 on the supposition that one of the sons died without posterity, hence he was not listed in the passage in Chronicles.

11. *Who was anointed to take Saul's place? 16:11*

Samuel was sent to David. After the seven sons of Jesse had been presented, and the Lord had not pointed out any one of them as the chosen one, Samuel was prompted to ask if these were all. David was absent, having been sent into the field to tend the flock. A full description of his person is given as the narrator tells of his entrance. The adjective "ruddy" is used at times to denote the reddish color of the hair, which was regarded as a mark of beauty in lands where the hair is generally black. All that is said of him indicates how eminently he was fitted, so far as his looks and his figure were concerned, for the office to which the Lord had chosen him. Along with the anointing, the Spirit of Jehovah came upon David from that day forward.

12. *What did Samuel experience in selecting the one to be anointed? 16:12*

Samuel came to Bethlehem and was met by the elders of the city. He sanctified Jesse and his sons. In attempting to find the son God had chosen to anoint king, all seven of the sons of Jesse were brought before Samuel. Having been told by the word of God that none of these seven was the right one, Samuel asked Jesse if these were all of his sons. He was informed that there was one more, the youngest, who was watching over the sheep. Samuel told

Jesse to fetch him, and that they would not so much as eat until he had come. When David was brought to Samuel, Samuel was told of God that this was the right one. 13. *Did David's brothers know he was to be king? 16:12, 13*

There is nothing recorded concerning any words of Samuel to David at the time of the anointing and in explanation of its meaning, as in the cast of Saul (10:1). In all probability Samuel said nothing at the time, since, according to verse two, he had good reason for keeping the matter secret, not only on his own account, but still more for David's sake; so that even the brethren of David who were present knew nothing of the meaning and the object of the anointing, but many have imagined that Samuel merely intended to consecrate David as a pupil of the prophets. Immediately following the account of the anointing, we read this brief note, "So Samuel arose and went to Ramah." At the same time, we can hardly suppose that Samuel left Jesse and even David in uncertainty as to the object of his mission and of the anointing which he had performed. He may have communicated all this to both of them, without letting the other sons know. It by no means follows that because David remained with his father and kept the sheep as before that his calling to be king must have been unknown to him. In the anointing which he had received he did not discern either the necessity or obligation to appear openly as the anointed of the Lord. After receiving the Spirit of the Lord in consequence of the anointing, he left the further development of the matter to the Lord in childlike submission, assured that He would prepare and show him the way to the throne in His own good time.

*Saul Seeks a Musician. 16:14-23*

14 But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.

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 a 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 Beth-lehemite, *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.

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.

22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight.

23 And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

14. *What was the evil spirit which came upon Saul? 16:14*

Jamiesson says that he had lost everything and was irritable. Matthew Henry said that he grew fretful and peevish and discontented, timorous and suspicious, ever and anon starting and trembling. Josephus says that he was as if he had been choked or strangled, and a perfect demoniac by fits. This made him unfit for business, precipitate in his counsels, the contempt of his enemies, and

a burden to all about him. The affliction was a divine visitation, apparently mental perturbation. It is described as an "evil spirit from Jehovah." It is difficult to discover the exact idea. There is no trace of a belief in the existence of evil spirits, in our sense of the word. We conclude that the spirit thought of as the agency of evil is a higher evil power, which took possession of him, and not only deprived him of his peace of mind, but stirred up his feelings, ideas, imagination, and thoughts. It is from Jehovah, because God sent it as a punishment.

15. *What was Saul's reaction to the servants' suggestion?*  
16:17

Saul's servants, seeing him in such an evil state, suggested that he secure a musician to render such music as would bring him comfort. Music was known as a remedy, and the courtiers recommended that he seek a skillful harpist. The powerful influence exerted by music upon the state of mind was well known even in earliest times so that the wise men of ancient Greece recommended music to soothe the passions, to heal mental diseases, and even to chuck tumults among the people. Saul approved his courtiers' plan, and David was mentioned by one of Saul's attendants. Saul sent for David; and coming to court, David speedily established himself in the favor of the king.

16. *How could David be called a man of war?* 16:17, 18

The description of David as a "mighty man" and a "man of war" does not presuppose that David had already fought bravely in war, but may be perfectly explained from what David himself afterwards affirmed respecting his conflicts with lions and bears (17:34, 35). The courage and strength which he had then displayed furnished sufficient proofs of heroism for any one to discern in him the future warrior.

17. *Why did Saul send for David?* 16:19

Saul sent for David to be his attendant. David's name means "beloved," and he had a bubbling personality with

a great deal of talent. His name does not mean "chieftain," as some evidence from the Mari letters may indicate. Saul was not looking for a chieftain as some translations would suppose. He was looking for a man to play the harp before him, and to calm his troubled mind when the evil spirit came upon him.

18. *What presents did Jesse send to Saul? 16:20*

David's father sent an ass laden with bread, a bottle of wine, and a kid to Saul. The Septuagint translation does not show an ass laden with bread, but rather a bushel of bread. This change of translation was made in misreading a Hebrew word for a beast of burden as a homer, and ancient Israelite measure. The circumstances point to David's taking a beast of burden for these various provisions rather than his carrying such a load himself. Such humble gifts to a king indicate that Saul's court was very crude.

19. *What was Saul's attitude toward David? 16:21*

Saul was attracted to David from the first time he saw him. He had no idea that David had been anointed to succeed him. Had there been no jealousy, Saul would have loved David as his own son. It was only when he saw his real potentiality and popularity that Saul was afraid of David and jealous of him. These verses explain how the two men met for the first time. David hardly looked at Saul as a man to replace. He was simply conscientious about his work. His being in the court afforded him the opportunity to learn the responsibilities of a leader of the state. At the same time he was in a position to demonstrate his abilities and talents and thus prepare for the time when he would take over the full responsibilities of the government.

20. *Why did Saul want David to stand before him? 16:22*

Radical critics attack this verse and charge that it was interpolated. There is absolutely no reason for taking this verse out of the text. Its meaning affects the narrative

considerably. Saul evidently called David before him and gave him a short trial period of service. He passed the first examination with flying colors. Saul was attracted to David and loved him. Saul therefore sent word to Jesse and asked him to consider David his servant permanently. Here is an example of the kind of thing which Samuel said would happen when the people got a king. Samuel said that he would take their sons and appoint them for himself (I Samuel 8:11). Saul was not despotic but rather made a request of the father.

21. *What was David's service?* 16:23

David's principal services to Saul consisted mainly of his being with Saul when the evil spirit came upon him. This last verse indicates that his services were needed repeatedly. The Septuagint translates the verb in the way that lends itself to giving the idea of repeated activity. David did not have to do this only once when he was first called to administer to Saul. His services were needed repeatedly, and he was the means of sustaining Saul in his activities.

## CHAPTER 16 IN REVIEW

1. To what town did God send Samuel to find a king? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was David's father? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Of what tribe was he? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which purpose of his mission did Samuel announce? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was David's "home town"? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who was David's oldest brother? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which other two of David's brothers were named? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many brothers did David have altogether? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where did Samuel go after anointing David? \_\_\_\_\_
10. On what musical instrument did David play? \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 17

- Vv. 1-11 *Goliath's challenge.* Once again Israel and Philistia were at war. On this occasion, the battle was pitched farther south; and the battlefield was in the land belonging to the tribe of Judah. The conflict reached a stalemate when a champion, Goliath, came out to challenge the best to be found in the armies of Israel. No champion was found at first in the camp of Saul.
- Vv. 12-27 *David bears Goliath's challenge.* When Saul went to battle, David returned to his father's house in Bethlehem. Since Jesse's three oldest sons were in Saul's army, Jesse sent David to the battle to inquire about his sons' well-being. It was while David was on this errand for his father that he heard Goliath's challenge. David was not afraid to answer the challenge.
- Vv. 28-37 *Saul sends David to meet Goliath.* David based his judgment on his past experiences with the power of God. By faith in God he had been able to defend his father's sheep when they were attacked by lions and by bears. This courage impressed Saul, and he sent David out to do battle against the Philistine.
- Vv. 28-54 *David slays Goliath.* David did not use Saul's personal armor with which Saul had clothed him. He took only his tried and trusty sling and five smooth stones for it. He had used this kind of weapon, and he felt confident with it. After he had hit the giant with a stone, he beheaded him with the sword which he had taken out of Goliath's sheath.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

Vv. 55-58 *Saul inquires about David's background.* One of the rewards promised to any who would slay Goliath was the hand of the king's daughter in marriage (v. 25). He had also promised that his father's house would be made free in Israel (v. 25b). Although David had formerly been in Saul's court, the king now made definite inquiry concerning his ancestry and background.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *We should use the equipment we have.* David said that he had not proved Saul's armor (v. 39). They were not his own. He did not know how to use them. We likewise should not try to do things in the same way another might have devised. We should be ourselves and use the talents and abilities which God has given to us.
2. *To do battle in the name of the Lord is to be victorious.* Ultimate victory is promised to those who do battle for God. The gates of Hell will not prevail against the Lord's church (Matthew 16:18).

### *Goliath's Challenge.* 17:1-11

Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

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.

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* a 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.

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.

11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

1. *Where were Shochoh, Azekah, and Ephes-dammim?*  
17:1

These places are in the Valley of Elah, now called *Wady es Sunt*. This valley begins a few miles northwest of Hebron and runs in a northerly direction between the mountains of Judah and the lower hills of the Shephelah forming the border of the Philistine Plain. Shochoh, now called *Suweikeh*, is about nine miles down the valley. This spot was on the Philistine side of the valley, the western side. To meet the description of the Scripture text, modern-day explorers look for a place which has on each side a mountain slope suitable for the camp of an army. It would need to be a valley wide enough to give room for Goliath's daily advance into it with his challenge.

Finally, a brook must flow along the valley where smooth, round stones could be found nearer Saul's side of the valley than the Philistines' side. J. W. McGarvey, in his *Lands of the Bible* (page 260), says that just such a point was found by him. He found it a short distance north of Shochoh. Above the spot, the valley was too narrow and the hills too steep, while the brook was either in the middle or too near the western side. At the point he located, however, the western hills have a moderate slope. They recede to a kind of amphitheater. A sloping ridge stands on the opposite side with a valley on each side of it. No doubt here were stationed the two armies with something more than a quarter of a mile of space between them. The brook, a raging torrent in the winter, but dry in the summer, flows within sixty or seventy yards of the eastern side of the valley. David, in advancing, was compelled to cross it. The bed is full of smooth, round stones from one to six inches in diameter. With scarcely a moment's hesitation David could have picked up five of these stones to suit his purpose. Mr. McGarvey and his companions picked up five apiece, any one of which would be the very thing with which to knock down a giant! The word "Ephes-dammim" comes from the root which means "boundary of blood." It is called Pas-Dammim (I Chronicles 11:13). No doubt the bloody contest between Israel and the Philistines gave the place its name. Probably this was a name for the valley where the battle was pitched. Azekah comes from a root meaning "tilled." It is known as a town in the plain of Judah (Joshua 15:35). It seemed to be a place of considerable strength (Jeremiah 34:7), and it had suburban villages in later times (Nehemiah 11:30). The southern coalition of the Canaanite kings were defeated at this place by Joshua, and their army destroyed by an extraordinary shower of hailstones (Joshua 10:10, 11). This location must have been farther down the valley and to the north of the battle field.

2. *Who was Goliath?* 17:4

Goliath was a survivor of the famous race of Anak (Numbers 13:28). The spies compared them to the Nephilim or "giants" of Genesis 6:4. The home of Goliath is named as being Gath, one of the chief cities of the Philistines. His height was six cubits and a span, which is, according to the calculations made by Thenius, about nine feet and two inches. The armor of Goliath corresponded to his stature, his coat of mail not being made of rings worked together like chains, but a coat made of plates of brass, lying one upon the other like scales. Upon his feet were greaves of brass, slung over his back was a small shield, and carried before him was a huge shield. The object of this description is to show how impregnable the man seemed to be. Added to all this is a description of his offensive weapon, a spear whose shaft was like a weaver's beam and whose head weighed some seventeen pounds.

3. *What challenge did he hurl at the armies of Israel?*  
17:8-10

It was, and is, the Arab custom for a warrior to vaunt his own prowess and to satirize his enemies, as a challenge to single combat. Goliath offers himself as a sample of his nation and bases his challenge upon the uselessness of general engagement when the single combat would settle the whole matter. The whole issue of the war was to be staked on the duel, and the challenge became a taunt, when no one was brave enough to accept it. At his words, all Israel, even Saul, were dismayed and greatly afraid; because not one of them dared to accept the challenge to fight with such a giant.

*David Hears of Goliath's Challenge.* 17:12-27

12 Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

13 And the three eldest son of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

14 And David *was* the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.

15 But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem.

16 And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself 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 to thy brethren;

18 And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of *their* thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

21 For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

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.

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.

4. *Where was David at the time and what was he doing?*  
17:14, 15

David had been dismissed by Saul at the time; and having returned home, he was feeding his father's sheep once more. At this point, the household of Jesse is again described so far as is necessary to the present purpose. Jesse himself is too old to go to the war (v. 12), and David is regarded as too young. Three of the sons are in the ranks, but what has become of the other four is not told. Since David was too young at this time, we presume that he was not yet twenty years old; for Israel's men of war were to be men who were twenty years old and older (Numbers 1:3).

5. *How did it happen that he was at the battle?* 17:17, 18

His father sent him to see how his brethren fared and to take them some food. The presents sent by Jesse in the hands of David when he first went to Saul's court suggest how simple were the customs of Israel and in the court of Saul at that time. When he went to the camp, David again carried provisions and gifts. The parched corn was ears of wheat or barley plucked just before they were ripe and roasted for provision for travelers or soldiers. The army evidently had no regular commissary. To this provision were added ten of the round flat loaves of the *fellabin*. David was also to take ten cheeses to the captain of the thousand, to ask his brothers of their welfare, and to "take

their pledge." What this means is uncertain, but no corruption of the text is apparent. Possibly some token had been agreed upon which they were to send instead of a letter.

6. *What was the "trench"?* 17:20

The place of the wagons was back from the field of battle. This would be the center of the location of the material for battle. Supplies of various natures would be kept here. Any group of people demands certain provision when they stay for awhile in one place. Saul had hid himself in the baggage when he was first introduced to the people for a public anointing (10:22). The trench mentioned is no doubt a rampart which was thrown up to protect the baggage so that the enemy could not break through and destroy the victals. The American Standard Version translates this word trench with "place of the wagons." They did not fight battles in the same manner as those fought in World War I, when the foot soldiers were compelled to dig trenches and face the enemy across a no-man's land. Neither was it the kind of trench which would be dug in World War II, as so many of the armies directed their men in the field to dig slit trenches to protect themselves in times of bombings and strafings.

7. *How was the battle put in array?* 17:21

The battle was pitched as described in the first part of the chapter. One army was on the hill to the west of the valley of Elah; the other army was on a hill to the east of the same valley. A brook ran through the midst, but there was an open place where Goliath could come to make his challenge. Probably the men did march towards each other and stand in lines drawn in array, but none dared attack the other because of the challenge that was left unanswered and the impregnable position occupied by the enemy. This stalemate continued for forty days (v. 16).

8. *Where was Gath? 17:23*

Gath is a Philistine town with the name meaning "wine press." The importance of this city is seen in the fact that it makes so many different appearances in the Scripture narrative. David's ultimate conquest of Philistia resulted in his taking control of their leading city of the Philistine pentapolis, and people from the city were prominent even in David's army. One of David's chief military men was Ittai the Gittite (II Samuel 15:19). David also had with him a great number of men among the Cherethites and Pelethites, known as the Gittites. It is expressly stated that these men came from Gath (II Samuel 15:18). Goliath was a Philistine champion from a very important Philistine town.

9. *What rewards were promised to one who would slay Goliath? 17:25*

The men of the army understood that the man who killed Goliath would be enriched with great riches. Saul must have promised that he would give the man his daughter in marriage. As an additional enticement he promised to make his father's house free in Israel. A man's house which was freed would have to pay no taxes. His sons would be freed from military service, and his daughters would not be taken as confectionaries and maids.

10. *What was David's reaction to Goliath's challenge? 17:26, 27*

When David heard the words of Goliath's challenge, he made more minute inquiries from the bystanders about the whole matter and dropped some words which gave rise to the supposition that he wanted to go and fight with the Philistine himself. David was making clear that Goliath had to fight not with men, but with God—and this with a living God, and not with an idol. In other words, David was not afraid; and when he continued speaking to different groups after this manner, he was finally brought into the presence of Saul.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### *Saul Sends David to Meet Goliath. 17:28-37*

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.

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.

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.

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.

11. *What was the attitude of his brother Eliab? 17:28-29*

David's eldest brother was greatly enraged at his talking courageously among the men, and he reproved David. It was his opinion that David was not contented with his lowly calling, but that he aspired to lofty things and took great delight in watching the bloodshed. The eagerness of a lad to see the battle needs no comment; the boys among Mohammed's followers at Medina wept when they were pronounced too young to go to war. Eliab was charging his brother with the very things of which he was guilty—presumption and wickedness of heart. David showed his purpose all the more by calmly answering his brother as he had formerly answered the other men.

12. *What were David's first words to Saul? 17:32*

When David was brought into the presence of Saul, he said, "Let no man's heart fail on his account: thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." To Saul's objection that he was a mere youth and the Philistine was a man of war from his youth up, David replied that as a shepherd he had taken a sheep out of the jaws of a lion and a bear and had also slain them both. David's courage rested upon his confident belief that the living God would not let His people be defied by the heathen with impunity. Saul then desired for him the help of the Lord in carrying out his resolution and commanded him to put on his own armor. David began to accept the proffered equipment, but he was not accustomed to such paraphernalia. He returned the armor to Saul and went forth armed only with his trustworthy sling and his dauntless faith in God.

13. *Why did David call Goliath an "uncircumcised Philistine? 17:36*

The covenant of circumcision was made with Abraham before Isaac was born. This covenant extended to Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar. It also extended to Abraham's descendants through Keturah, including such people as Midianites. Philistines were descendants of Ham, the

brother of Shem. Shem was the ancestor of Abraham's descendants, but the Hamitic line had received no covenant of circumcision. The Philistines were direct descendants of Cush (Genesis 10:8-14). To call a man an uncircumcised Philistine was to cast reflection upon his heritage. An uncircumcised Philistine was not under the covenant of God. He could not expect the spiritual blessings from God. It was as odious an epithet as David could think of to hurl at Goliath.

14. *What was Saul's final decision? 17:37*

Saul's final decision was that David should challenge Goliath. He raised objections about it, but was finally convinced that in the desperate situation there was no one else to meet the challenge. As he sent David forth, he pronounced a heartfelt blessing upon him: "Go, and the Lord be with thee." No better prayer could be offered for one being sent on a dangerous mission.

*David Slays Goliath. 17:38-54*

38 And Saul armed David with his armor, and he put a 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.

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.

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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.

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.

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

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.

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.

15. *Why did David not wear Saul's armor? 17:38, 39*

David did not wear Saul's armor because he had not proved it. Exactly what he meant by saying this is hard to tell, but it certainly would not fit David. Saul stood head and shoulders above anyone else in Israel. David was not fully grown at the time. The helmet of brass and the coat of mail would not be comfortable for David. In the second place, he had not proved that he knew how to use the sword. His weapons had been the weapons of rural use. In the third place, David had not proved himself worthy of wearing a soldier's armor. He was not unworthy, but it is normal for a soldier to earn his stripes and to deserve the privilege of carrying certain weapons. David was quite humble, and he may have meant that he had no right to wear the king's armor.

16. *With what was David equipped? 17:40*

David was equipped with a sling and a shepherd's bag, called a "scrip." In addition, he selected five smooth stones out of the brook as he crossed it. The exact nature of the scrip is not known, but it was probably a pouch which may have been suspended from his girdle or from a strap slung over his shoulder. As David had grown up watching his father's sheep, he had become skilled in the use of a sling. Benjaminites are mentioned in Judges 20:16 as being able to sling a stone at a hair's-breadth and not miss. Moreover they did this with their left hands. Such skill is difficult to obtain, but it is a deadly offensive and defensive weapon.

17. *What did Goliath and David say to each other?*  
17:43-47

The giant looked upon David with disdain and asked if they had sent someone out after him as after a dog with clubs and sticks. Goliath said that he would feed the flesh of David to the birds of the air. David replied that the giant was coming out to meet him with a sword and spear and javelin, but that he came to meet the giant in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom the giant had defied. David also said that Jehovah would deliver the giant into his hands and that he would give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines unto the birds of the heavens, and that all people would know that Jehovah depended not upon spears and swords, but that the battle would be won by His power.

18. *What was the result of the encounter?* 17:49-51

David was confident that the battle would be Jehovah's. He declared that all the earth would know that not by sword and spear doth Jehovah save; for the battle is Jehovah's, to dispose of according to his own sovereign will. When Goliath arose, therefore, and drew near, David ran towards him, took a stone out of his pocket, hurled it, and hit the Philistine in his face so that the stone entered his forehead and the giant fell upon his face to the ground. Goliath was so disdainful of David that he failed to close the visor of his helmet. David then cut off the head of the fallen giant with his own sword. Upon the downfall of their hero the Philistines were terrified and fled; whereupon the Israelites rose up with a cry to pursue the fleeing foe. They pursued them from the valley of the battle to the gates of Ekron, returned to plunder the camp of the enemy, and returned to their homes victorious. David took the head of Goliath and brought it to Jerusalem, and put his armor in his tent. From this place, Goliath's sword was taken to the Tabernacle at Nob. It was deposited

here by David in honor of the Lord and the victory that was granted over Israel's enemies.

19. *How far did the Philistines flee?* 17:52

Shaaraim is from the Hebrew word meaning, "two gates." There are two places by this name. One, a city near Azekah in Judah (Joshua 15:36), the other is a town in Simeon (I Chronicles 4:31), and evidently to be identified with Sharuhēn, which is between Gaza and Beersheba. Ekron is one of the Philistine cities where the Ark had been kept. Mention of the fact that the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim even to Gath and Ekron would indicate that the Philistines were driven back into their own territory. The mention of the Valley would indicate that there was another valley near Ekron. Reference could hardly be to the valley Elah where the battle was fought. This was no doubt a turning point in David's life and it was also a turning point in Israel's history. The Philistines are no longer found fighting up in the mountains of Judah and Ephraim. God's people were blessed with a decisive victory over their perennial enemies.

20. *Why did David take Goliath's head to Jerusalem?*

17:54

The Israelites tired from chasing the Philistines and spoiled their tents. The Philistines had left in such a complete rout that they had not taken their baggage and equipment with them. David himself took the sword of Goliath and put it in the tabernacle at Nob (I Samuel 21:9), but he took the head of Goliath and brought it to Jerusalem. The rest of his armor was kept in David's tent for the time being. Jerusalem was not yet David's capital city. He was evidently not gibbeting Goliath's head on the wall of Jerusalem as the Philistines did the bodies of Saul and Jonathan on the wall of Beth-shan (I Samuel 31:11). The Philistines also sent Saul's head

around about in the cities of the Philistines to publish the victory among their people.

David evidently did not pass around Goliath's head to publish the victory, but he may have brought it to Jerusalem to warn the Jebusites, who held the city, not to cause trouble for Saul and the armies of Israel. David was also possibly bringing it to throw it in the valley of Hinnom, which later was used as a place of refuse. If this had been the long-standing practice of casting refuse into this valley, David may have disposed of Goliath's head in this manner to show his utter contempt for anyone who would defy the armies of the living God.

*Saul Inquires About David's Background. 17:55-58*

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, Inquire thou whose son the strippling *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.

21. *Why did Saul seemingly fail to recognize David?*  
17:55-58

This does not necessarily mean that Saul did not know David as the young man that played the harp for him when he was under the spell of the evil spirit. The fact that he had asked no questions along this line when David first appeared before him indicates that he knew who he was. Otherwise it would be hard to understand how he was so ready to trust him. What he did not know was

the standing of David's family. It was the story of David concerning his family that seemed to have a strong appeal to Jonathan and led him to make the gift of his armor.

If Saul was going to make Jesse's house free in Israel, he would have to know more about the house. He may have inquired as to the number of sons in the home of Jesse. Furthermore, if David were to become the son-in-law of the king, Saul would want to know his background to make sure that he was of proper Israelite ancestry. It would also be necessary for Saul to find out more about David's family in order to know what kind of gifts to make for this daring deed of patriotism. David did surely more than to answer Saul's question. He must have gone into some little bit of explanation of his humble origins; because when he concluded speaking with Saul, Jonathan's soul was knit to that of David (I Samuel 18:1).

## CHAPTER 17 IN REVIEW

1. Where did the Philistines gather for battle? \_\_\_\_\_
2. To what tribe of Israel did the place belong? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the name of the Philistine champion? \_\_\_\_\_
4. From what Philistine city did he hail? \_\_\_\_\_
5. For how many days did Goliath issue his challenge? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many of David's brothers were in Saul's army? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which of David's brothers rebuked him? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many stones did David take from the brook? \_\_\_\_\_
9. To what Philistine city did Israel pursue the Philistines? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what Canaanite city did David carry Goliath's head? \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 18

- Vv. 1- 4 *David's covenant with Jonathan.* David's spirit was of such nature that Jonathan was immediately attracted to him. David made a covenant with Jonathan which was later renewed. The effect of the covenant was that David and Jonathan agreed not to harm each other. In case of the death of either the other agreed not to harm the descendants of the deceased.
- Vv. 5- 9 *Saul's jealousy of David.* David carried out all of his responsibilities with effectiveness. He won such favor in the eyes of the people that he became a national hero. The song which the people sang concerning the exploits of Saul and David aroused the jealousy of Saul because it was more favorable to David than it was to Saul.
- Vv. 10-16 *David driven out of Saul's court.* Saul's jealousy became so intense that he tried to kill David, not once but twice. Finally David was sent from the court to serve with the army in a distant outpost.
- Vv. 17-30 *David, the king's son-in-law.* It was understood by the men in the army that whoever slew Goliath would become the king's son-in-law, but Saul shamed David in the sight of Israel by giving his oldest daughter Merab to another man. When Saul found out that Michal loved David, he attempted to ensnare David by having him kill 100 Philistines as a dowry. When David did twice what was expected of him, Saul could hardly refuse to give Michal to him as his wife. This Saul did

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

although he knew that all Israel loved David greatly and he himself feared David more and more.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Kindred spirits are attracted to one another.* Though Saul was afraid of David, Saul's son Jonathan was a good man and found a fast friend in David. David's speech before Saul after David had killed the giant was of such humble nature that Jonathan's soul was knit to the soul of David immediately. Men today often find their closest friends among fellow workers in the church. Such ought to be the case with God's people. Their closest friends ought to be those who are of like precious faith.
2. *Two wrongs do not make a right.* David did what was expected of him even though Saul treated him shamefully. He must have been tempted to retaliate against Saul's injustices, but the idea of gaining revenge never gained the upper hand in David's thinking. It seemed that the more Saul oppressed David the more faithful David was to the tasks assigned him by Saul. David's actions remind us of the injunction of the apostle Paul to "overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

Saul's Reception of David Into His Court, 18:1-30.

#### *David's Covenant With Jonathan.* 18:1-4

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more to his father's house.

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.

1. *What took place between David and Jonathan when he told about his family? 18:1-4*

David's victory over Goliath was a turning-point in his life, which opened the way to the throne. This deed brought him out of the rural shepherd life to the scene of Israel's wars. In these wars Jehovah blessed all his undertakings with success. It also brought him, on the other hand, into such a relation to the royal house, which had been rejected by God, though it still continued to reign, as produced lasting and beneficial results in connection with his future calling. In the king himself, from whom the Spirit of God had departed, there was soon stirred up such jealousy of David as his rival to whom the kingdom would one day come, that he attempted at first to get rid of him by stratagem. When this failed, and David's renown steadily increased, he proceeded to open hostility and persecution. Jonathan, however, clung more and more firmly to David with self-effacing love and sacrifice. This friendship on the part of the son of the king not only helped David to bear the more easily all the enmity and persecution of the king but awakened and strengthened in him a pure feeling of unswerving fidelity towards the king himself.

2. *Why did David remain permanently with Saul? 18:2*

When David first came to Saul's court, he went to and fro to feed his father's sheep (17:15). His habit must have been to spend some time with Saul, then as Saul would show improvement, David would be free to go back to his father's house. If Saul's condition deteriorated, David would be called again to the court. After David slew the giant he vaulted into such a prominent place in the life of Israel that Saul kept him with him permanently.

This change of his schedule must not have been because of the worsening of Saul's condition, but rather the fact that his courage had been demonstrated in such a way as to make his services in constant demand.

3. *Why did Jonathan give his armor to David? 18:4*

As a sign and pledge of his friendship, Jonathan gave David his clothes and his armor. This seems to have been a common custom of very ancient times. The manifestation of Jonathan's love is seen in the covenant. Saul had earlier been willing to clothe David in his armor, but his was a temporary measure. Jonathan's gift was a permanent bestowal of honor and favor.

4. *When did David become Saul's armor-bearer? 18:4*

When Absalom was brought back from Gilead, he prepared a chariot of horses and fifty men to run before him (II Samuel 15:1). Saul did not have as much equipage, but he must have had several armor-bearers. When David first came to be with Saul, Saul loved him greatly, and David became his armor-bearer (16:21). Since David came and went and was not constantly at Saul's court, David was probably not his only armor-bearer. After he killed Goliath, it would appear that David was made Saul's personal armor-bearer. Saul set David over his men of war. This prominent position given to David was pleasing in the sight of the people. The servants who were under David's jurisdiction were also pleased with his leadership.

*Saul's Jealousy of David. 18:5-9*

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.

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.

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.

5. *What caused Saul's anger after David had defeated the Philistines? 18:7, 8*

The eulogies of the women who greeted the returning army roused the jealousy of Saul. He therefore removed David from service near his person and appointed him over a band of soldiers in the field. David's activity and discretion were such that his hold on the people increased, which increased also Saul's jealousy. Michal, the younger daughter of Saul fell in love with David; and Saul made this an occasion for exposing David to new dangers. David's success in this instance added to the king's dislike, which became a settled hatred. At one point we are told of Saul's attempt to murder David. At another point, we are told of Saul's unfulfilled promise to give his older daughter to David. All these are but expressions of Saul's growing hatred.

6. *What is the meaning of Saul's eyeing David? 18:9*

Saul was so jealous of David that he kept him under constant surveillance. He was especially cognizant of all honors bestowed on him and heard with displeasure the songs that the women sang about David. From that day forward, Saul watched David's every move. He was evidently watching to see if he could find some flaw in him. Had David made a wrong step, Saul would have been

quick to condemn him and perhaps dishonor him or even kill him. Each of David's victories must have brought added displeasure and jealousy for Saul. Every favor bestowed on David must have given him acute mental anguish. He was indeed filled with an evil spirit.

*David Driven Out of Saul's Court. 18:10-16*

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.

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.

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.

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord *was* with him.

15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

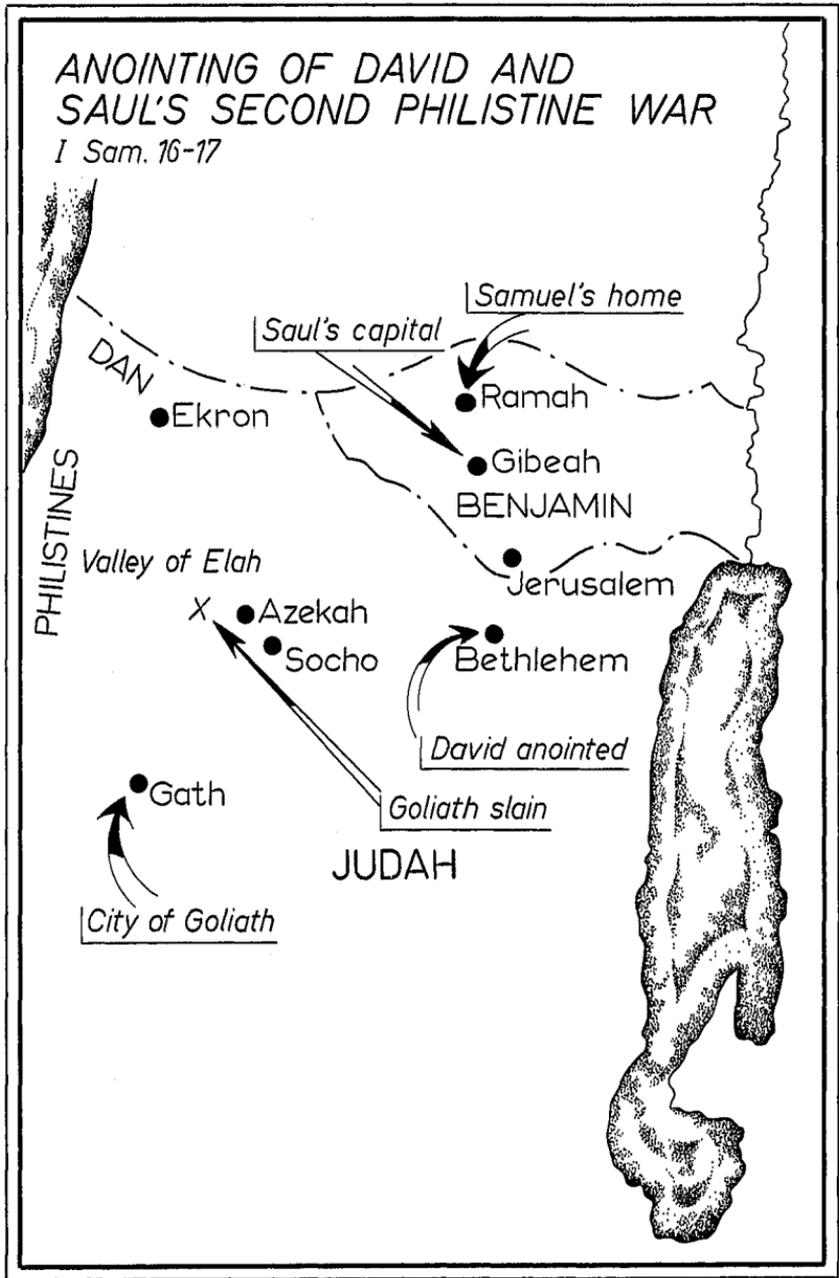
16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

*7. How could Saul prophesy? 18:10*

The evil spirit that came upon Saul was a supernatural influence. It was more than jealousy. Saul may have left himself open for the seizure of the evil spirit by falling into moods of melancholia. His condition may have been aggravated by the nearly insane jealousy he felt towards David. His condition was quite unnatural. The spirit of the living God not only filled his servants that they might reveal the truth, but Satan worked with all power and signs and lying wonders among his servants (II Thessalon-

# ANOINTING OF DAVID AND SAUL'S SECOND PHILISTINE WAR

I Sam. 16-17





General view of the valley of Elah

Matson Photo Service

ians 2:9). Saul was filled with an evil spirit, and his prophesying was not done in truth.

8. *How did David escape twice?* 18:11

The exact nature of Saul's attack on David is not made clear from this verse. He did have a javelin in his hand as David played before him. Saul threw the javelin, intending to pin David to the wall with it. The fact that David escaped once would be enough, but the statement is made that he escaped twice. Some commentators feel that Saul swung the javelin. If this were the case, David ducked and escaped the blow. Saul may then have swung again, and David dodged again. This kind of action does not fit the description of Saul's intention to pin David to the wall. It would be better to view this as a statement that this kind of an attack was made not only once but twice.

9. *Why did Saul make David captain over a thousand?*  
18:13

Saul's jealousy of David turned into fear. The Lord was with David and blessed him, but an evil spirit was in possession of Saul. Saul removed David from being his armor-bearer, not because he thought David would seek revenge, but because the constant aggravation and irritation of his presence was more than Saul could take. He also felt that David would be in great danger out in the field of battle. He made him a captain over a thousand men (18:16). David never made a wrong step. He behaved himself very wisely. He gave Saul no occasion to find fault in him. David's blameless conduct caused Saul to be more and more afraid of him. For this reason Israel and Judah loved David. Once again a distinction is made between the eleven other tribes and the leading tribe of Judah. Such a reference is not an indication of the books being written after the schism, but rather a manifestation of the fact that God had chosen Judah to be the leading tribe. David's conduct brought him into

such a place of prominence that he was like Joshua, who was chosen to take Moses' place as Israel's leader. As Moses was laying down the reins of government, he prayed that the Lord would set a man over the congregation who would go out before them and come in before them. This man's responsibility was to lead them out and bring them in. As Moses said, he had this responsibility so that the congregation of the Lord "be not as sheep which have no shepherd" (Numbers 27:17). Solomon used this same kind of reference to indicate his place of leadership as their wise king. Solomon said that he did not know how to "go out and come in" (II Chronicles 1:10). David must have had a place of very great prominence as his irreproachable character and wise conduct won much favor for him.

*David the King's Son-in-law. 18:17-30*

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.

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?

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.

20 And Michal Saul's daughter loved David. and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

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.

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.

23 And Saul's servants spake these 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.

25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

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.

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.

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.

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.

#### 10. *Who was Merab?* 18:17

Merab was Saul's oldest daughter by Ahinoam, Saul's wife (14:50). Saul's men understood that whoever killed Goliath would become the king's son-in-law. Since Merab was his older daughter and as yet unmarried, he promised

to give her to David as his wife. He asked additional service on David's part as he entered into this covenant. He charged him to be valiant for Saul and to fight the Lord's battles. Saul was not at all anxious for David to continue his valiant service, but he was hoping that if David went into battle against the Philistines, the Philistines might kill him. Saul would thereby be freed from the threat to his throne. David was humbled by this promised honor. He did not count himself worthy of being the king's son-in-law. He did not count his life to be of much effect and evidently fought the Philistines without regard for his own safety.

11. *Why was Saul's promise not kept? 18:19*

Saul showed himself to be a very wicked king. He not only set David in positions where his life would be endangered and threatened his life on a number of occasions, but he failed to keep his word to David. A character study of Saul would reveal that he was jealous, fearful and dishonorable. He became a complexity of evil motives and deeds. When it was time that he should be married to Merab, Saul betrayed him and gave Merab to be the wife of Adriel, a Meholathite.

12. *Who was Michal? 18:20*

Michal was Saul's younger daughter. Her mother was also Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz (14:50). Michal loved David, and this information was brought to Saul. He saw in Michal's association with David an opportunity to lay a snare for David. He proposed that David would be his son-in-law by marrying Michal, but he demanded a dowry of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. The servants of Saul were sent to find out David's reaction to such a proposal. David felt that he was being mocked by the king and said, "seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law" (18:23). He evidently believed that Saul was toying with him, and he did not think it was a laughing matter. In other words, David took the proposal

seriously and was willing to do whatever was honorable to be given the hand of Michal in marriage.

13. *Why did Saul demand the foreskins of David?* 18:25

Jacob worked for seven years in order to receive the hand of Rachel in marriage (Genesis 29:28). Saul demanded a very unusual dowry from David in the form of 100 foreskins of the Philistines. Hardly any personal advantage came to Saul by demanding such a dowry. He was evidently trying to place David in such a dangerous situation that David could not escape. If David went out to kill one hundred Philistines and one of them killed him, then Saul would have removed this constant source of aggravation. Once again David showed himself willing to give more than could be expected of him. He not only killed a hundred Philistines, but doubled the number. He killed two hundred men and brought their foreskins to Saul.

14. *What is the meaning of the phrase, "in full tale"?*  
18:27

There was no lack of any in the total of two hundred foreskins. The number was not one hundred ninety-nine. It was a full two hundred, just twice as many as Saul had demanded. This phrase is an old English phrase from which we sometimes get the expression, "all told." We may make reference to there being two hundred people, "all told," at some kind of meeting. This expression has persisted in our language from the old English way of saying that a number was fully counted.

15. *Why did the princes of the Philistines go forth?* 18:30

The princes of the Philistines probably went out to avenge the killing of two hundred of their men by David as he satisfied the beastly whim of king Saul. They went forth to battle against the Israelites as they probably did on a number of occasions. David behaved himself wisely as ever. His behavior was better than that of any of the other servants of Saul so that his reputation grew better

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and better. His reputation even spread into Philistia, and all the Israelites came to depend upon him greatly. The Philistines feared him as a mighty man of war, and the Israelites looked to him as a champion of their cause.

### CHAPTER 18 IN REVIEW

1. What was the name of Saul's son? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What items did Saul's son give David? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many slain did the people ascribe to David? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many slain did the people ascribe to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
5. To whom did Saul give his older daughter in marriage? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the name of the daughter of Saul whom David married? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What rank did David hold in Saul's army? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many men did he have under him? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many foreskins of Philistines did Saul demand of David as a dowry? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many foreskins did David secure? \_\_\_\_\_

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 19

- Vv. 1- 7 *Jonathan intercedes for David.* Jonathan spoke kindly to Saul on David's behalf. He brought the two together again.

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- Vv. 8-17 *David driven out a second time.* Now Jonathan's good offices were to no avail. Once again Saul tried to kill David. When David escaped from his flying javelin, Saul sent messengers to David's home; and Michal, David's wife and Saul's daughter, helped him to escape.
- Vv. 18-24 *David with Samuel.* The old prophet Samuel was David's good friend. Samuel and Saul had parted company long ago. Samuel had gone to anoint David to be king. David knew that he would find a friend in Samuel. He went to him in Ramah.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Some men are determined to do evil.* Some situations are of such an evil nature that no amount of good seems able to prevail. Some men are so filled with evil thoughts that they will not be persuaded by any good reasoning. Such seems to be the case with Saul. Christians will do well to realize this truth and cease to cast their pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6).
2. *A man's enemies may be those of his own house* (Matthew 10:36). Even though David was Saul's son-in-law, Saul was determined to kill him. Michal, David's wife, seems to have lied about David's threatening her. David must have wondered if there were any good person to help him since they of this own family were against him.
3. *A friend in need is a friend indeed.* Samuel had brought the call of God to David when he anointed him in Bethlehem. Now the side of events was going against David. David must have sorely needed the asylum afforded him by the man of God in Ramah.

## David's Final Flight from Saul's Court, 19:1-24.

*Jonathan Intercedes for David.* 19:1-7

And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should 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.

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?

6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, *As the Lord liveth*, he shall not be slain.

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.

1. *Who were Saul's servants?* 19:1

Saul's servants would be his courtiers. They were his other armor-bearers, his captains of the army, and all those who had an office in his kingdom. Saul extended his personal scheme to include all those over whom he had any control. He embraced Jonathan, his son, in the order. All were expected to do whatever they could to catch David and kill him. Such a widespread plot made it necessary for David to be always on the defensive. Had it not been for Jonathan, Saul's plot may have been suc-

cessful; but Jonathan told David of this extensive attempt on the part of Saul to kill him.

2. *What was Jonathan's scheme? 19:3*

Jonathan intended to make an opportunity to speak personally to his father about David. He found this opportunity as the two were in a field near the place where David was fighting. Jonathan spoke only good of David. His reasoning was good, and he reminded Saul of the good things David had done for him. Jonathan pointed out that David had not sinned against Saul. His activity had brought honor and glory to Saul and his kingdom. Jonathan reminded his father that David took his own life in his hands as he went out against Goliath. Jonathan believed that the Lord had worked in these instances and had brought about a great salvation for all Israel. Jonathan reminded Saul that he had seen this himself and rejoiced over it. Jonathan could see no reason for Saul's seeking to slay David. To Jonathan the killing of David would be the shedding of innocent blood.

3. *Why did Saul yield to Jonathan's appeal? 19:6*

When Saul was in full possession of his faculties, he must have known that he was wrong in trying to bring harm to David. Much of his fear of David must have come when he was in possession of the evil spirit. If Jonathan caught him at a time when he was rational, he could make his father understand what was right. Such must have been the case for Saul listened to Jonathan.

*David Driven Out a Second Time. 19:8-17*

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.

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.

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.

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 tonight, tomorrow thou shalt be slain.

12 So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.

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.

15 And Saul sent the messengers *again* to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him.

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.

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?

#### 4. *Why did Saul have his spear in his hand? 19:9*

Saul probably had the spear as a sceptre. He must have held it in his hand as he presided over his court. This would be in keeping with ancient oriental custom. It is also possible that Saul kept his spear always at hand in order that he might seize upon an opportunity to kill David. The spear that he held was evidently in the form of a javelin which he could throw. On the occasion described in this chapter he threw the javelin, but missed David. The javelin then stuck in the wall as David escaped out of Saul's presence. This is the second incident mentioned in which David escaped from a direct attack

on the part of Saul. Since the other occasion mentioned David's escaping twice, this would make at least three times that David escaped out of Saul's presence (18:10).

5. *Why did Michal have teraphim? 19:13*

Teraphim were little household images. The fact that Michal had these in her house reveals that she was not purely a worshipper of the Lord. Teraphim were found in the house of Laban, and Rachel stole them when she left her father's house (Genesis 31:19). These images were not large, for Rachel was able to hide her father's teraphim in the camel's baggage and sit on them. If Michal had larger images so that only one of the teraphim was put in the bed to look like a human form, they must have been larger than those stolen by Rachel, since it would be hard for Rachel to hide an image of this size. The pillow of goat's hair would resemble human hair quite naturally. It was goat's hair which Jacob put on his hands to feel like the human hair on Esau's hands (Genesis 27:16). Ancient dramatists in Greece and Rome used kid skin for the making of puppets to resemble humans, and they used kid skin with the hair to make wigs and toupees. Kid skin very nearly resembles human skin in its softness and pliability.

6. *Was Michal's answer true? 19:17*

Nothing is said about David's threatening Michal. David may have asked her to let him go and to give him time to escape so that he might protect her. Saul may have been so senseless in his attack on David that he would have killed his own daughter along with David. The inference of her statement is that she could not prevent David's escape. She gives the impression that David forced her to make up the bed so that it appeared that he was in it, even threatening her life if she failed to cooperate with him. If this be the case, there is no reference to it in the narrative. More than likely it is a piece of deceit on the part of Michal, and she is not justified in lying thus about the matter.

*David With Samuel. 19:18-24*

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.

19 And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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?

7. *What was Naioth of Ramah? 19:19*

Naioth was the communal dwelling place of the company of the prophets found in Ramah. It can hardly be taken as a town for there is no reference of Samuel's moving his residence to a smaller village which would be under the jurisdiction of Ramah. The Naioth would likely be located at the highest point in Ramah. This would make the ideal dwelling place of the prophet.

8. *What was Samuel's position with the prophets? 19:20*

Samuel was called the "head" of the prophets. He had jurisdiction over them and occupied the same place that

Elijah evidently occupied at a later time. When Elijah was about to be taken into heaven, Elisha asked to be given a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elisha was evidently asking to be recognized as Elijah's successor as head of the prophets (II Kings 2:9).

9. *What caused the prophesying?* 19:20b

The Spirit of God came upon the men. The prophets could not work up an ecstatic frame of mind. They were not whirling dervishes and even the use of the musical instruments does not account for the spirit of prophecy coming upon these men. It has well been said that no prophecy is of any private interpretation. Men of God did not speak as it pleased them, "for no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21).

10. *Who were the company of the prophets?* 19:20

The company of the prophets are sometimes known as the "band" of the prophets. On other occasions they are known as the "school of the prophets." Another designation is "sons of the prophets." These were young men that are met in the Scripture all the way from the time of Samuel down to the time of Amos who said that he was not "a son of a prophet" (Amos 7:14). These men were allowed to marry, but they lived in a common dwelling place. They had an older prophet as their leader. On occasions they were sent on such important missions as anointing kings, even in a country like Syria. They were sent on special missions such as that fulfilled by the unnamed prophet who announced judgment on Jeroboam's idolatry (I Kings 13:1).

11. *In what sense was Saul naked?* 19:24

Saul did not have on his usual regal costume. He was probably clad only in his undergarments. This truth is brought out in such instances as the occasion on which David danced before the Ark. On that occasion, he wore a linen ephod (II Samuel 6:14). When David got to his

house, Michal upbraided him because she thought he had shamelessly uncovered himself (II Samuel 6:20). Evidently Michal was incensed that her husband, the king, would dance before the Ark in such an abbreviated costume as a priest's ephod. She must have thought that it was beneath his dignity to be among the common people and not to have on his robe and crown. On another occasion we learn that Peter put on his coat and jumped into the sea because he was "naked" (John 21:7). The American Standard Version contains a footnote indicating that Peter had on his "undergarment only." This must have been the case with Saul's lying on the ground all night and prophesying.

12. *Why is the proverb given twice? 19:24*

When Saul first met a band of prophets after leaving Samuel, he fell in with them and began to prophesy (10:12). People learned of this, and they started the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" On this occasion at Naioth Saul once again fell among the prophets and prophesied. The occasion received a new exemplification. It also received a new basis and was therefore the cause of the proverb being revived and emphasized.

## CHAPTER 19 IN REVIEW

1. Who interceded with Saul on David's behalf? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Saul hurl at David? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did Michal put in David's bed? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Of what was the pillow made? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did David threaten to kill Michal? \_\_\_\_\_
6. To whom did David flee? \_\_\_\_\_
7. In what city did David find refuge? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What group of men were prophesying when Saul's messengers met them? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where did Saul go in search of David? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Quote the proverb which arose from Saul's prophesying. \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 20

- Vv. 1-10 *David's appeal to Jonathan.* Since Jonathan had helped David to return to Saul's court at one time, David sought him out again. Jonathan was still David's friend and agreed to assist David.
- Vv. 11-23 *Jonathan's plan.* Jonathan renewed his covenant with David and agreed to find out his father's intentions concerning David. He also arranged a plan whereby David would know the outcome of Jonathan's inquiry of his father.
- Vv. 24-34 *Saul's attack on Jonathan and David.* When Saul found out that Jonathan was in touch with David he berated not only Jonathan but also his own wife Ahinoam as well.
- Vv. 35-42 *David's and Jonathan's parting.* When David learned of Saul's implacable anger, he knew that he could not return to the court. He knew that he was doomed to live the life of a fugitive. The parting with Jonathan was sad, but in the best interests of both.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The value of faithful friends.* At the risk of his own life Jonathan was willing to help David. Their friendship is classic in its very nature. The two stand as examples of what friends ought to be to each other.
2. *The vile fruits of jealousy.* Saul became so intense in his hatred, fear and jealousy of David that he attempted to kill his own son. He called his wife a "perverse, rebellious woman" (v. 30). Such is the way of one who is proud and selfish.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

3. *The strengthening of truth in adversity.* The parting of Jonathan and David is filled with heartwarming lessons. The two wept unashamedly, for their souls had been knit inseparably together by their experiencing danger together. Such is the outcome of the fires of testing on friendship that is true.

David's Farewell to Jonathan, 20:1-42.

*David's Appeal to Jonathan.* 20:1-10

And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

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 show it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? *it is not so.*

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.

4 Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do *it* for thee.

5 And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, tomorrow *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 Beth-lehem 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 has 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?

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?

10 Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what *if* thy father answer thee roughly?

1. *Why did David appeal to Jonathan? 20:1*

Samuel was the man who had anointed David to be king over Israel. In this role, Samuel had showed himself to be a friend of David. David first fled to him. After he had been with Samuel in Ramah, his thoughts must have turned to other friends and supporters. No one had been any closer to David than Jonathan. In addition Jonathan would have full access to the court of Saul. Jonathan would know if there were some possible reasons for Saul's continued animosity. It was for these reasons that David next turned to Jonathan. His question was three-fold: What had he done? What was his iniquity of any kind? What was his sin against Saul? David thought Saul had surely indicated some reason why he was seeking to take his life.

2. *Why did Jonathan deny his father's intentions? 20:2*

Jonathan did not so much deny his father's intention as to utter a prayer that God would spare David's life. It was unthinkable to Jonathan that David should be slain. His continued speech, however, reveals that he evidently thought that his father was not intending to take such drastic action. As heir apparent to the throne, Jonathan would be taken into his father's most intimate confidence. Nothing of any significance would be hidden from Jonathan; and he felt that Saul's intentions towards David were ultimately for good, except when his father was in the throes of the state of depression into which he fell.

3. *Why did David insist that Saul did intend to kill him?*  
20:3

David said that Saul knew that there was a deep friendship between Jonathan and David. On account of this friendship he believed Saul had failed to reveal his full intentions towards David as a part of the information he gave to Jonathan. This was one aspect of the kingdom's business into which Saul had not taken Jonathan into his confidence. David thought that Saul did not want to grieve Jonathan in this matter and had spared him the mental anguish of knowing his father was intending to slay his best friend. David insisted that there was only a very slight chance that he could escape. He was just one step away from death.

4. *What was the plan devised between Jonathan and David?* 20:5

David proposed being absent from the feast of the new moon. He intended to go and hide himself in a field for three days while Jonathan made specific inquiry into the status of Saul's plans. Should Jonathan find out that David could safely come back into the court, he was to come out into the field and get him. If there were no possibility of his being reinstated at the court, Jonathan was to come and inform him so that he could flee from Saul.

5. *Was there a feast at Jesse's house?* 20:6

The feast of the new moon was a very important feast to the Israelites. Every male member was expected to observe the beginning of the new month. It is quite possible that there was a feast being held at Jesse's house in Bethlehem. The Tabernacle in Shiloh had lost its significance to the people since the Ark had been captured by the Philistines. The Ark itself was still in the house of Abinadab on the western border of the tribe of Judah. The faithful people of Israel would continue to hold their feast. Since this is mentioned as an annual feast, it may

have been the first day of the new year, the first day of the month Abib.

6. *How would David's absence indicate Saul's attitude?*  
20:7

David would surely be missed. This may have been the very time at which Saul had laid the plot to catch David. He may have been waiting for this occasion when all his courtiers were expected to be with him. The fact that David was gone would irritate the king. The extent of his irritation would indicate his attitude towards David.

7. *What covenant of the Lord was between David and Jonathan?* 20:8

The covenant of friendship into which David and Jonathan had entered (18:1, 2) was considered a holy covenant by David. It was more than a statement of friendship between two men. David did not take it lightly. He had sworn unto the Lord that he would show kindness to Jonathan. Jonathan had made the same vow to him. This covenant was renewed time and time again throughout the lives of the two men. It bound them together inseparably.

8. *What danger was there in the plan for Jonathan?* 20:10

David foresaw the possibility of Saul's answering Jonathan "roughly." As the matter transpired, Saul did answer Jonathan roughly. He called him the son of a perverse, rebellious woman (v. 30). Saul even cast his javelin at Jonathan to smite him (v. 33). It is hard to imagine any depth to which Saul could have fallen where he would be lower than he was at this time. He had turned upon his armor-bearer and champion, David. He had accused his own daughter of turning against him. He had imagined that his courtiers were all against him. He came to the place where he cast reproach and suspicion upon his own wife and then threw a javelin to kill his heir and prince.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### *Jonathan's Plan: 20:11-23*

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 tomorrow any time, *or* the third *day*, and behold, *if there be good* toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show 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 show 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.

14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not:

15 But *also* thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

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.

18 Then Jonathan said to David, Tomorrow *is* the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

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 not 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 for ever.

9. *What is the meaning of Jonathan's prayer? 20:12, 13*

As Jonathan and David went into the field, Jonathan prayed to the Lord God of Israel. He asked God to do evil to him if he did not tell David the outcome of the matter. His prayer was really a vow. It was a solemn oath taken before the Lord that he would sound out his father and then tell David. If, for any reason, Jonathan failed to bring word to David, he prayed that God would smite him.

10. *What was the house of David? 20:16*

As yet David had no family. The covenant which Jonathan made with David was looking into the future to a time when David would have heirs. The covenant which Jonathan and David made was not only between themselves personally, but it was to be binding upon their descendants. It was a promise that neither family would turn upon the other. Such a covenant was needed because regal families quite often exterminated each other. One family coming to the throne would customarily seek out all the members of the other royal house and attempt to exterminate them. By doing this they would dispose of any threat which might be made to their claims to the throne.

11. *Where was the stone Ezel? 20:19*

The spot is lost to present-day archaeologists, but it was evidently near Ramah in Benjamin. The stone would have marked the field and spot where David was to hide. This would make it possible for Jonathan to come back to the area and be certain that he was in the vicinity of David's hiding place.

12. *How would the shooting of arrows be a sign to David?*

20:20-23

The signal was arranged so that David would know the outcome of Jonathan's inquiry without any direct conversation. If Jonathan shot arrows into the field, and then said to the lad who was to fetch the arrows that the arrows were beyond the boy, then David would know that he was to get up and flee. If Jonathan shot the arrows and then said to the lad who was fetching them that the arrows were between Jonathan and the lad, David would know that it was safe for him to come out of hiding. David was then to get up from his hiding place and come back with the boy and the arrows to Jonathan. Should Jonathan be followed into the field, there would be no danger to anybody concerned. If Saul were still threatening David's life, the boy would run on and get the arrows. He would bring them back to Jonathan and they would return to Gibeah. After they had gone David would get up and flee. If Saul were favorably inclined towards David, David could listen for the signal and then get up and come back with all in a friendly and amiable atmosphere.

*Saul's Attack on Jonathan and David. 20:24-34*

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.

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 today?

28 And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave* of me *to go* to Beth-lehem:

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 favor in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

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?

31 For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send an fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

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.

### 13. *Where was David's seat?* 20:25

From the arrangement given in the text it appears that Abner sat on one side of Saul and David sat on the other. Mention is made of the fact that Jonathan arose which may be an indication of Jonathan's having given Abner his seat next to Saul. Saul's seat was by the wall, a reference that indicates the use of a room where Saul could come and dine. The feast itself was important to the Israelites and David might well be expected to attend.

### 14. *Why did Saul think David was unclean?* 20:26

Those who touched dead bodies were not clean and could not attend the feasts. Since David was a man of war and

was sent out to fight Saul's battles, he might be expected to be in this condition. Even some animals were considered unclean to the Israelites, and anyone who touched them was unclean until the end of the day (Leviticus 11:27). When Saul missed David from the feast of the new moon, he was hoping that he was absent for some unavoidable reason, and the most logical explanation would be that he was ceremonially unclean and therefore not eligible to participate in the feast. This would lead Saul to expect that David would be at the feast on the next day. With this thought in mind he dismissed the situation.

15. *Why would David's brother command him to be at home? 20:29*

The elder brother had the right of *prototokia*. This was the same as the Latin *primogeniture*. The firstborn in the family was given a double portion of the father's inheritable goods. He had the responsibility for the younger children and especially for the arranging of marriages for the daughters in the family. If the father left a widow, the older son was also responsible for her welfare. David's father was not yet dead, for we learn that he later joined David in his flight from Saul (22:3). Eliab, David's older brother, may well have been assuming many of the responsibilities of the head of the family during the years of Jesse's later life.

16. *Why would Jonathan's love for David cause confusion? 20:30*

Under normal circumstances Jonathan would have been heir to Saul's throne. The love that Jonathan had for David led him to honor David as the leading man in Israel. By doing this he was taking a second place himself and was not filling the prominent role which Saul thought belonged to the crown prince. Saul evidently believed that Jonathan would rather see David sitting on the throne than to sit on the throne himself. Such a situation would lead to a break in the genealogy of the house of Saul or at

least to a change of dynasties. In this way Ahinoam, Jonathan's mother, would not be the queen mother. This would cause confusion on her part.

17. *Why did Jonathan become angry?* 20:34

Jonathan became so angry that he left the feast. He did not participate in the services of the second day of the feast of the new moon, and he was filled with fierce anger. He had been convinced beyond all question or doubt of the fact that his father was determined to kill David. In addition to this Saul had cast reproach upon Jonathan's mother and even attempted to take Jonathan's life. Although Jonathan appears to be the kind of a person who would give the other fellow every benefit of the doubt, he finally saw the truth of the matter. Such a desperate situation filled him with grief and anger. He was grieved for David's sake. He was filled with fierce anger towards his father.

*David's and Jonathan's Parting.* 20:35-42

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.

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.

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.

18. *Why did Jonathan send the lad back to the city? 20:40*

Since no one else had come with Jonathan and the lad who fetched his arrows, Jonathan was safe in sending the lad back to the city so that he could have one more conversation with David. If anyone had come with them, Jonathan would probably have simply given the signal and then gone back to the city with the lad. Moreover, if someone had been watching the events, Jonathan would not have dared to bring David out of hiding. As they were alone except for the lad, Jonathan ordered the lad to leave them. After the lad left, David was free to come out of his hiding place.

19. *In what way did David exceed? 20:41*

The extreme warmth of the friendship of David and Jonathan found its expression on this occasion as they embraced one another and wept. Their weeping must have been filled with uncontrollable sobs. This condition continued for a time until finally David gained control of his emotions and led Jonathan to gain control of himself. The two were then able to talk about their affairs.

20. *What facts show the superiority of Jonathan's friendship with David? 20:42*

Jonathan had much to lose personally by befriending David. Events which were transpiring made it clear that David was the most outstanding citizen in Israel. Although Jonathan was probably unaware of David's being

anointed as king by Samuel, he must have realized that David was destined for a place of leadership in the kingdom. Jonathan did not try to press his claims to the throne but acquiesced to the Lord in the matter. Their friendship was bound by an oath which they swore "in the name of the Lord." Their prayer was that the Lord would be between them and between their houses forever. Their parting prayer is of the same spirit as that of Jacob and Laban as they separated. They gave us the Mizpah saying, "the Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another" (Genesis 32:49). As Jonathan and David parted, they prayed that God would watch them while they went their separate ways. When they could no longer be together personally to counsel and aid each other, their prayer was for the Lord's abiding presence.

## CHAPTER 20 IN REVIEW

1. To whom did David go after he left Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
2. From what feast was David absent? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where did David say he was going? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did Saul think he was not at the feast? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Near what stone was David to hide? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How did Saul describe his wife? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did Saul hurl at Jonathan? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who sat by Saul's side at the feast? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who went to the field with Jonathan? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What did Jonathan shoot into the field? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 21

- Vv. 1- 9 *David at Nob.* The Ark of the covenant was not yet returned to the tabernacle. The high priest was at Shiloh in the days of Samuel but after the Ark was captured, the Tabernacle was evidently located at Nob. David wanted to worship God and so went to the Tabernacle. He found some help and friendship in the priests that were there.
- Vv. 10-15 *David at Gath.* David's flight to Philistia seems ill advised, but he must have thought that he would find help there. Since Saul was seeking to kill him he might find safety among Saul's Philistine enemies. He fled to the city which had been introduced earlier as the home of Goliath. It was a very important Philistine city and ruled over by Achish, the king.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Let us go into the house of the Lord*" (Psalm 122:1). David sang this song which he taught Israel, but this was evidently the tenor of his life long before he wrote the Psalm. Since he was in dire straits, he not only sought out the priest of God but also went to the house of the Lord where he could worship in an acceptable way. Here he would have opportunity to make a sacrifice unto God and to seek the will of the Lord for his life.
2. *Politics make strange bedfellows.* This old adage has been seen in many different instances. Once David had fought against the Philistines. He slew the champion of their army and caused them to flee from the armies of Israel. Now he sought refuge among them. His reasoning was wise according to the ways of this world, but it fills us with chagrin to see a man of God

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brought so low that he must affiliate himself with the enemies of God's people in order to save his own life.

3. *The enemies of God's people watch them closely.* When David got to Achish in Gath, he found that they already knew the song which was sung in Israel crediting David with slaying ten thousands of men whereas Saul had slain only thousands. They also recognized him as being the one who was to become king of Israel. He was thus not able to find safety among them. Christians would be surprised to find out how much non-Christians know about their everyday activities. We ought to realize that non-believers watch the believers very closely.

David's Flight to Gath, 21:1-15.

### *David At Nob. 21:1-9*

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?*

2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place.

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.

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.

6 So the priest gave him hallowed *bread*: for there was no bread there but the shew-bread, 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.

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.

1. *To what place did David first flee? 21:1*

David fled first of all to Nob, to Abimelech the high priest, to inquire the will of God through him concerning his future course and induced him to give him bread and the sword of Goliath also, under the pretext of having to perform a secret commission from the king with greatest speed. The town of Nob, or Nobeh, was at that time a priests' city, in which, according to the following account, the Tabernacle was then standing and the legal worship carried on. According to Isaiah 10:30, 32, it was between Anathoth and Jerusalem: and in all probability it had been preserved in the village of *el-Isawiyeh*, an hour's distance from Jerusalem and the same distance to the southeast of Gibeah of Saul.

2. *Why did David say he was alone? 21:2*

The high priest was surprised to see David, the son-in-law of the king and a chieftain among the soldiers, without

a company of men with him. He asked David about this, and David replied that he had been sent on a certain business that was secret, therefore, he said he was traveling alone. He explained further that he had dispatched his soldiers to other places. He must have had some young men, but not his usual soldiers, with him.

3. *Was it right for him to eat the bread? 21:3*

For David and the young men to eat the shew bread was a departure from the Levitical Law. As is stated in the Law (Leviticus 24:9), the bread was for the priests. According to a higher law of love for a fellow man in need, the high priest may have justified himself in giving this bread to David. Jesus made reference to this incident when the Pharisees found fault with the disciples for being hungry and plucking ears of corn to eat on the Sabbath day. Jesus did not expressly justify David in his taking the shew bread, but He referred to the matter in order to give pause to the Pharisees. Jesus might have expected them to find fault with David rather than with his disciples (Matthew 12:1-4).

4. *Why did the high priest ask if the young men were clean? 21:4, 5*

The high priest was reluctant to give the holy bread to men who were ceremonially unclean. A part of the sanctification of a people for a holy occasion was their refraining from their normal relationships with their wives (Exodus 19:15). If the young men of David were ceremonially clean, the high priest would not feel as reluctant to give them the holy bread.

5. *Who was Doeg? 21:7*

Doeg was an Edomite. The Edomites were descendants of Esau (Genesis 36:1). These people lived in the country south of the Dead Sea. As the brother of Jacob, Esau was given a secondary blessing of Jacob. Esau had many descendants, and they grew into a prosperous nation. They

had kings ruling over them before the monarchy was established in Israel (Genesis 36:31). Doeg the Edomite was a chief herdsman among Saul's servants. He may have come to Israel as a mercenary and been given the responsibility of tending to the king's flocks and herds. If this were the case, he was no doubt grazing the royal herds near Nob and thus in a position to overhear the conversation of David.

6. *Why did the priest have Goliath's sword? 21:9*

After the battle in the valley of Elah David put Goliath's armor in his own tent. At that time he took the head of Goliath and brought it to Jerusalem. Nothing is said at that time about the ultimate destiny of Goliath's armor, but it was customary for a victorious people to bring some spoils of war to their temple as an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord, who had given victory. It was no doubt that spirit which prompted David to leave the disposition of Goliath's armor with Saul. Saul had evidently sent the sword, at least, to the Tabernacle at Nob.

*David At Gath. 21:10-15*

10 And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

11 And the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is not this David 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?

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 scrabbled 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?

7. *Why did David flee to Philistia? 21:10*

David fled to Gath, the home of Goliath, where Achish was king. Achish was Saul's enemy. Saul was David's enemy. Achish and David had a common enemy in Saul. David must have thought that Achish would give him political asylum.

8. *Why did they call David a king? 21:11*

This Achish, king of Gath, is evidently the same one who was overlord of David in his later career. The servants and officers of Achish asked, "Is not this David, king of the land?" They called him king, not because his anointing and divine election were known to them, but on account of his victorious deeds, which had thrown Saul entirely into the shade. Whether they intended by these words to celebrate David as a hero, or to point him out to their prince as a dangerous man is sometimes debated; but David's actions indicate that they were considering doing him harm.

9. *What effect did these questions have on David? 21:12, 13*

David pretended to be out of his mind. In their presence, he carried out all the acts of a maniac. When they tried to take him captive, he raved in their hands. In their houses, he scribbled on the doorposts. Wherever he was, he let the saliva run out of his mouth. By these acts, David caused Achish to wish to be rid of his company. From the assertion that the king made, some would imply that the members of the king's household were insane; but the obvious meaning is simply that the king did not relish the company of madmen, of whom plenty were to be had in his own land.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 21 IN REVIEW

1. When David finally fled from Saul, to what place did he flee? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was priest there? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did the priest give David to eat? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What piece of armor did he give to David? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the name of Saul's servant who was there? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Of what nationality was the servant? \_\_\_\_\_
7. To what foreign country did David flee? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what city did he seek refuge? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What was the name of the king to whom David fled? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What title did these foreign people ascribe to David? \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 22

- Vv. 1- 5 *The prophet Gad and David.* As David left Philistia and moved back through the land of Judah, he was joined by members of his own family. All those who were in distress or in debt also joined David. Altogether he had a company of 400 men. After David fled to Moab, God sent his prophet Gad to be with David and to instruct him not to flee outside the land of Israel.
- Vv. 6-16 *Saul's increasing jealousy.* Saul not only berated the members of his own family, but he loosed a tirade against his officers and soldiers accusing them of being in a conspiracy with David. This caused Doeg to reveal David's brief association with the priests at Nob.
- Vv. 17-23 *Saul's slaughter of the priests.* There was still some fear of God among Saul's men. When Saul ordered the killing of the priests none of his soldiers would obey. Finally, Doeg killed all but one of the priests.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God always raises up men to meet the needs of the hour.* God has never been without men to meet the needs of a particular situation. When David was in need of a man of God, God sent Gad his prophet to be with David. When God needed a messenger to carry the gospel to the Gentiles he called Saul of Tarsus to be His chosen vessel. God has worked this way throughout human history, and Christians should always be thankful that there are those who are willing to rise up and meet the call of God.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

2. *Man's worst enemy is often his own imagination.* Saul imagined that all of his men were against him. He fell into such a slough of self-pity that he thought there was conspiracy in the ranks of his own soldiers. He thus alienated the affections of many of his leaders. Too often this happens in the ranks of Christian workers today.
3. *Nothing is holy to a man who has sold his soul to Satan.* Most men would stop short of killing God's anointed people. When Saul ordered his men to slay the priests there was none at first to do his infamous will. Finally one who was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel and evidently a mercenary in Saul's army fulfilled the mad king's order. It is hard to imagine anyone falling lower than Saul fell as he slew the priests, but when man sells his soul to Satan, he falls to unbelievable depths.

Saul's Reprisals Against David and His Friends, 22:1-23.

### *The Prophet Gad and David, 22:1-5*

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.

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.

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.

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.

1. *Where was Adullam? 22:1*

Adullam is one of the Canaanite towns whose kings are said to have been conquered by Joshua (Joshua 12:15). It is mentioned in the Shephelah, between Jarmuth and Shocoh (Joshua 15:35); in II Chronicles 11:7, it comes in immediate connection with Shocoh; and in Nehemiah 11:3; 11:30, it is one of the towns of Judah. These indications point to a location on the western edge of Judah and favor the identification with the present *Aid-el-ma*, twelve miles west by south from Bethlehem. David probably had friends there, and he was joined by his own clan. With David outlawed, they would not feel safe. At this time also a large number of malcontents gathered around David. These numbered about four hundred men, and David became their leader. Here is evidence that Saul was oppressing his people, causing some of them to sell themselves to others as servants (Leviticus 25:39; II Kings 4:1).

2. *Why did David flee to Moab? 22:3*

His ancestress Ruth was a Moabitess. Mizpeh means literally "a watch-tower" or "mountain height" commanding a very extensive country. It is probably used here in reference to a mountain hideout on the high land which bounded Moab on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. As David came to the king of Moab, the Moabites had probably taken possession of the most southerly portion of the eastern lands of the Israelites. We may also infer this from the fact that Saul had also made war upon Moab.

3. *Who was the prophet Gad? 22:5*

The prophet had probably come to David from Samuel's school of prophets; but whether he remained with David from that time forward to assist him with his counsel in

his undertakings cannot be determined. In I Chronicles 21:9, he is called David's seer. In the last year of David's reign he announced to him the punishment which would fall upon him from God on account of his sin in numbering the people (II Samuel 24:11 ff.); and he also wrote the acts of David (I Chronicles 29:29). In consequence of his admonition, David returned to Judah and went into the wood Hareth, a woody region on the mountains of Judah, which is never mentioned again, and the situation of which is unknown. According to the counsel of God, David was not to seek for refuge outside the land; not only that he might not be estranged from his fatherland and the people of Israel, but also that he might learn to trust entirely in the Lord as his only refuge and fortress. David had said that he would wait until he knew what God would do to him. He was assured of the justice of his cause as contrasted with the insane persecutions of Saul, and he confidently hoped that God would bring his flight to an end. Now he was to trust implicitly in Jehovah.

*Saul's Increasing Jealousy.* 22:6-16

6 When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him;)

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 showeth 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?

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 inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

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 inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as this day?

14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who *is so* faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?

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.

16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.

#### 4. *Why was Saul under a tree?* 22:6

The unsophisticated society of the early Israelites did not demand that the king have a palace which was equipped with finery. Saul evidently held court in the open air. This was the custom in the days of Deborah. We read of her that she "dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment" (Judges 4:5). Conditions had not changed greatly in the days of Saul, and his judgments were passed out to the people under similar circumstances.

*5. What was the meaning of Saul's question? 22:7, 8*

In order to elicit response from his servants, Saul asked them if David was in a position to reward them for their services. David obviously could not make any of them captains of thousands because he had less than a thousand in his band. By accusing his people of conspiring against him, Saul reveals that he is yet not quite rational. The corrupt state of his mind is brought out in his statement that nobody felt sorry for him. He even indicated that he thought Jonathan had stirred up David against him to lie in wait to kill him. Such an evaluation of the situation was a complete reversal of the facts. It was Saul who was lying in wait for David. David was not lying in wait for Saul. Saul must have learned of Jonathan's final covenant with David; for he asked why nobody had told him that his son had made a league with David, the son of Jesse.

*6. Who reported the action of Ahimelech to Saul? 22:9, 10*

Doeg, the Edomite, told Saul of David's coming to Nob. He did not tell all the facts. He did not tell Saul that David had told Ahimelech that he was on a secret and hurried mission for the king. For his part in the transaction, Saul afterwards took fearful vengeance upon the priest and his associates at Nob. The verse prepares us for the account of Doeg's betrayal of David. Some have therefore supposed the earlier verse to be an interpolation, but the later passage seems to presuppose the earlier. Doeg, the Edomite, who is described as Saul's muleherd, was kept at the sanctuary by some ceremonial obligation.

*7. Who was Ahimelech? 22:11*

Ahimelech was the high priest and successor of Eli, although of a different line. He was the son of Ahitub and not the son of Hophni or Phinehas, the sons of Eli. His name is a good Hebrew word signifying that his father was king. His father was probably not really king, but

the name has this meaning. His father was the leading priest, and in the position of ruling over the other priests.

8. *Had Ahimelech inquired of God for David?* 22:13

The scripture contains no reference to Ahimelech's making any sacrifice for David. There is no statement of his having used the Urim or Thummim to find out the Lord's will for David's life. The only benefits bestowed on David by Ahimelech were his giving him some of the shewbread and the sword of Goliath. These two items are mentioned by Saul, but he was evidently more concerned about the possibility of David's having secured the blessing of God at the hands of the high priest. If Saul thought that this had been done, he would have felt that not only men but God himself were surely against him. Indeed God was against him for Saul had failed to obey God.

9. *What was Ahimelech's reply to the king?* 22:14, 15

Ahimelech took the same position that Jonathan had taken. He reasoned with the king that there was nobody in all of Israel more faithful to Saul than David. The high priest also assured Saul that he had not transferred his allegiance to David. He was not serving as David's high priest. He denied that he had inquired of God for him. What Ahimelech had done he had done in integrity.

*Saul's Slaughter of the Priests.* 22:17-23

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.

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 wear a linen ephod..

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.

20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

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.

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

10. *What vengeance did Saul execute on Ahimelech?*  
22:17, 19

Upon being informed by Doeg concerning David's flight to the priest at Nob, Saul summoned the priest and all his father's house, the entire priesthood, to answer for what they had done. Ahimelech was not conscious of any crime, since David had come to him with a false pretext; and probably knowing little of what transpired at the court, he answered calmly and worthily. In his consciousness of innocence, he prayed that no guilt be laid to the charge of himself or the priests. That they were under suspicion is manifest from their being summoned before the king. To this protestation of ignorance and innocence, Saul replied only with a sentence of death on him and his whole clan. He commanded the runners, his body guard, to act as executioners; but they refused to carry out the command, owing to the sacred character of the accused. Doeg was less scrupulous, and at the king's command he turned about and slew the priests. When Abiathar told David of what had happened, David accused himself as an

accessory, since his visit had precipitated the whole affair. Abiathar found refuge with David, and David's exile continued.

11. *Who escaped from Saul's slaughter? 22:20, 23*

Only one son of Ahimelech escaped, and his only refuge was with David. David assured the young priest that he would protect him as one of his own men. It was in this manner that David secured not only the services of Gad, the prophet, but also the services of Abiathar, the priest. One by one the leading citizens of Israel were coming over to David's side.

## CHAPTER 22 IN REVIEW

1. To what point in Israel did David return? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what tribe was the place located? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many men did David have with him? \_\_\_\_\_
4. To what point in Moab did David flee? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which of David's ancestors was from Moab? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the name of the prophet who came to David? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How does Saul refer to David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Whom did Saul order to kill the priests? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who did kill the priests? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which priest escaped? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 23

- Vv. 1- 6 *Abiathar, the priest, with David.* Escaping from the slaughter at Nob, Abiathar joined David in his hideout in Keilah. Abiathar had a linen ephod, a distinctive garment of the priests and evidently served as the priest for David and his men while they fled from Saul.
- Vv. 7-18 *David's and Jonathan's meeting.* Saul learned that David was hiding in Keilah and went out to get him. Jonathan, Saul's son arose and went to David into the forest around Keilah. The two met again and confirmed a covenant which they had made earlier. Jonathan returned to his home but David remained in hiding in Keilah.
- Vv. 19-29 *Saul's pursuit of David.* The Ziphites came to Saul in Gibeah and told him where David was hiding. With this information Saul made a bold attempt to capture David. He very nearly accomplished this. On one occasion Saul went on one side of the mountain and David and his men were on the other side. David got away and continued his flight out of Saul's presence. He then moved his hiding place to the caves on the west shore of the Dead Sea near En-gedi.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God's abundant provision for our needs.* God not only sent a prophet to be with David but he also made it possible for a priest to join David's company. God always does more than we would expect.
2. *The blessing of steadfast friends.* David must have longed to see Jonathan. Jonathan must have known this. He came to David and the two were able to

renew their covenant and David received strength to go on in his life as a fugitive.

3. *God's good providences.* Things happen in life that cannot be explained except that they are directed by the hand of almighty God. When Saul went around one side of the mountain David was on the other. God must have been with David.

Saul's Pursuit of David to Keilah, 23:1-29.

*Abiathar, the Priest, With David.* 23:1-6

Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors.

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.

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?

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.

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.

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.

1. *Why did David save Keilah? 23:1*

Keilah is a city in the Plains of Judah now identified with *Khirbet Kila*. The location is some nine miles northwest of Hebron. The city was on the Philistine border, but the inhabitants were evidently Israelites of the tribe of Judah. David himself was of that tribe; and although

the people of the community later betrayed David, his deliverance of them would have endeared him to the upright men of the place. Such activity on the part of David demonstrates that he was still behaving himself wisely, even while fleeing for his life from the king. He had the best interests of the people at heart.

2. *How did David enquire of the Lord? 23:2*

As Moses appointed Joshua to be his successor, the Lord told Moses that Joshua would stand before Eleazar who was to ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord (Numbers 27:21). It was at the word of the priest as given to him by the Lord that Joshua was to lead the people out to battle and to bring them back in again when it was over. Of Moses himself it was said that "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10). Both Gad and Abiathar, the prophet and the priest, were with David. More than likely David used the Urim and the Thummim, God's appointed means for revealing His will. The inspired prophet could also receive the Lord's message and deliver it. In either way David moved only at the Lord's directive. He did this regardless of the fear which gripped men. Naturally they were afraid to take the offensive against the Philistines by themselves since they were on the defensive against any attack Saul might make. Such activity seemed foolhardy to them. They were in enough trouble on their own without stirring up the opposition of the Philistines.

3. *Why did Abiathar bring an ephod with him? 23:6*

The ephod was the distinctive garment of the high priest's clothing. Such wearing apparel would identify Abiathar as the priest with David's men. It would signify that he was an heir of the priests who were slain at Nob and would indicate orderly procedure on the part of David in appointing him as his priest. There is no indication that the ephod mentioned here was in any way a fetish

such as was made of the spoils of war taken by Gideon after he defeated the Midianites. The idolatry practiced with regard to the ephod in Gideon's day is soundly condemned (Judges 8:27), and if there had been anything wrong with Abiathar's having an ephod, it would more than likely be mentioned.

*David's and Jonathan's Meeting.* 23:7-18

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.

9 And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.

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.

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 forbare to go forth.

14 And David abode in the wilderness in strongholds, 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.

16 And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.

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.

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

4. *Why did Saul think he could catch David in Keilah?*  
23:7

A man is hard to catch in the open fields. Those who are skilled in guerrilla tactics can slip off into the woods, hide in caves, or literally blend into the landscape. A group of men in a city are easier to catch. Saul evidently thought David had made a tactical mistake in going into a city which had gates and bars. If Saul could only besiege the city, set watchmen at the walls, and block the gates, then it would be impossible for David to escape. Even if Saul could not fight his way into the city, he could lay a siege and starve David and his men until they were forced to surrender.

5. *Why did David call for the ephod? 23:9*

If Abiathar brought an ephod to David, he more than likely brought the rest of a high priest's wearing apparel. God commanded Moses that he should make a breastplate for the high priest and here were placed the "urim and thummim" (Exodus 28:30). These items formed the media through which the high priest learned the will of the Lord in regard to any important matters. Josephus identifies the Urim and the Thummim with the sardonyxes on the shoulders of the ephod (*Antiquities* III, iii, 5). The rabbins indicated that these stones would glow with an unnatural iridescence to indicate the Lord's will. If the Lord's answer was negative, they would remain dull and dark. Other suggestions are made indicating that

there was a golden plate within the folds of the ephod. On this plate were engraved the letters of the sacred name of God. It is suggested that by fixing his gaze on these letters, the priest became capable of prophesying, hearing the divine voice within or listening to it as it proceeded from God. The former suggestion seems more likely, and it was on this account that David called for the ephod. God would give him guidance through the services of the priest.

6. *Did the oracle come true?* 23:12

David asked the Lord if the men of Keilah would deliver him up to Saul's hand. God said that they would. He also asked if Saul would come down to fight with him, and the Lord responded that Saul would come down to fight with him. David and his men left Keilah after he made this inquiry of the Lord. There is no record of the men of Keilah delivering David into the hands of Saul for this reason. Some would feel, therefore, that the oracle of the Lord was thwarted by David's actions. If we understand David's question to be a conditional question, we would not deny that the oracle came true. David's question should be understood more as an enquiry as to whether the men of Keilah would deliver him if he stayed there. Of course, if he left then they would not have this opportunity. David was trying to find out if they were grateful for the way in which he had saved them out of the hands of the Philistines. He was making inquiry about their loyalty to him. When he found that their loyalty could not be trusted, he left their area. Furthermore, if the men of Keilah are considered to be a part of the people known as the Ziphites, we learn from the Scripture that these men twice revealed to Saul the hiding place of David in their vicinity. The land of Ziph extended between Carmel and Juttah and included the inhabitants of the highland of Judah. The men of Keilah might well be described as Ziphites. These men did deliver up David.

7. *Why did David's band increase? 23:13*

More and more people were placing their confidence in David. Gad, the prophet, had been sent of God to be with David. Abiathar, the priest, had fled to David after the priests were slaughtered by Saul. In the beginning every one that was distressed, every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented gathered themselves to David. The fact that his band was increasing would indicate that more people were plunging into debt on account of the taxation levied upon them to support the monarchy. More and more people were growing discontented with Saul and his policies. An increasing number of people were distressed over the way in which Saul was pursuing David. All of these joined themselves to David.

8. *Where was Ziph? 23:14*

There is a town in the desert or wilderness of Ziph to which David fled. It was a place fortified by Rehoboam at a later date. The location has been preserved in the ruins of *Tell Zif*, four miles southeast of Hebron. The wilderness of Ziph was that portion of the desert of Judah which was near to and surrounded the town. Generally speaking, it was the highland district of Judah, and would be extending from Carmel on the east to Juttah on the west.

9. *How did Jonathan strengthen David's band? 23:16*

Jonathan's coming to David would in itself encourage him greatly. To see an old friend was a real privilege for a fugitive. Jonathan's strengthening of David was primarily "in God." One might expect such encouragement to be the function of the prophet or the priest, but the covenant between Jonathan and David had been a sacred vow. The flight of David was even worse than he had anticipated, and Jonathan's coming to him gave him a great deal of reassurance. He was strengthened to know that Jonathan had not forgotten. This knowledge would be an immense boost to David's morale.

10. *How did Jonathan know that David had been anointed king? 23:17*

David delivered the men of Keilah (eight and one-half miles northwest of Hebron, *Kbirbet Kila*) from the hands of the Philistines. Saul had proposed to come against the city while David was enclosed therein; but David, led of the Lord, departed and hid in the wilderness of Ziph. To his wilderness retreat came Jonathan. Here he told David that he knew that he was to be king, and he asked only that he himself might have the second place. It by no means follows from the words "my father knoweth" that Saul knew of David's being anointed; nor does it follow that Jonathan knew of David's calling to be king. Jonathan could learn from David's course this far, and from his father's own conduct, that David would not be overcome, but would possess the throne after the death of Saul.

*Saul's Pursuit of David. 23:19-29*

19 Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strongholds 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.

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 subtilly.

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.

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.

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 Sela-hammahlekoth.

29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strongholds at En-gedi.

### 11. *Why did the Ziphites aid Saul?* 23:19

Saul had repeatedly scolded his courtiers and every other member of his kingdom. He charged them with being in league with David and aiding and abetting him in an attempt to usurp the throne. He charged them with failing to understand his position and to sympathize with him in his plight. He had slain the priests under the false charge of their being on David's side. Such activities on the part of the king would strike terror in the hearts of the weak and vacillating members of the kingdom of Israel. Some of these may have been rewarded for information which they brought to Saul. Others, who had knowledge of David's whereabouts, may have been afraid to conceal it lest they be charged with failing to support Saul. These people are especially despicable because of their repeated spying on David and reporting to Saul.

*Tell Zif* itself is a conical hill. It stands above rich and beautiful valleys which surround it on every side. The base is terraced, and its light, rich soil produces a full harvest of grain. The summit is leveled and circular, being about one hundred yards in diameter. Nothing is left of the town, however, except a few cisterns, sepulchres, and pieces of pottery that are thickly intermixed with the soil. The view to the southeast is extensive and reaches out over a rich and beautiful country. Barren hills of the desert span the horizon (J. W. McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, p. 255).

12. *Where was Hachilah?* 23:19b

Hachilah appears to be the long ridge now known as *El Koleb*. On this high hill is a ruin called *Yukin*. David's hiding here is apparently the only significant event which transpired at this place throughout the Bible history. The Ziphites betrayed him again when he was here later (26:1).

13. *What was the meaning of Saul's benediction?* 23:21

Saul was very appreciative of the fact that the Ziphites had brought him information about David's hiding place. In his nearly ecstatic condition he pronounced a benediction upon these people. He was grateful that they had compassion on him and helped him. He prayed that they might be blessed of the Lord for what they had done. The benediction would be a lot of empty words to anybody who knew Saul's real character. Since Saul had turned his back on God and was forsaken of God, one could hardly expect that God would hear his prayer for a blessing to be upon anybody. Here is an instance of a pitiable reference to God by one who had essentially abandoned God and thereby had been left desolate by God.

14. *What is the meaning of the "thousands of Judah"?*  
23:23

Judah had always been the most numerous of all the Israelite tribes. At the first numbering, while they were still at Sinai, Judah numbered 74,600 (Numbers 1:27).

At the second numbering, just before the Israelites entered Canaan, Judah was still the largest and at that time she numbered 76,500 (Numbers 26:22). Those who were numbered were men twenty years of age and older. No doubt there were as many women of this same age as men. In addition there would be an equal number of boys as well as an equal number of girls under these ages. Judah may have had as many as 300,000 inhabitants. Saul faced an enormous task as he boasted that he would search David out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

15. *Where was Maon?* 23:24

Maon was a town on a high hill in the tribe of Judah, and located some seven miles to the south of Hebron. David hid himself here and later found many of Nabal's possessions nearby (25:2). *Tell Main*, a rather small mound of ruins, has been taken to be the modern-day remnants of the location. The Scripture located Maon south of Jeshimon. Jeshimon is a word signifying a waste or desolation. This is a title given to the area north of the Dead Sea (Numbers 21:20; 23:28). At times this title is given to the desert area of Judea. The American Standard Version gives it the title of Arabah. This title is usually applied to the deep valley running between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah. David's wandering must have taken him into an area that was sparsely inhabited and where little vegetation marked the landscape. It is little wonder that he referred to himself as a flea (24:13).

16. *What was the rock?* 23:25

The rock is undoubtedly the cone-shaped height of Maon. The top of the height is covered with ruins, and there are some indications that these may be the remains of a tower. No reason is given for David's descending from the height of the mound, and he chose to remain in the desert of Maon. Perhaps this mound was more visible to an approaching army and David decided that he would

be safer hiding behind it than staying on top of it. He did escape from Saul by going around one side of the hill while Saul was on the other.

17. *Was David's escape providential? 23:27*

The fact that a messenger came to Saul just at the time when he was about to take David and his men appears to be an act of providence. Certainly David could hardly have sent word to the Philistines and urged them to attack Saul while he was in the south part of his country. Probably the Philistines did keep an eye on Saul and knew where he was. They did, no doubt, take advantage of the opportunity to "spread themselves over the land" (marginal reading A.V.). Their attack must have been more than a skirmish or a small raid. Such a light attack would hardly have caused Saul to give up on his pursuit of David just at the time when he had him in his clutches.

18. *What is Sela-Hammablekoth? 23:28*

The spot cannot be identified definitely, but the word is a compound indicating "the rock of divisions." This was the scene of one of David's most remarkable escapes from Saul. David must have given the spot this name in commemoration of his providential deliverance from the armies of Saul, just as Jacob gave the name "House of God," to Luz when God revealed Himself there (Genesis 28:19) and Abraham gave the name Jehovah-jireh to Mount Moriah when God provided a ram to take the place of Isaac as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:14).

19. *Where was En-gedi? 23:29*

En-gedi is along the west shore of the Dead Sea. The Arabs call it "Ain Jiddy." Travelers in this area say that nothing can surpass the gloomy grandeur of the mountain walls of this vicinity. The mountain-sides have turned brown and, in places, almost black by their long exposure to the elements. They are rendered still more gloomy by contrast with the rich green and the sparkling water of the oasis in the wilderness. The spot is frequently men-

tioned in the Old Testament, but not enough is said to give a very definite concept of it as it then existed. At En-ge-di one is about halfway down the west side of the Dead Sea and at a point to look out over the Dead Sea to the eastern shore.

20. *What reference did David make to these events in the Psalms? Psalm 54:1-7*

Many of the Psalms seem to arise out of particular instances in the life of David. The Shepherd Psalm, the Twenty-third Psalm, for example, must have been written in recollection of David's early life as a shepherd. No doubt God's spirit guided him to leave this treasure of devotion as a testimony of the way in which David had known God through his experiences as a humble shepherd boy. Many of the other Psalms carry headings which indicate the particular event in David's life out of which the Holy Spirit through David gave to us lasting testimony of God's providence. The Fifty-fourth Psalm is attributed to David and was written when the Ziphim, or the Ziphites, came and said to Saul, "Doth not David hide himself with us?" Certainly the sentiments are appropriate as David says, "For he hath delivered me out of all trouble, and mine eyes have seen his desire upon my enemies" (Psalm 54:7).

## CHAPTER 23 IN REVIEW

1. What city did David protect from the Philistines? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Abiathar have when he fled to David? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many men were with David? \_\_\_\_\_
4. In what wilderness did David hide? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who came down to see David in the wilderness? \_\_\_\_\_
6. In what hill did the Ziphites tell Saul that David was hiding? \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

7. Where was Saul when the Ziphites went to him? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what wilderness was David hiding when the Ziphites returned? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What name was given to the place where David escaped? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what place did David finally flee? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 24

Vv. 1-7 *David spares Saul's life.* David was hiding in a cave in En-gedi when Saul came to rest in the open mouth of the cave. As Saul slept, David crept forward and cut off the bottom of his robe. When Saul left the cave, David ran after him to identify himself and to show him how he could have killed him if he had so desired.

Vv. 9-15 *David pleads for his life.* David rightfully judged that many men had spoken false words about him and his relationship to Saul. He therefore asked Saul to listen to him and not to the false reports. He also asked that the Lord judge between Saul and himself.

Vv. 16-22 *Saul accepts David's plea.* Saul knew that what David said was true. He admitted that David was more righteous than he and assured David that he would no longer pursue him. Saul then went home, but David and his men stayed in the stronghold of Judah.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Let God lead.* David was not willing to take matters into his own hands to get rid of Saul. He knew, of

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

course, that if he killed Saul that he would himself become king. He would come to the throne under these circumstances with a shadow of guilt over him. He therefore was willing to wait until in God's providence Saul's reign would end. We need to learn this lesson of patiently following the Lord in all of our endeavors.

2. *Let the Lord judge.* David asked Saul to let God judge between the two of them. David knew that the Lord's judgment would be right. This is where all our judgment should originate.
3. *"Overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:21b). David's goodness in sparing Saul's life overwhelmed Saul and caused him to realize that he had been wrong in trying to take his life. He therefore assured David that he would no longer pursue him. He also asked David to make a covenant that David would not kill Saul's descendants. David was willing to make this covenant, and the pursuit was over for the time being.

Saul's Life Spared by David, 24:1-22.

### *David Spares Saul's Life. 24:1-7*

And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of En-gedi.

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.

3 And he came to the sheepecotes 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.

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.

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.

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.

1. *Who told Saul where to find David? 24:1*

No mention is made of the party or parties who told Saul that David was over in En-gedi. Since the Ziphites had informed Saul on previous occasions, they were probably the ones who gave this information to Saul. Again Saul may have left certain of his servants in the land of Judah to keep him informed of David's whereabouts. Although Saul was forced to leave the area himself in order to drive out the invading Philistines, he did not want to lose contact with David.

2. *What were the "rocks of the wild goats? 24:2*

Wild goats ran on the sides of the cliffs which dropped down to the Dead Sea from the mountain of Judah in the vicinity of En-gedi. It was in one of these caves on the west side of the Dead Sea just a little farther to the north that the Dead Sea Scrolls were found by a goat-herd. The man was looking for some of his lost animals when he came upon the mouth of one of these caves. Thinking that perhaps his animals were down in the cave, he himself entered it and found the sealed earthen vessels which contained the fabulous scrolls which have been acclaimed as the most important archaeological discovery of recent times. As far as Bible lands are concerned, wild goats made many tracks only a foot wide all through this area. This expres-

sion should not be taken as a proper name for some particular rocks, but as a general term applied to the rocks of the location on account of the number of goats which are to be found in the region.

3. *Why was David in a cave? 24:3*

Since caves were throughout the length and breadth of the area, they afforded a natural hiding place for David and his band of 600 men. The men of Israel hid themselves in the caves earlier when the Philistines attacked their land (I Samuel 13:6). Lot had asked permission to hide in a cave when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (Genesis 19:30). Probably David and his men went into the caves to sleep, finding this to be a more secure place to hide than out in the open field.

4. *Why did Saul come into the cave? 24:3*

It is said that Saul went into the cave "to cover his feet." The exact meaning of this expression is debated, and some take it to be a euphemism. The expression occurs also in Judges 3:24 when Eglon's servants were afraid to disturb him as they thought he had gone into his chamber "to cover his feet." Those who understand this as a euphemism believe that it describes Saul's performing the necessities of nature, since it was a custom in the East to cover the feet at such a time. The Peshitta, an ancient version of the Bible, translates this Hebrew phrase as meaning "to sleep." What follows seems to favor this. David must have gone into the cave to rest, and Saul found the spot to be suitable to his needs as well.

5. *How did David's men view the situation? 24:4*

David's men thought that this was an opportune time for David to kill Saul. They said, "Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee . . ." No record is made of David's ever having received a prophecy that God would deliver Saul into his hand. David was not out to kill Saul, although Saul accused him of lying in wait for him (I Samuel 22:8, 13). Gad, the prophet, was with David,

but there is no record of his having brought such an announcement to David. David's men must have therefore been referring to their interpretation of God's providences. It appeared to them that God had been saying through the transpiring events that eventually David would prevail over Saul. They could see no outcome of the situation except that David would overcome Saul and succeed him on the throne.

6. *What was David's view? 24:5*

David did nothing more than to arise and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe while he was sleeping. Afterward his conscience hurt him about this. He looked upon Saul as God's anointed. David had great respect for God's anointed leaders, and he was ashamed of the fact that he had humiliated Saul by marring his robe.

*David Pleads for His Life. 24:8-15*

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.

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 today 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 pro-

ceedeth 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.

7. *Why did David dare to show himself? 24:8*

David trusted God to protect him, but he did not want to take foolish risks. Still he felt the circumstances favored his speaking to Saul directly. He could demonstrate the fact that he had not been lying in wait for Saul. In his hand he had a piece of Saul's robe which he had cut off, and this would be evidence of the fact that he could have killed Saul if he had wanted to do so. Armed with this bit of evidence, David thought that he could prevail upon Saul to listen to reason and to leave the area and stop his attempt to kill David.

8. *Why did David ask that God judge between them? 24:12*

David did not want to condemn his king and pass judgment upon him. He simply explained to Saul that he had cut off his skirt and did not kill him. This was a demonstration of the fact that there was neither evil or transgression in David's hand. He explained that he had not sinned against Saul. On the other hand he said that Saul was hunting him to kill him. David also was expressing his avowed purpose of letting God work out the difficult situation. David would not lift up his own hand to harm Saul. He was waiting for the Lord to avenge him of the evil which had been done to him.

9. *What ancients had given this proverb? 24:13*

The Hebrew word behind our word *ancients* signifies those who are from the east country. The word appears in Ezekiel 47:8 and must be a reference to the forefathers

who had originated in the Mesopotamian valley. In later Israelite history, Solomon is compared to the wise men of the East. At that time it was said that Solomon's wisdom exceeded the wisdom of all the children of the east country (I Kings 4:30). The saying which David quoted must have been well known, and it is reminiscent of Jesus' statement that we shall know men by their fruits. Jesus said, "A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 6:17). David knew that if he performed the wicked deed he would be considered a wicked man. He did not want to be in this class.

10. *Why did David call himself a dead dog?* 24:14

David was referring to himself as being one of no account. He was from the lowly shepherd's home in Bethlehem of Judah. His father was not a very important man in Israel. David's reference to himself in this lowly figure was similar to Saul's humility as he was introduced to Samuel. Saul had said that he was a member of the smallest tribe of Israel and that his father was the least of all the families of the tribe (I Samuel 9:21). Such language is customary among Orientals. Usually they are a very humble people, and we take David's expression to be a sincere effort to subject himself to the rightful claims of his king.

*Saul Accepts David's Plea.* 24:16-22

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.

17 And he said to David, Thou *art* more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

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.

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.

22 And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

11. *Why did Saul weep? 24:16*

Saul was ashamed of himself. He could hardly believe that it was David speaking to him. He had to ask him if it were really his voice that he was hearing. Saul admitted that David was more righteous than himself. He realized that David had rewarded good for evil. David's judgment of the situation was correct. He really did not need to wait for a further indication from God of His judgment in the matter. Saul knew what the judgment would be.

12. *Why did Saul conclude that David would be king? 24:20*

As events were transpiring, it was quite evident that Saul could not prevail over David. It was therefore evident to Saul as well as to many others that David was destined to be the sole leader of the people of Israel. It is doubtful that Saul knew that Samuel had anointed David to be king. Jonathan had reached the conclusion earlier (I Samuel 23:16). Even the Philistines had greeted David with a reference to their belief that he was king of Israel. The servants of Achish asked him, "Is not this David, the king of the land?" (I Samuel 21:11). These people surely would have no knowledge of the anointing at Bethlehem at the hands of Samuel the prophet. They must have

reached this conclusion from the song that they had heard the people singing one to another in their dances as they said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (I Samuel 21:11b).

13. *What favor did Saul ask of David? 24:21*

Saul asked David to enter into a covenant with him that was similar to the covenant existing between Jonathan and David. He asked David to swear to him that he would not kill his heirs. He prayed that David would not blot his name out of the national records of Israel and from his father's line. The Gibeonites asked for such vengeance to be reeked upon the house of Saul because Saul had tried to exterminate them. Their vengeance was only a partial extermination, but they did ask that seven of Saul's sons be delivered to them in order that they might hang them up in Gibeon (II Samuel 21:6). Egyptian kings quite often treated their successors in this way. They defaced the monuments so that there would be no permanent record left of their predecessors, and killed all the family of the former king to prevent any future glory from accruing to the house. David entered into this agreement with Saul. He had no evil intentions towards him.

14. *Where was the hold? 24:22*

David must have returned to the mountain heights. A different Hebrew word is used in I Samuel 22:5 to signify a stronghold. At that time David was seeking refuge in Mizpeh of Moab. Since Moab was outside the borders of Israel, Gad brought God's directive to David and told him to spend his time in the land of Israel. By staying inside the borders of the country, he would not only demonstrate to his people that he was upright in his actions, but he would also be afforded what protection they could give him. David's returning to the stronghold in Judah is indicative of the fact that he did not think that Saul's good intentions towards him would be long-lasting. Had he

thought that Saul would be favorably inclined towards him over a long period of time, he might have returned with him to Gibeah.

15. *On what two occasions did David spare Saul's life?*

24:26

Saul was called from his pursuit of David to drive the Philistines from the border of Israel. When Saul returned from this expedition, he again hunted for David, this time in the wilderness of En-gedi. It so happened that David and his men were hiding in a cave. Saul entered the mouth of that cave, and slept there. David's men were elated, because it appeared that Jehovah had delivered David's enemy into his hand. All David would do, however, was to cut the skirt from Saul's robe, privily. Even this small act weighed upon David's conscience. When Saul arose and left the cave, David kept his men from harming him, and asserted that he was loyal to the king, Jehovah's anointed. This touched even Saul's heart; and he repented over the evil that he had plotted against David, swearing that he would not do so any more. Saul then returned to his capital, but David and his men went up into a stronghold.

On another occasion, David sent spies and found out Saul's camp. This was after Saul had promised not to pursue David. David found the camp sleeping. He asked who would go over into Saul's camp. Abishai wanted to kill Saul while he was sleeping, saying that he would not need the second thrust of his spear. David again spared Saul's life, however, and took only his spear and a cruse of water, both of which were at the head of the sleeping Saul. Then, David went to a high hill a little distance off and shouted to the sleeping pursuers. He chided Abner for not having kept more careful watch over Saul, Jehovah's anointed. Saul recognized David's loyalty to the king and promised the second time not to pursue David any longer. Each of the two men then went his way.

FIRST SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 24 IN REVIEW

1. How many men did Saul take to catch David? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What name was given to the area where Saul went? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was David hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What did David's men urge him to do to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What part of Saul's clothing did David cut? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What ancient proverb did David quote? \_\_\_\_\_
7. By what figures did David allude to himself? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Saul do when he recognized David? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where did Saul go after leaving David? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where did David go after Saul left? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 25

- V. 1 *The death of Samuel.* The grand prophet of God finally reached the end of his earthly pilgrimage. He was buried in his home at Ramah. Although mention is made of David's activities, it is not specified that he was able to be in Ramah at the time of Samuel's burial. Since he went farther south after Samuel died, he probably felt he had lost a great friend and that he should get farther away from Saul.
- Vv. 2-13 *Nabal's shameful treatment of David.* David had befriended Nabal by protecting his flocks from time to time. He therefore felt that he had a right to ask for some consideration at the time of the shearing. Nabal was churlish, however, and refused to send any provisions to David. David thus determined to fight against Nabal.

Vv. 14-38 *Abigail appeals to David.* Abigail was Nabal's wife and when she heard of her husband's unfair treatment of David she went to meet David and asked him to spare her husband. Her words were wise and David listened to her appeal. Although David did not attack Nabal, Nabal was overcome with fear when he heard how close to feeling David's wrath he had come. The Lord then smote him and he died.

Vv. 39-44 *David's wives.* David married Abigail after Nabal died. He also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Michal, David's wife, had been given to another man by Saul.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*" (Psalm 116:15). Verse one of this chapter should stand alone. It records the death of a valiant soldier of the cross. Special notice should be taken of this event. God's followers should always mark well the fall of His valiant leaders.
2. "*Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold*" (Proverbs 25:11). Abigail's words to David were words of wisdom. He did well to heed them. Wherever Christian people find words of wisdom, they should give full attention to them. They are indeed like apples of gold.

David's Continued Flight, 25:1—26:25.

### *The Death of Samuel. 25:1*

And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

1. *Why was all Israel gathered together? 25:1*

All Israel was gathered together because Samuel had died. They came to Ramah to lament him and to bury him. The fact that he was buried in his house is a reference to a custom of the day for a man to be buried on his own property. The Hebrew word might have better been translated "a sepulchre," especially one that is much adorned. Such a reference is made in Isaiah 14:18 and also in Ecclesiastes 12:5. Samuel was buried in his own private tomb on his own property.

2. *Where was the wilderness of Paran? 25:1 b*

The wilderness of Paran was in the Negeb, the southern part of the land of Palestine. Several main divisions are made in the Promised Land. The Hill Country was the center of the land and sloped down to the west to the Mediterranean Sea. From the Hill Country another slope went east to the Jordan Valley. This mountainous region is often referred to simply as the Hill Country. The Philistine Plain was occupied by the enemies who were constant in their opposition to the people of God. The Valley was the territory of the Jordan which ran the full length of Canaan, beginning in the foothills of Mt. Hermon on the north and ending at the Gulf of Akabah on the south. The South was the land below Beersheba. This wilderness area was very sparsely populated, and some have concluded that it has always been an uninhabited and uninhabitable place. Recent studies made in the area have shown that there were many settlements here in ancient times, some of them dating back to the days of Abraham. Moses and the people of Israel wandered for forty years in the Wilderness of Paran (Numbers 13:3). Much of this time was spent in and around Kadesh-Barnea. David went to this extreme southern border of the land of Israel in order to escape the wrath of the demented king.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### *Nabal's Shameful Treatment of David. 25:2-13*

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.

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.

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 aught 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.

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 nowadays 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.

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.

3. *Who were Nabal and Abigail? 25:2, 3*

David had protected the shepherds and the sheep of Nabal while they were in Carmel. Consequently, when David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent his young men to Nabal that Nabal might give to David and to his men some food and provisions in return for their protection. Nabal railed at the servants of David and sent them away empty-handed. One of Nabal's servants told this to Abigail, who saw the injustice of Nabal's action, and as a result, secretly took provisions to David. When Abigail returned to her husband, she found him in the midst of a drunken feast, so she told him nothing until the morning. When Nabal knew how close he had come to being wiped out and that his wife had saved him by her kindness, his heart died within him; and ten days later he died. David loved Abigail. When the news of Nabal's death was told to David, he sent to Abigail to ask her to become his wife. She consented, and they were married.

4. *What was the basis of David's request? 25:7*

While David was in and around Maon and Carmel, he had protected Nabal's shepherds and their flocks. Nabal may have been one of those who profited greatly from David's driving the Philistines away from Keilah. Whether David had protected Nabal's flocks from wolves or human predators, David felt that Nabal should be grateful for what he had done. He asked Nabal to check among his own young men to find out the truth of the matter. The occasion of sheep-shearing was also a joyous occasion when a man's heart should be opened to his friends and benefac-

tors. The sheep had been sheared and the profit from the sale of the wool would have brought prosperity to the owner. For all these reasons David asked for any token of Nabal's good pleasure which might have been convenient for him.

5. *What was Nabal's attitude towards David? 25:10*

Nabal sneered at David. He asked who David was, although he knew him. He cast reflection upon his ancestry by asking what benefit there was in being a descendant of Jesse. He also evaluated the situation by saying that David was simply a renegade deserter from Saul's army. He classed him with many servants of the time who had broken away from their masters without fulfilling their obligations to them. Nabal utterly despised David and turned a deaf ear to David's request.

6. *What was David's reaction? 25:13*

David armed himself for war. He commanded his men to prepare for battle. Two hundred men were left with the women and children to guard their homes and supplies. David took 400 men with him and was preparing to attack Nabal. He not only intended to take some of the food and supplies provided for the festive occasion but he also intended to kill Nabal. Such drastic action is not typical of David, who usually inquired of the Lord before he went into battle. This incident reveals an occasion when David allowed his quick temper to get the better of him and overrule a decision he would have made had he given more thought to it.

*Abigail Appeals to David. 25:14-38*

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:

## FIRST SAMUEL

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.

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.

20 And it was *so, as* she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold David and his men came down against her; and she met them.

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.

23 And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, 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.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

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.

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 hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

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.

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.

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.

38 And it came to pass about ten days *after*, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died.

7. *How did Nabal escape? 25:14*

Some young man told Abigail, Nabal's wife, how her husband had railed on David's men. The young man was evidently one of Nabal's servants who was ashamed of his master's actions. He was one of the men of whom David suggested Nabal make inquiry and must have known that David had a right to request a token of appreciation from Nabal. Nabal's actions must have been of such nature as to make it almost a matter of honor for David to avenge himself. The young man affirmed all that David had said. None of Nabal's flocks were missing while they were under David's protection. None of their equipment was missing as long as they were in contact with them. David had saved Nabal from very many losses. As a matter of fact a young man said that they felt as safe as if they had been behind a city wall.

8. *What was the young man's estimation of his master?*  
25:17

The young man was so ashamed of his master's action that he terminated his discourse with his master's wife by

referring to Nabal as the son of Belial. This epithet was one which was hurled to any man who was of bestial character. He viewed Nabal as a son of Satan, a worthless man. He was ashamed of him, and had gone to his wife to see if some action might be taken to rectify the situation.

9. *What did Abigail do? 25:18*

Abigail took matters into her own hand. She took provisions for David and his men. Without telling her husband, she loaded beasts of burden with 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five sheep already dressed, five measures of parched corn, and 100 clusters of raisins, in addition to 200 cakes of figs. She organized a company of servants to lead the asses and urged them to go on before her. She may have been afraid that if she were in the first contingent she would be attacked by David who was evidently going to take the spoils from Nabal by force. She also knew that the situation demanded speed and she did not want the servants to wait for her.

10. *What were David's intentions? 25:21*

David was not only out to get some provisions from Nabal, but he was also bent upon the utter destruction of the man and his family. He vowed a vow to God that he hoped God would wipe him out if he did not destroy Nabal from the face of the earth. As the American Standard Version expressed it, he said that he would not leave "by the morning light so much as one man child" (25:22b).

11. *How did Abigail stop David? 25:23*

Abigail took the initiative when she came within sight of David. She did not wait to see if he would attack her; but she approached him, got down off her donkey, and fell on her face to the ground before David. She must have known that David would not attack a woman, and yet she asked that all the iniquity of her husband be

laid upon her. She was willing to take the responsibility for what had happened although she had evidently had nothing to do with it. She asked David to let her speak to him about the matter.

12. *What is the meaning of the word Nabal? 25:25*

The word *Nabal* is a word from the original which means "fool." She also describes her husband as a worthless fellow, a son of Satan, a "man of Belial." She went on to say that she had not seen the young men whom David had sent to Nabal. Had she seen them, she would have attempted to give them these tokens of their appreciation of what they had done for them. Abigail then thanked God that David had been stopped from going out to shed innocent blood. David really had no right to take Nabal's life, although he was treated shamefully. Finally Abigail called attention to the provisions which she had brought. She called the present a blessing (25:27a).

13. *What was Abigail's estimation of David? 25:28*

Nabal had referred to David as a worthless servant who had broken away from his master. He had classed him with runaway slaves, but Abigail saw through the transpiring events that God was building a sure house for David. This meant that she viewed David as one to become the father of a great family in Israel. She believed that this was true because David was fighting the battles of the Lord. He was not fighting for himself, but he was putting down injustices and championing the cause of the righteous.

14. *What is the meaning of the phrase "the bundle of life?" 25:29*

If an object were in the midst of a lump of clay in a sling, it would not fall out. Any separated object would fall away. Abigail may have known of David's great victory over Goliath as David used his sling to kill the giant. She knew that David would appreciate this figure of speech and hoped that this would convince him of her good intentions towards him. Abigail went on to say that



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.

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.

17. *Was David's marriage to Abigail an honorable one?*  
25:39

From the beginning it was not God's intention that man should have more than one wife. The Law was given at a time when men were practicing polygamy, and God did not reveal the full Christian standard at that time. He did give legislation to regulate polygamy, and this led men to the place where they could receive Christ's full revelation. In the light of the dispensation it was perfectly permissible for David to marry Abigail. Her husband was dead, and she was free from her obligations to him. Abigail was a very wise woman, viewing herself as unworthy of the love of David (25:41).

18. *What kind of woman was Abigail?* 25:42

Abigail was an honorable person and made a good wife for David. She was the mother of Chileab, David's son, of whom little is known (II Samuel 3:3). Her conduct showed her to be discrete in that she did not reveal her actions to her husband when he could have stopped her. She was humble (v. 23), generous (v. 27), god-fearing (v. 29), knowledgeable (v. 30), and affluent (v. 42).

19. *Who was David's other wife?* 25:43

David's other wife was Ahinoam (25:43). Ahinoam is introduced only as the Jezreelitess. Jezreel must have been a town in the mountains of Judah (Joshua 15:56), and

not the city of that same name in the tribe of Issachar (Joshua 19:18). The place in Issachar is so far north that it would seem improbable that David would have been in that area.

20. *What had happened to Michal? 25:44*

Michal was David's first wife. She had lied about his threat to her when David fled from their home as Saul came to kill him. Saul had then given Michal to Phalti, the son of Laish of Gallim. Phalti is called Paltiel in II Samuel 3:15. Gallim was a place between Gibeah of Saul and Jerusalem. David later persuaded Ish-bosheth and Abner to bring Michal back to him (II Samuel 3:14).

## CHAPTER 25 IN REVIEW

1. Where was Samuel buried? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what wilderness was David hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what man did David send for supplies at the time of shearing? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where was the man's home? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was his wife's name? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many men did David take to fight Nabal? \_\_\_\_\_
7. By what title did Nabal's servant refer to him? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the meaning of Nabal's name? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What other woman did David marry? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what man had Saul given Michal? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 26

Vv. 1- 5 *Saul pursues David again.* Saul had once said that he would leave David alone, but he could not resist the temptation to try to kill the man who threatened his position as king. The Ziphites came to Saul in Gibeah and told him that David was hiding in the hill of Hachilah. Saul then pursued David again.

## FIRST SAMUEL

Vv. 6-20 *David again spares Saul.* Once more David had an opportunity to kill Saul as Saul lay sleeping. Some of David's men wanted him to slay the king, but David was unwilling to lift up his hand personally against God's anointed, the ruler of Israel. He did take his spear and cruse of water. He then awakened Saul and showed him that he could have killed him when he stole into his camp and took his spear.

Vv. 21-25 *Saul again repents.* Saul knew that he had done wrong in breaking his oath. He also knew that David was more righteous than he himself. When he was confronted with this truth, he repented again. Once more he said that he would not try to kill David. He blessed David and returned to his place.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Man should respect the things of God.* David demonstrated over and over again that he respected God's anointed leader. Saul was quite unrighteous but David knew that he was still God's anointed king. He was unwilling himself to take Saul's life even though he did have the opportunity more than once.
2. *Men today do well to respect God's appointments.* "How oft shall my brother sin against me"? (Matthew 18:21). Peter once asked Jesus how often his brother should sin against him and yet be forgiven by him. Peter thought that seven times were sufficient, but Jesus taught Peter that we should forgive a repentant brother an unlimited number of times. David demonstrated this very well in his life. Over and over again he forgave Saul and tried to live peaceably with him.

*Saul Pursues David Again. 26:1-5*

And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon?

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.

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.

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.

1. *Did the Ziphites betray David again? 26:1*

The repetition not only of the treachery of the Ziphites, but also of the sparing of Saul by David, furnished no proof in itself that the account contained in chapter twenty-six is only another legend of the occurrences already related in chapter twenty-four. As the pursuit of David by Saul lasted for several years, in so small a district as the desert of Judah, there is nothing strange in the repetition of these similar scenes. The agreement between the two accounts reduces it entirely to outward and unessential things. On the other hand, all the details, as well as the final results of the two occurrences, differ entirely from one another. These decided differences prove clearly enough that the incident described in the second instance is not the same as the similar one mentioned earlier.

2. *Why did Saul have only 3,000 men with him? 26:2*

The men of Israel numbered 300,000 and the men of Judah were 30,000 in number when the combined armies

went out to fight Nahash, the Ammonite, in (11:8). Later there were only 2,000 men with Saul and 1,000 men with Jonathan (13:1) when Saul and Jonathan were fighting the Philistine garrisons. The fact that there were 3,000 men with Saul when he went out against David would indicate that this was the size of the standing army which Saul kept. Israel could have mustered 1,300,000 men in the closing days of David's reign (II Samuel 24:9). Saul must have felt that he did not need a huge army to fight David's small band of 600 men.

3. *Where were the two armies?* 26:3

Saul was in the hill of Hachilah in the center of the territory of Judah. This hill is described as being "before Jeshimon." It was on the edge of the hill country which rose out of the Arabah, the deep valley which ran along the eastern border of Palestine. David was "in the wilderness." Whether he was in the wilderness of Ziph near the center of Judah or in the wilderness of Paran (25:1) cannot be determined. Since Saul had come to seek him in the wilderness of Ziph, it seems better to think of him as being located there at the time of this battle.

4. *Why did David send out spies?* 26:4

Ordinary precautions would dictate that a band of soldiers the size of David's army have some men serving as scouts. They would need to determine the location and strength of the enemy. Although this is the first time we find David using spies, it must have been Saul's usual practice for he seemed to be able to keep close watch on David's movements.

5. *What kind of trench was in Saul's camp?* 26:5

The American Standard Version translates this word with the phrase, "place of the wagons." Once again we find a reference to the custom of ancient armies to throw up a rampart around their supplies (I Samuel 17:20). It was around these supplies that the main body of the army had pitched its tents. Saul and Abner were in the place

of the wagons. They must have been behind the rampart and in the center of the army where they would enjoy utmost protection.

*David Again Spares Saul. 26:6-20*

6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

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.

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.

9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?

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.

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.

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.

13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a 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.

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.

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?

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.

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.

6. *Why did David propose to go into the camp? 26:6*

For a moment David may have weakened and thought that he might do some personal harm to Saul. Since he had refused to do this before, he may have had other objectives in mind. He had sent out spies to find out as much as he could about Saul's army and its movements. It may have been his own purpose to go into the camp to learn as much as he could about Saul's army for himself. He found out that Saul was there lying within the trench.

He saw his spear stuck in the ground at the head of his bedroll. He saw that Abner was there also as well as many of the other captains of thousands and soldiers whom David had fought with on previous occasions.

7. *What was Abishai's proposal? 26:8*

Abishai, the son of David's sister, Zeruah, and brother of Joab, proposed that they slay Saul while he lay sleeping. Abishai seems ever ready to take immediate action against David's enemies. He made this same proposal when Shimei cursed David as David fled from Jerusalem during the revolt of Absalom (II Samuel 16:9). Abishai seemed sure of his prowess for he said that he would smite him but once and that he would not need to smite him the second time. He felt that he could kill Saul with one stroke.

8. *What was David's reaction? 26:10*

Once again David said that he would not lift up his own hand against the Lord's anointed. He predicted that Saul would go down into battle and be killed. If this were not his end, he would die sometime of old age. At any rate David himself was not going to be a party to the slaying of Saul. He did take evidence from his visit to Saul's camp and returned to his own men. The evidence which he took was the spear and the cruse of water. The spear evidently had a sharp point on the butt end of it so that it could be stuck down in the ground without dulling the sharp point on the other end of the shaft. The cruse of water was the personal jar or cup which would be recognized as Saul's own.

9. *Why did David rebuke Abner? 26:15*

After David got back to his own men, he cried out to Abner and asked him if he did not consider himself to be a valiant man. He chided him by asking if there were any man in his field to equal him. He then asked why he had not kept better watch over the king. He then announced that there had been those in the camp who intended to kill Saul. David's rebuke was stinging as he

judged that Abner was worthy of death because he had not guarded the king more carefully. He asked him to go out to see if he could find the king's spear or the water jar which had been kept at his pillow. Abner's search must have revealed that these items were gone. He knew that David had passed up an opportunity to kill Saul.

*10. Why did Saul call David his son? 26:17*

David was Saul's son-in-law. He had just been awakened out of his sleep, and he may have been very kindly disposed towards David. Saul loved David when he first met him; and since he was old enough to be his father, he may have looked on him as he did the members of his own family. Certainly this kind of address does not reveal any real feeling of animosity towards David on the part of Saul. It must have been largely when he was possessed of the evil spirit that Saul sought to kill David.

*11. What was David's proposal? 26:19*

David proposed that he make an offering to God, if God was stirring up Saul's hatred for him. A sinner was to be punished. If the king knew of his sin, his duty was to execute judgment. For example, one of God's laws through the ages has been that a man who killed another man should be put to death (Genesis 9:6). David was saying that if he were guilty of some crime for which the punishment was less than death, perhaps he could make a sin offering to the Lord and be forgiven of his sin. Thus Saul would not need to continue to search for him. On the other hand, if wicked men were making false accusations against David, he prayed that they might be cursed before the Lord because they were keeping him out of the presence of the king and making him to live on the borders of the promised land. In the areas outside of the borders of Israel David would be in pagan territory. These people worshipped other gods. The net result of his exile was that he could not go to the Tabernacle or to the priests of God and was in effect being told to go and serve other

gods. David was willing therefore that his blood might be shed if there were just cause: but if there were no real reason for his being killed, he prayed that his blood would not be shed in vain.

12. *What figures did David use to describe his plight?*  
26:20

David said he was like a flea or a partridge. He was being forced to move about from place to place. He was like a bird being hunted in the forest. He was forced to make himself as inconspicuous as a pesky insect. These were humble figures, but they described his condition very well.

*Saul Again Repents. 26:21-25*

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.

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 today, 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.

13. *What was Saul's decision? 26:21*

Once again Saul said that he had sinned. He gave permission for David to return to his place unmolested. He

promised him that he would do him no harm. Saul admitted that he had acted like a fool. He had made a grave mistake. Saul parted from David after pronouncing a benediction upon him (v. 25). He predicted that David would go on to accomplish outstanding feats and that he would eventually prevail over him. David was allowed to go on his way unmolested and Saul went back to his home in Gibeah.

## CHAPTER 26 IN REVIEW

1. Who told Saul where David was hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what hill was David hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many men did Saul take to find David? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who went with David into Saul's camp? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was Saul's captain? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What items did David take from Saul's camp? \_\_\_\_\_
7. By what title did Saul address David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. By what figures did David refer to himself? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What part did Saul say he had played? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What part of Saul's armor did David show to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 27

- Vv. 1-7 *David again in Gath.* David's return to Philistia has been called a lapse of faith. He had been told by the prophet Gad not to flee outside the borders of Israel. David must have given up hope of living safely in Israel. He disobeyed God's commandment and returned to Achish, the king of Gath.
- Vv. 8-12 *David's pretended campaign against Judah.* The king of Gath gave the city of Ziklag to David for his residence. David and his men dwelt there for sixteen months. On a number of occasions he invaded the Geshurites and other foreigners to the south of Judah. He reported to Achish the king of Gath that he had been making attacks against Judah itself. He was trying to curry favor with Achish by pretending to attack his own people.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The weakness of the flesh.* David had demonstrated many times that he was a man of great faith. He finally weakened and went against the instructions of God. We look to David as a hero but we realize that he was human. He reached the end of his endurance and gave in to the wisdom of the world which was not the wisdom of God.
2. *A lie is never justifiable.* David lied to Achish when he said that he had attacked the south of Judah (v. 10). He was forced to slay all the inhabitants of the cities which he attacked lest some would report that he was not actually fighting against Judah. One sin led to another. When he lied about where he was fighting, he also had to kill any who might tell the truth. God

cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18) and He does not expect His servants to lie, even to save their own lives.

David's Second Flight to Gath, 27:1-12.

*David Again in Gath. 27:1-7*

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.

2 And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that *were* with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath.

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.

4 And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.

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?

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.

1. *Why was David safer among the Philistines? 27:1*

David felt that Saul would not pursue him into the Philistine territory. His belief was justified from what is recorded in verse four. When Saul heard that David was in Philistia, he did not seek for him anymore. At the same time David was going against the commandments of God. God the prophet had told David not to flee outside the territory of Israel (22:5). At this point in his career

David was despairing of his life. He gave up and did what seemed best to him, but he was turning against the directions of God.

2. *What was David's position in Gath? 27:3*

David was still considered the leader of his 600 men. They evidently asked for political asylum with the king of Gath. This same king had not received David well when David came to him at the beginning of his flight. At that time his servants had reminded him that David was a very popular hero in Israel. David felt it to his advantage at that time to act as if he were a maniac. In this way he escaped any interrogation or imprisonment. As David returned at a later time Achish must have been convinced that Saul was definitely trying to kill David. This must have convinced him that it was all right for David to stay in Gath. The situation of David and his men was such that they could now enjoy a more normal life. Mention is made that each of David's 600 men went over with their households. David had his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail.

3. *Why did David ask for a town? 27:5*

The families of the 600 men would be large enough to settle a town. If they had a place of their own they would have more freedom. David was able to direct the affairs of a group of people. His abilities to lead were evident as he rose to prominence in Israel. If Achish trusted him and gave him a town, David could serve him well as one of the fortified cities giving protection to Gath. David also felt that he was not worthy of living in the royal city with the king. His presence there might have caused him some embarrassment among the other Philistine lords. All of these reasons seemed sufficient for David's having a separate town.

4. *Where was Ziklag? 27:1*

This town was given to the Simeonites in the time of Joshua (Joshua 19:5); but was afterwards taken by the

Philistines, probably not long before the time of David, and appears to have been left without inhabitants in consequence of this conquest. The exact situation has not been clearly ascertained; but it was evidently close to the southwestern border of Judah because David was able to represent his expeditions against the Geshurites, Gezrites and Amalekites as having been against the men of Judah. The statement that David remained there a year and four months is a proof of the historical character of the whole narrative.

*David's Pretended Campaign Against Judah. 27:8-12*

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.

10 And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road today? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites.

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.

12 And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

*5. Who were the people whom David attacked? 27:8*

The Geshurites, the Gezrites and the Amalekites were nomadic people who lived on the southwest border of Palestine. Their territory is described as being that land

along the route to Shur. This was the wilderness where Hagar lived after she was driven out from Abraham's household (Genesis 16:7). Geshurites are noted in Joshua 13:2 as south of Palestine. Gesenius connects the Gezrites with Mt. Gerizim, but this is very doubtful. They, too, must have been south of Palestine proper.

6. *What was David's purpose in his campaigns? 27:9*

David attacked the non-Israelitish people and utterly destroyed them so that there would be no living witnesses of his attacks. He did this and then told Achish that he had been fighting his own people. In this way he hoped to convince Achish that he was completely divorced from his former allegiance to Saul. If Achish believed that David was fighting against the people of Judah, he would believe that David would support the Philistines in their wars against the Israelites.

7. *Against whom did David say he was fighting? 27:9*

David said he had been fighting against the south of Judah, the Jerahmeelites, and the Kenites. The Jerahmeelites were the inhabitants of Jerahmeel. This was a city in Judah southwest of Hebron. The Kenites were the descendants of Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law (Numbers 10:29). These people were ordered to get out of the area when Saul was told to wipe out the Amalekites (I Samuel 15:6).

8. *Why did David use this deception? 27:12*

David was beginning to weaken in his honest purposes. He had left Israel against the commandments of God. He found himself in a position where he had to convince Achish that he was loyal to him. He saw no other way to insure his safety. Some of his own people had betrayed him and he was not safe to live among the people of his own tribe, the tribe of Judah. Had he only trusted in the Lord he would not have been forced to come to the place where he lived by deception.

FIRST SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 27 IN REVIEW

1. To what foreign country did David finally flee? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many men did David have with him? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what city did he flee? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What wives of David were with him? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was king of the country? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What city was given to David and his men? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How long did David stay in the city? \_\_\_\_\_
8. To whom did the city later belong? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Against what people did David make raids? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Against whom did David say he made raids? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 28

- Vv. 1- 2 *David with Achish in battle.* The Philistines began a campaign against Israel; and David was forced to go along with his benefactor, the king of Gath.
- Vv. 3- 6 *Saul forsaken by God.* Samuel was dead. Those that had familiar spirits had been put away out of the land. Saul had no one to give him guidance. The Lord did not answer him because Saul had disobeyed the Lord. The priests were not able to get an answer by Urim or Thummim. Since Saul had slain most of the priests there were none of these to help him. The only other prophet of whom we have knowledge was Gad, and he was with David. Saul was utterly abandoned.
- Vv. 7-14 *Saul seeks the witch of En-dor.* The law of Moses had commanded the people of Israel not to allow a witch to live in their midst. Saul

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

had put out of his country most of those necromancers, wizards, and witches. Some of his soldiers knew of the home of the witch in En-dor, and he disguised himself and went to her.

Vv. 15-25 *Samuel's appearance.* The Lord raised Samuel and allowed him to make a posthumous appearance to Saul. This appearance frightened the witch and greatly distressed Saul.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *A man forsaken of God is really all alone.* Saul makes a pitiable picture as there was no prophet, priest, or any other servant of God to advise him. We should learn from this occurrence that it is a terrible thing to turn one's back on God. We should remember that God is near to those who draw near to Him.
2. *There is life after death.* The witch of En-dor was not able to raise Samuel. She was frightened and cried out when Samuel was raised by the Lord. Samuel's appearance gives us evidence of life after death. We should all look forward when we will be raised to live a life everlasting.

Preparations for Saul's Last Battle, 28:1—29:11.

*David With Achish in Battle.* 28:1, 2

And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

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.

1. *What was the demand of Achish on David?* 28:1

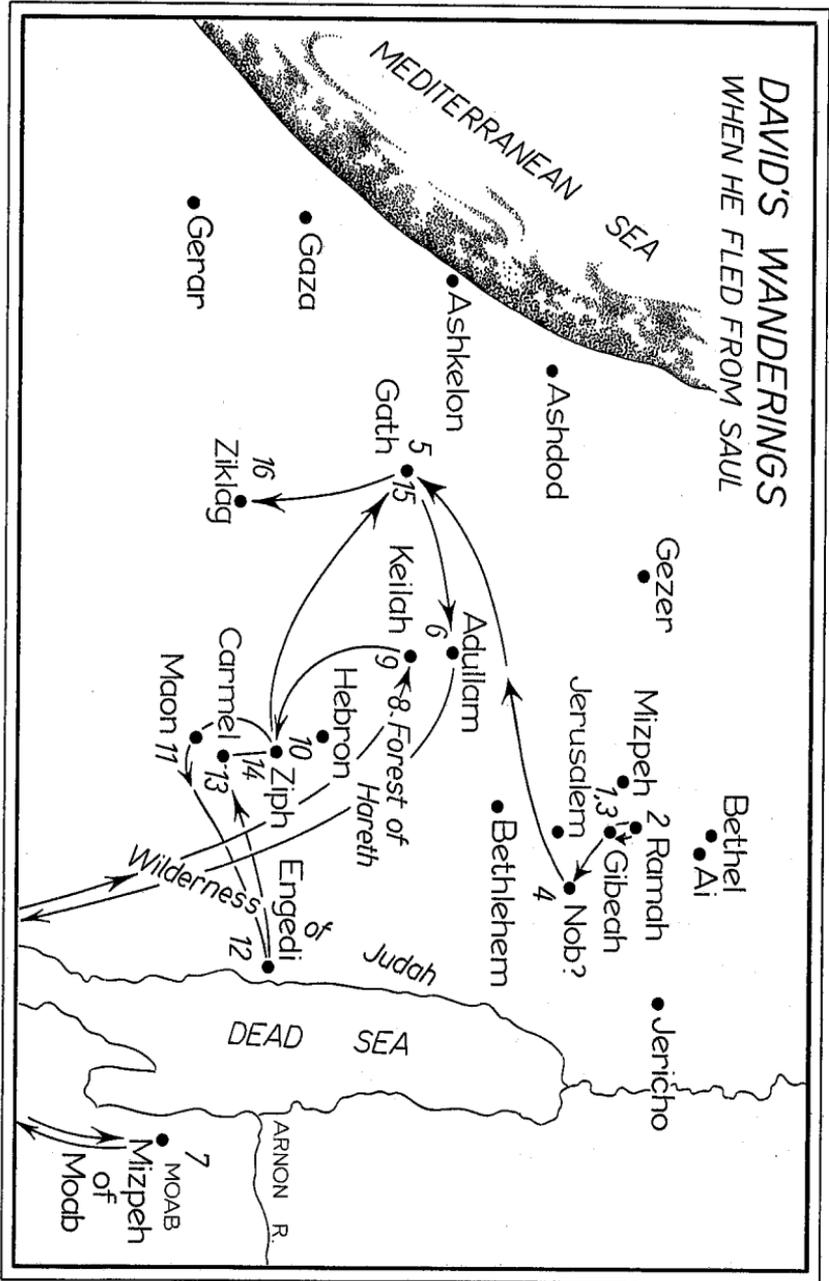
In exchange for the protection which David had received from Achish, David was expected to serve as a soldier with the Philistines. This was a high price to pay for the little bit of security which the Philistines afforded David. It has well been said that he who gives up a bit of his liberty in order to insure some security is worthy neither of liberty or security. David found himself in a position where he was expected to fight with the Philistines against his own people.

2. *Did David intend to fight against Saul?* 28:1, 2

While David was living in Philistia, the Philistines gathered their armies together for a campaign against Israel. Achish sent word to David that he was to go with him in his army along with his own men. David answered ambiguously. His words contained no distinct promise of faithful assistance in the war against the Israelites. There are no grounds for inferring that David was disposed to help the Philistines against Saul and the Israelites. Judging from his previous acts, it would necessarily have been against his principles for him to fight against his own people. Nevertheless, in the situation in which he was placed he did not venture to give a distinct refusal to the summons of the king. He was undoubtedly hoping that God would show him a way out of the conflict between his conviction and his duty to obey the Philistine king. He had no doubt prayed earnestly about it; and the faithful God helped his servant; first of all, by the fact that Achish accepted his indefinite declaration as a promise of unconditional fidelity and still more by the fact that the princes of the Philistines overrode the king.

*Saul Forsaken by God.* 28:3-6

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city.



## DAVID'S WANDERINGS

### WHEN HE FLED FROM SAUL

(The places listed are shown on the map.)

1. *Gibeah*; I Sam. 19:1-17.
  - a. Jonathan intercedes for David; 19:1-7.
  - b. Saul tries to spear David; 19:8-10.
  - c. Michal helps David escape; 19:11-17.
2. *Ramah*; I Sam. 19:18-24; Ps. 59 (?).
  - a. David visits Samuel; 19:18-19.
  - b. Saul and his messengers prophesy; 19:20-24.
3. *Gibeah*; I Sam. 20.
  - a. David absent from feast of new moon; 20:1-34.
  - b. Jonathan warns David with arrows; 20:35-42.
4. *Nob*;<sup>1</sup> I Sam. 21:1-9.
  - a. Ahimelech gives David food and weapons; 21:1-6, 8-9.
  - b. Doeg the Edomite witnesses Ahimelech's act; 21:7.
5. *Gath*; I Sam. 21:10-15; Ps. 34, 56.
  - a. David feigns madness.
6. *Adullam*; I Sam. 22:1-2; Ps. 142.
  - a. David gathers 400 followers.
7. *Mizpeh of Moab*; I Sam. 22:3-5.
  - a. David leaves his parents here for safety.
8. *Forest of Hareth*; I Sam. 22:5-23; Ps. 52.
  - a. Saul slays priests at Nob; 22:5-19.
  - b. Abiathar comes to David; 22:20-23.
9. *Keilah*; I Sam. 23:1-12.
  - a. David saves Keilah from Philistines; 23:1-6.
  - b. Saul pursues David; 23:7-12.
10. *Ziph*; I Sam. 23:13-23.
  - a. David escapes to the wilderness; 23:13-14.
  - b. Jonathan's last visit with David; 23:15-18.
  - c. Ziphites reveal David's hiding place to Saul; 23:19-23.
11. *Maon*; I Sam. 23:24-28.
  - a. David narrowly escapes Saul.
12. *Engedi*; I Sam. 23:29—24:22.
  - a. David spares Saul.
13. *Carmel*; I Sam. 25:1-44.
  - a. Samuel's death; 25:1.
  - b. Nabal refuses food for David's men; 25:2-13.
  - c. Abigail's intercession; 25:14-35.
  - d. Death of Nabal; 25:36-38.
  - e. David marries Abigail; 25:39-44.
14. *Ziph*; I Sam. 26:1-25.
  - a. Ziphites reveal David's hiding-place again; 26:1-3.
  - b. David spares Saul; 26:4-25.
15. *Gath*; I Sam. 27:1-4.
  - a. David dwells with Achish.
16. *Ziklag*; I Sam. 27:3-12.
  - a. David receives Ziklag from Achish; 27:5-7.
  - b. David raids southern tribes; 27:8-12.

<sup>1</sup> The location of Nob is uncertain. It is thought to be near the Mt. of Olives near Jerusalem.

And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

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.

6 And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

3. *Why had Saul put away the witches? 28:3*

Saul had kept the Law as recorded in Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; and Deuteronomy 18:10. Since Samuel was dead, Saul had no prophet to whom he could turn. He had chased out the people with familiar spirits and the wizards. He could not go to a false prophet. He could find no spiritual assistance of any kind, good or bad, valid or invalid.

4. *Where was Shunem? 28:4*

Shunem was a little town in the valley of Jezreel. The Philistines had marched to this far point between Mount Carmel on the west and Mt. Gilboa on the east. This was a famous battlefield, being the scene of the battle against Sisera in the days of Deborah (Judges 4:7). Gilboa was the mountain on the northeastern edge of the plain of Jezreel. Shunem was the modern Shulem or Solam, some eight miles away from Mt. Gilboa.

5. *Why was Saul so alarmed? 28:5*

Since he had met and defeated the Philistines in earlier battles, Saul's great alarm can be attributed only to the feeling that the Lord had forsaken him. No doubt the Philistine army was formidable, but he had met the armies of the Ammonites soon after he became king. He mustered 330,000 warriors out of Israel on that occasion. Using good military strategy and completely trusting in

God, Saul had been victorious against these eastern enemies (I Samuel 11:11). Throughout his career he had fought many battles against the Philistines, but his falling into the clutches of the evil spirit repeatedly must have enervated Israel's first king. He had been unsuccessful in his wicked attempt to kill David and David's continued wise behavior had convinced Saul that God was with David and not with him. All of these things combined left Saul a cringing coward.

6. *What were God's ways of revealing His will?* 28:6

Three of the various ways in which God revealed himself in ancient times are mentioned in connection with Saul's vain attempt to learn the will of God. God often spoke to people in dreams. This had been His way of indicating His will to Joseph (Genesis 37:5). The Urim was a part of the high priest's wearing apparel, and it was used to find out the Lord's will as the priests made inquiry of Him (Exodus 28:30). Prophets were active throughout most of Israel's history. There were bands of prophets in the days of Samuel, and God revealed His will through these men (I Kings 13:1). We need to remember that God "who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). Saul's desolate condition is emphasized by the statement of the fact that God did not answer Saul by any of these means.

*Saul Seeks the Witch of En-dor.* 28:7-14

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 En-dor.

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.

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.

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.

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.

#### 7. Why did Saul go to the witch of En-dor? 28:7

The Philistines had collected their forces in the plain near Shunem. Saul's army was encamped on the slopes of Mt. Gilboa, some two miles away but plainly within sight of the enemy. The very sight of the enemy had thrown Saul into dread terror. He was greatly anxious about the outcome of the battle and inquired of the Lord what might be the results of the coming conflict. The Lord had left Saul as He had withdrawn His spirit from Samson during the time of the Judges; and He did not answer Saul, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Instead of repenting and humbling himself before Jehovah, Saul plunged stubbornly forward in an

attempt of his own invention to find the verdict of the future. When living prophets gave no answer, he thought that a dead one might be called up, as if a dead one were less dependent upon God than the living, or that, even in opposition to the will of God, he might reply through the arts of a conjuring woman. Truly, if he perceived that God was hostile to him, he ought to have been all the more afraid, lest his enmity should be increased by his breach of His laws. But fear and superstition never reason.

8. *Where is En-dor? 28:7b*

En-dor still exists in a village under the ancient name on the Shoulder of *Duby* or Little Hermon about two miles from Saul's camp. Saul must have made a pitiable sight as he disguised himself and left the security of his camp to go down into the valley to find the home of the outlawed witch. Perhaps he had to slip along through the night past the Philistine outposts in order to reach this eerie home. His ill-fated journey is a sad commentary on the lot of a man who disobeys God.

9. *Why did Saul disguise himself? 28:8*

Saul would not want to be recognized by any Philistine scout whom he might meet. Most of all he knew that the woman would not practice her illegal art if she recognized him as king. He must have been ashamed to wear his kingly robes and make such a pitiable request of a spiritualist. His disguise would not be able to hide his stature, however; and this outstanding feature of Saul's person may have helped the witch to unmask Saul when Samuel did come back from the grave.

10. *Why had witches been banned? 28:9*

When Israel came into the promised land, they were "not to learn to do like the abominations of these nations." There was not to be found in the land any who caused his son or his daughter to pass through the fire (in other words, a worshipper of Moloch). Neither were there to be any who practiced sooth-saying, or a wizard, or a

snake-charmer, or a conjurer, or one who pronounced a ban, a necromancer and wise man, or one who asked the dead to be brought up. Moses was given this in the Law, and he grouped all the words which the language contained for the different modes of exploring the future and discovering the will of God, for the purpose of forbidding every description of soothsaying. At the head of the list was placed the prohibition of Moloch-worship, to show the connection between soothsaying and idolatry. Saul had acted in accordance with God's law when he banned all these from the kingdom (See Numbers 23:23 and Deuteronomy 18:9 ff.).

*11. Why was the woman suspicious? 28:9*

The witch of En-dor was afraid that her visitor was laying a snare for her. She was afraid that she would be reported to the king and eventually be killed. She knew that the Law said, "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus 22:18). She knew that God had ordained that there should not be found among the Israelites any "that use divination or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (Deuteronomy 18:10, 11). She had to be cautious in order to practice her illicit profession. When Saul gave her his word that she would not be punished, she was willing to go ahead.

*12. Did Samuel appear to the witch? 28:12*

The early Christian writers, the Protestant reformers, and many later Christian theologians assumed that there was no real appearance of Samuel, but only an imaginary one. More lately the opinion has been expressed that the apparition of Samuel was merely a delusion produced by the witch without any background at all. More recently orthodox commentators have been almost unanimous in the opinion that the departed prophet did really appear and announce the destruction; not, however, in consequence of the magical arts of the witch, but through a miracle

wrought by the omnipotence of God. This is favored by the narrator who speaks throughout of the appearance not of a ghost, but of Samuel himself. It is also sustained by the circumstance, that not only do the words of Samuel to Saul create the impression that it is Samuel himself who is speaking, but his announcement contains so distinct a prophecy of the death of Saul and his sons, that it is impossible to imagine it can have proceeded from the mouth of an imposter, or have come from Satan.

*13. How did the witch recognize Saul? 28:12*

The woman must have concluded that she was in the presence of Saul because he had asked to have a seance with Samuel. Samuel and Saul had been rather closely associated in the political and religious activities of the kingdom of Israel. The woman must have known about Samuel's death and Saul's desperate effort to find out the will of God. The very fact that Saul had asked for Samuel to be brought back from the dead probably raised a question in the woman's mind from the very beginning of the interview. As Samuel was raised from the dead by the power of God and the woman was frightened by this miraculous event, she undoubtedly was then not afraid to express her conviction. Saul's stature would have been a feature that he could not disguise. There was none other in Israel as tall as he. He stood head and shoulders above all the others. This imposing stature coupled with the strange request for Samuel's being brought back from the dead would have convinced the woman of the identity of her strange visitor.

*14. In what form did Samuel appear? 28:14*

Samuel's appearance is not to be regarded as the appearance of one who had risen in a glorified body; but though somewhat spirit-like in its external manifestation, so that it was only to the witch that he was visible, and not to Saul. It was merely an appearance of the soul of Samuel, which had been at rest, in the clothing of the

earthly body and dress of the prophet, which were assumed for the purpose of rendering it visible. In this respect, the appearance of Samuel, rather resembled the appearances of the angels in human form and dress, such as the three angels who came to Abraham in the grove at Mamre, and the angel who appeared to Manoah, with this exception, however, that these angels manifested themselves in a human form, which was visible to the ordinary bodily eye, whereas Samuel appeared in a spirit-like form. In all these cases the bodily form and clothing were only a dress assumed for the soul or spirit, and intended to facilitate perception, so that such appearances furnish no proof that the souls of departed men possess material corporeality.

*15. How did Saul know that it was Samuel? 28:14*

The apparition was clothed in the prophet's mantle such as Samuel was accustomed to wearing. Saul asked the woman to describe the apparition and she said that it was an old man. Samuel had died after several years of work among the people of Israel. Since Saul had asked for Samuel in the first place, he must have realized that God had granted his request.

*Samuel's Appearance. 28:15-25*

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?

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:

18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor

## FIRST SAMUEL

executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto this day.

19 Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

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.

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:

25 And she brought *it* before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

16. *In what way was Samuel disquieted? 28:15*

The actions of the woman imply most unquestionably that she saw an apparition which she did not anticipate. This leads us to believe that she was not really able to conjure up departed spirits or persons who had died, but that she might merely pretend to do so. Even if it is

concluded that the woman had a certain demoniacal background, the appearance of Samuel differed essentially from everything that she had experienced and effected before, and therefore filled her with alarm and horror. The very fact, however, that she recognized Saul as soon as Samuel appeared, precludes us from declaring that all this was nothing more than jugglery and deception. Her recognition of Saul when Samuel appeared may be explained from their close association during Samuel's lifetime and the woman's knowledge of this, or from God's granting her clairvoyant power even as He had granted the appearance of Samuel himself.

17. *Why did Samuel reveal David as the next king? 28:17*

The purpose of God had already been formed and was about to be fulfilled. Samuel thus announced it definitely to Saul. Saul had taken very extreme measures. Although he explained that he was sore distressed, he did not have reason to ask God to disquiet Samuel. The Philistines were oppressing Israel. God had indeed departed from Saul. Saul was unable to get any revelation of the will of God from the prophets or by dreams. All of this was not reason enough to resort to illegal measures. Saul should have known that if the Lord was departed from him, he was helpless. This final and irrevocable revelation of God's utter rejection of Saul was in keeping with the drastic steps which Saul had taken. If Saul had any doubt about the outcome of his own kingdom it was removed by this revelation from the prophet who had been returned from the dead.

18. *What was the basic reason for Saul's being rejected?*  
28:18

A two-fold reason is given for Saul's being rejected. Samuel said it was because he had not obeyed the voice of the Lord. This was probably a reference to his failing to wait for seven days as he was ordered by Samuel before the two were to sacrifice. Samuel also said that it was

because he had not executed God's fierce wrath on Amalek. On both these occasions Samuel had rebuked Saul while he was alive. Coming back from the dead he summarized the rejection of Saul as being on account of these two failures.

19. *How would Saul be with Samuel?* 28:19

Samuel told Saul that he would die in the battle the next day. The two men would thus be together in the world of the departed spirits. Here is another indication of the deep conviction held by the Old Testament people with regard to life after death. Such expressions as one's being "gathered to his people" (Genesis 25:8), this statement of Samuel's with regard to Saul, and David's statement that his dead boy could not be brought back but that he would go to him (II Samuel 12:23) all verify the faith of the Israelite people in life after death.

20. *Why did Saul fast?* 28:20

Saul was mentally perturbed and excited of body and soul. His deep mental anguish left him without appetite. Hannah's deep distress left her in a similar condition (I Samuel 1:7) as did the apostle Paul's repentant spirit (Acts 9:9). In addition, he may have fasted as an outward sign of his attempt to be holy, hoping in this way to win favor with God.

21. *Why was the woman concerned for Saul?* 20:21

The witch had a sincere respect for her sovereign, and she did not want to see him expire because of lack of nourishment. She also knew that he would need every ounce of his strength as he made his way back to his camp and entered into the final battle with the Philistines. Her reasoning was good. She reminded Saul that she had listened to his request and cooperated with him in the practice of her necromancy, and she felt that it was only fair that Saul in turn listen to her appeal on his behalf. The woman's request was not enough in itself: but as his servants continued to insist that he eat something, he finally

arose from lying prone on the ground and did eat as he sat on the edge of the bed. This final ministration to Saul's physical needs on behalf of his loyal subject is a touching picture of life in Palestine in the eleventh century before Christ. She performed all the menial tasks necessary in the preparation of the meal and served it with loyal devotion. Thus strengthened, Saul and his servants returned to their camp and prepared for the final battle.

### CHAPTER 28 IN REVIEW

1. What kind of people had Saul banned from Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where were the Philistines encamped? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was Israel's camp? \_\_\_\_\_
4. By what means had Saul inquired of God? \_\_\_\_\_
5. For what kind of woman did Saul seek? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did the woman live to whom Saul went? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Whom did Saul ask the woman to disquiet? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what garment was Samuel arrayed? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Did Saul see Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Did Saul hear Samuel's voice? \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 29

- Vv. 1-7 *David challenged by the lords of the Philistines.* The lords of the other cities of the Philistines doubted that David would fight against his own people when they actually went into battle. These men requested that Achish, the king of Gath, send David back and not allow him to go into the conflict. Achish was not convinced that David would betray him in the heat of battle, but he yielded to the will of the other Philistine leaders and sent David back from the battlefield.
- Vv. 8-11 *David departs from Achish.* The Philistine lords of such towns as Ekron, Lachish, Gaza and Gath had met at Aphek along the Mediterranean coast as they prepared to go into battle. David departed from this point and returned toward Ziklag. The Philistines went on to battle near Jezreel.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "All things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28). David must have been in great mental anguish as he found himself in a position where he might be forced to fight against his own people. He had pretended to wage little skirmishes against the south of Judah, but he had not actually done this. He had indicated that he would be loyal to Achish, the king of Gath, who had befriended him and allowed him to dwell in the Philistine city of Ziklag. It is hard for us to believe that David would actually fight against his people and he must have been glad when the Philistine lords insisted that he be sent back from the battlefield. This is apparently the good providence of God that

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

keeps His chosen servants from going too far in the wrong direction.

2. "*Lest haply we be found even to fight against God*" (Acts 5:39 b). In the days when the apostles were threatened by the Jewish leaders one of them had the good common sense to urge his colleagues not to go too far in persecuting Christians lest they themselves be found to fight against God. When we fight against God's people, we fight against God. We are glad that David did not have to fight against his own people. We should be careful that we do not put ourselves in a position where we fight against God's chosen men.

### *David Challenged by the Lords of the Philistines. 29:1-7*

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 rearward with Achish.

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?

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?

5 *Is* not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

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.

7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.

1. *Where was Aphek?* 29:1

At least four different locations bear the name of Aphek. One is a city mentioned in Joshua 13:4. The context indicates that this was north of Sidon, and is often identified as *Asqa*, the ancient *Aphaca*, some twenty-three miles on beyond Beirut. Another is a town in the tribe of Asher, which the Israelites failed to occupy (Joshua 19:30; Judges 1:31). This Aphek has been identified with Tell Kurdaneh, some six miles southeast of Accho. A third location is a town in the Plain of Sharon, about eleven miles northeast of Joppa. This is the present *Ras-el-'Ain*. The Philistines were camped here on their way to Shiloh to attack Israel at Ebenezer (I Samuel 4:1-12). A fourth location is a spot about four miles east of the Sea of Galilee in the land of Manasseh east. This spot is on the highway between Damascus and a plain of Esdraelon and is known as the present-day *Afik* (I Kings 20:26; II Kings 13:17). Still another site is posited as not only possible but probable from the reference of the location of the armies in Shunem and Jezreel (I Samuel 28:4; 29:1, 11; 31:3). It seems doubtful that the Philistines would be assembling their troops at this far northern point. The Aphek described here must be the town in the Plain of Sharon. To place it farther north would make it too far away for David and his men to reach Ziklag on the third day after he was discharged from Achish's service (I Samuel 30:1).

*2. Why did the Philistines send David away? 29:3*

All the various armies of the Philistine governors were being assembled at Aphek for the great push against Saul, when the rulers of the Philistines spied David and his army in the company of Achish. Having recognized him as David, the servant of Saul, they demanded that he not be allowed to go into the battle with the Philistine armies. Achish regretfully informed David of this decision; and in accordance with Achish's admonition, David returned the next morning to Ziklag. No doubt he was very light of heart praising God for having so graciously rescued him out of the disastrous situation into which he had been brought and that not altogether without some fault of his own.

*3. How did the Philistines know Israel's songs? 29:5*

The song that the women sang as David came back from battle was a very popular song. It is first mentioned in the period following David's victory over Goliath (I Samuel 18:7). This was the song which had stirred Saul's jealousy because the song ascribed but thousands to him while ascribing ten thousands to David. The Philistines had heard it before the time when David fled from Saul and went to Achish at Gath (I Samuel 21:11). Evidently these songs were sung on a number of occasions and the Philistines may have been present to hear it. If they had not heard it in a time of peace, they may have heard it as their armies were encamped close enough together for sounds to carry back and forth.

*4. Why did Achish regret discharging David? 29:6*

Achish had not realized the truth of the activity of David. He thought he had been making attacks on the south of Judah and took this as evidence of his complete severance from the tribes of Israel (27:12). Achish was forced to discharge David because this was the majority decision of the lords of the Philistines—the king of Ekron, Lachish, Gaza, Ashdod, and others nearby. Achish thought

that David would be a valiant soldier, for indeed he had a reputation of being a capable military man. It is quite doubtful that David would have fought against Saul. He had refused to harm him on a number of occasions, and he would certainly have rebelled against any personal combat between Saul and himself.

*David Departs from Achish. 29:8-11*

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?

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.

*5. Why did David protest? 29:8*

David was playing the part to the hilt. His words are ambiguous, and he does not expect that Achish will be able to make any charge against him. As he said that he would go and fight against the enemies of his lord the king, he does not make the reference personal. He could have been saying that he would fight against the Philistines, since he was really still loyal to Saul. Achish in his gullibility, took the statement of David to be a declaration of allegiance to him and assured David still more earnestly that he was firmly convinced of his honesty and integrity.

6. *Why did Achish compare David to an angel of God?*  
29:9

This idiom is used quite often by people who want to show their deep respect for others. The comparison of the king to an angel of God was made by the woman of Tekoah, who came up to see David at the invitation of Joab (II Samuel 14:17 and 20). In the case of the Israelites they would look to their monarch as God's vice-regent; but in the case of Achish, the idiom is probably no more than a way for him to say that he had the strongest conviction that David had behaved himself well. He was as faultless as an angel in the sight of Achish.

## CHAPTER 29 IN REVIEW

1. Where were the Philistines gathering together? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where were the Israelites encamped? \_\_\_\_\_
3. With whom was David going into battle? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who objected to David's presence? \_\_\_\_\_
5. By what name did the Philistines describe David and his men? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What title did the Philistines use to describe David's relationship to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Quote the song which the Philistines knew which referred to Saul and David. \_\_\_\_\_
8. To what heavenly being did Achish compare David? \_\_\_\_\_
9. When did David leave the Philistine camp? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Towards what place did the Philistines go? \_\_\_\_\_

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### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 30

- Vv. 1-6 *David's camp looted.* David and his men marched for three days from Aphek and came to Ziklag. They arrived only to find that their camp had been attacked, the city had been burned with fire, and the men's wives and sons and daughters had been taken captives.
- Vv. 7-20 *David's pursuit of his enemies.* David made inquiry of Abiathar, the priest, to find out the Lord's will. The Lord informed him that he should pursue those who had destroyed his camp. David found a straggler from the enemy's forces, and the straggler helped David to take the enemy's camp by surprise.
- Vv. 21-31 *David's good will towards Judah.* David took considerable spoil from the Amalekites, who had attacked the camp. He did not keep all of it himself. He ordered that all his men should share equally in the spoils, and he then sent some of the spoils to the cities of Judah. He especially made sure that spoils were sent to Hebron and to all the places where he and his men had been protected when they fled from Saul.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *There is strength in the Lord.* David's men were so distressed when they saw that their wives and children had been taken captive that they threatened to stone David. David himself was really distressed, but we read this significant statement of David: "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God" (v. 6 b). When there is none other to give help, God is always close at hand.

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2. *Victory belongs to the soldiers of the Lord.* A weaker man than David might have given up in despair when he returned to find that his own city had been pillaged and burned. He continued his march against the enemy and by the strength of the Lord was victorious. We need to remember that often victory is just around the corner. Sometimes we give up just on the brink of ultimate victory, but thus we know only defeat.
3. *Blessings are to be shared.* David was very unselfish in not keeping all the spoils for himself. He would not allow the selfish men in his army to keep those who had watched the baggage from sharing the spoils. He made it an ordinance in Israel that those who went to battle and those who watched the baggage were to share and share alike in the spoils of war. He also shared the spoils with those who had befriended him in earlier days. This is the magnanimous spirit needed by all of God's people.

### David's Return to Ziklag, 30:1-31.

#### *David's Camp Looted.* 30:1-6

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.

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.

4 Then David and the people that *were* with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

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.

1. *Why had the Amalekites sacked Ziklag? 30:1*

David and his men had made expeditions against these people when David wanted to impress Achish (I Samuel 27:9-12). These Bedouin peoples had probably watched the departure of David and his men and had taken advantage of the opportunity to capture their women, children, and possessions. It is ironical that the people who led this expedition against David were the people whom Saul had been sent to destroy. Evidently Saul had not only spared the king, but had allowed some of the men to escape. These people then rose up to cause trouble for David.

2. *Why had they not slain any? 30:2*

They had not followed David's method of warfare. David had the extreme need for ridding himself of any witnesses and had entered into campaigns of total extermination. The captives taken by the Amalekites were probably destined to the Egyptian slave market. This was the way in which the Midianites were introduced in the days of Joseph. They bought him for twenty pieces of silver and took him to Egypt, where he was sold (Genesis 37:36).

3. *What caused David's excessive grief? 30:4*

David and his men had marched with the rearward of the Philistine armies as far as Aphek. There they were halted by the lords of the Philistines who were making the final assignments for the battle in the north. After they were discharged, they made a forced march for three days

and had arrived in their home only to find it pillaged and burned. They wept until they had no more tears and no more mental, physical, or nervous energy to expend in their grief.

4. *Why did the men blame David? 30:6*

The men felt that their association with David would ultimately bring them only misfortune. The men are described as being "bitter of soul." This description fits angry men as is evidenced by Judges 18:25 and II Samuel 17:8. The Shunamite woman whose son had died is described in this same way as she fell at Elisha's feet (II Samuel 4:27). The same idea is expressed in an attempt to describe Jacob's fear and distress as he was about to return to meet Esau (Genesis 32:7, 8) and also the people of Israel as the Canaanite peoples whom they had left in the land distressed them (Judges 2:15). These men were at their wits' end. Since David was their captain and ultimately responsible for the major decisions, they blamed him for all that had befallen them. They even considered seriously the actual stoning of David.

5. *How was David sustained in the day of peril? 30:6b*

Hardly any stranger circumstances can be imagined than those which confronted David upon his return to Ziklag. He and his men had hurriedly returned from Aphek to Ziklag by a forced march of three days' duration. Their welcome consisted of charred remains of what had been their homes and the knowledge that their women, children, and cattle had been driven away as spoil by the plundering Amalekites. Their grief was such that they wept until the fountains of weeping were run dry, and then the men turned and vented their grief by anger at David. There were conversations directed towards stirring up the men to stone David. In all this, we read, "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." By such faith David was sustained even in days of greatest peril.

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### *David's Pursuit of His Enemies.* 30:7-20

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.

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*.

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.

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;

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drove before those *other* cattle, and said, This *is* David's spoil.

6. *How were the captives of Ziklag recovered? 30:7 ff.*

David inquired of the Lord concerning the advisability of going out against the Amalekites. God answered him by telling him that he should go out in pursuit of the enemy and added the promise that he would be blessed in the endeavor. An Egyptian, a slave of one of the plundering Amalekites, had grown faint while the plunderers were returning from Ziklag; and when he was unable to proceed with the army his master left him by the highway to die. This man was found by David, and his spirits were revived by their kind ministrations. He said that he would guide them to the camp of the pillagers if only David would promise not to take his life nor deliver him again into the hands of his master. Led by the slave, the men came upon the Amalekites as they were spread upon the ground eating and drinking, all of which was probably some sort of religious festival celebrating their successful plundering of Ziklag. The attack was sudden and soon decided, and the success was complete. David rescued all that had been carried away. Nothing was missing; and in

addition to recovering his own, David captured a large amount of other property.

7. *What was the nature of David's inquiry?* 30:8

David asked the Lord if he should pursue after the Amalekites. He puts it in the form of a question that could be answered by a full statement from the Lord. It would be better not to consider this as a question to be answered with a *yes* or a *no*. He was asking the Lord what would happen if he did pursue. The Lord answered his question. As he continued to be more specific, he asked if he could overtake the enemy. The Lord revealed to him that he would not only catch up with the Amalekites but he would recover everything he had lost.

8. *Where was the brook Besor?* 30:9

This brook is mentioned only at this point. It must have been south of Ziklag on the road to Egypt. Wady Gazze or Wady Sheria would fit a description of the events which transpired. Probably it was near Ziklag, because the men who stayed behind knew they would have to cross it in order to pursue the enemy.

9. *Why were the 200 so faint?* 30:10

David's men had been on a forced march from the rallying point at Aphek before they pursued their enemies from Ziklag. In addition, they had been under a great deal of mental strain as they had posed as friendly towards the Philistines. The final blow to their stamina came as they returned to find their wives, children, and supplies, carried away by marauders. Two hundred evidently stayed at Ziklag to protect the site. They knew that they would have to cross this valley and were not even able to begin the campaign.

10. *Who was the straggler?* 30:13

The young man whom David's men found in the field was an Egyptian. He was so faint that he was like a corpse according to the original text. After he had been given something to eat and drink, his spirit came again to

him. When he was asked about his background, he explained that he was an Egyptian but was a servant to an Amalekite. He had been left behind because he was sick and unable to keep up with the rest of the company.

11. *Who were the Cherethites?* 30:14

The Cherethites were tribes of the Philistines who lived in the southwest part of Canaan. Ezekiel mentioned them (Ezekiel 25:16) as did Zephaniah (Zephaniah 2:5). In these references they are synonymous with the Philistines. The Greek version called these people "Cretans." It is now understood that the Philistines originally came from Crete. David had Cherethites and Pelethites as body guards (II Samuel 8:18; 15:18; 20:7, 23; I Kings 1:38, 44; I Chronicles 18:17). Later on these men were called captains and the guard (II Kings 11:4, 19).

12. *Why did David overcome the Amalekites with ease?*  
30:16-20

When David came on the campsite of the Amalekites, they were spread all around over the ground eating and drinking and dancing. They were celebrating the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines and out of the land of Judah. Just how long David smote them is not clear, but it must have been only one evening. It was the next day after they had left Ziklag that he began the attack at twilight. He continued the attack after dark and recovered everything.

*David's Goodwill Toward Judah.* 30:21-31

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 Be-lial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they

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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.

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.

25 And it was *so* from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

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 Beth-el, 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.

13. *What military law was based on these events? 30:22-25*

Two hundred men had been too worn out by the events of the return from Aphek and all that transpired to cross over the Brook Besor as the men of David pursued the Amalekites. As a result, they had stayed behind with

some of the equipment. When the victorious men returned, they met these two hundred men; and the baser of their number were of a mind to refuse to divide the spoil with the two hundred. All that was to be given to these men were their wives and children. David immediately vetoed the proposition. His language is contained in this couplet:

“As the portion of the one who goes down into battle, So is the portion of the one who remains with the baggage.”

To this he added these words: “They shall all share alike.” David’s decision in the matter became a precedent for what was done in Israel from that time forward.

14. *To who did David send presents of the spoil? 30:26-31*

David used the booty at his disposal to win the hearts of the men of Judah. He sent portions to the elders of Judah, to his friends, and to his kinsmen with the note that the spoil was taken for a blessing for them from the possessions of the enemies of Jehovah. The listing of the cities indicates that they were all in the South of the land. In these cities and among these people David had wandered when he was a fugitive from the wrath of Saul. Many of them had no doubt rendered valuable assistance to David and his party. Sending these gifts could not fail to make the elders of these cities well disposed towards David; and so to facilitate his recognition as king after the death of Saul, David acted wisely. Moreover, some of these places may have been invaded and plundered by the Amalekites, since they had pillaged the Negeb of Judah.

## CHAPTER 30 IN REVIEW

1. Who had attacked Ziklag? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How long had David taken to reach Ziklag? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which wives of David were captured? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What did David's men propose to do to him? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What did the priest bring to David? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the priest's name? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many men went with David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many stayed behind? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Whom did David's men find in a field? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To whom did David send some of the spoil  
he took? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 31

Vv. 1-6 *Saul's death.* Samuel had told Saul that he would die in battle. This came to pass as the armies of Israel and Philistia met in battle on Mt. Gilboa. Saul fell on his sword and killed himself. His sons were killed with him in this fatal battle.

Vv. 7-13 *Saul's burial.* The Philistines cut off Saul's head and stripped off his armor. They put his armor in the house of their gods the Ash-taroth. They fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. The men of Jabesh-Gilead heard that Saul's body was hanging on Beth-shan. They came by night and took the body and gave it a decent burial.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The word of God is sure.* Saul had done everything he could to try to thwart God's will. Even though he had disobeyed God on at least two outstanding occasions, he evidently thought he could escape the ultimate punish-

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ment which was pronounced against him. Samuel had predicted that Saul would die in battle. Saul did die as Samuel said. We may rest well assured that the Word of God cannot be broken. The prophecies of God are sure to be fulfilled.

2. *Faithful friends are priceless.* Saul had befriended the men of Jabesh-Gilead by rescuing them out of the hands of Nahash, the king of the Ammonites. The men of Jabesh-Gilead did not forget that Saul had helped them in the early days of his kingship. They did what they could to see that Saul's body was given a fitting burial. At the risk of their own lives they crossed the Jordan river. Traveling by night they came to the wall of Beth-shan and took down the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons. They took these bones back to their town and gave them an honorable burial.

Saul's Last Battle, 31:1-13.

### *Saul's Death.* 31:1-6

Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

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 to 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.

5 And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, that same day together.

*1. Why did Israel fight in the mountains? 31:1*

The Israelites seemed to prefer the hill country for their battlefield. They were forced to fight Jaban, the king of Hazor, in the lowlands in the days of Joshua (Joshua 11:1). At that time the Canaanites fought with horses and chariots (Joshua 11:4), equipment which the Israelites did not appear to use in the battle until the later days of the kings of Israel (I Kings 20:25; II Kings 9:16; et al.). Israel evidently held a good reputation for fighting in the hill country, and their enemies thought that they were not able to fight in the valleys (I Kings 20:23). The chariots of their enemies would be able to roll more freely in the plains and the valleys, so Israel would have every advantage as they went into this final battle under Saul. They would have the physical advantage of the terrain as they went into this final battle against the Philistines. The most important advantage was not theirs. They did not have the blessings of God.

*2. Why were Saul's sons with him? 31:2*

In earlier battles Jonathan was the leader of the sons of Saul. On occasions he had been in charge of at least one thousand men. It was his bravery that brought an initial victory as he and his armor-bearers surprised the Philistine garrison. Abinadab and Melchishua may also have been in charge of a detachment of soldiers. Israel needed all her men in this great battle. Her kings' sons were not exempt from military duty.

*3. How badly was Saul wounded? 31:3*

The Philistines were better equipped in many ways than the Israelites. They used their bowmen with great advantage in the fighting on the mountain slopes. It was these men who finally caught up with Saul and his three sons. Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchishua were evidently

mortally wounded by the Philistines themselves. Saul's wounds left him able to converse with his armor-bearers and finally to fall on his own sword, though dying. The Greek translation of the Bible, made some two hundred years before Christ, viewed this situation as one depicting Saul being wounded in the abdomen. He might have expected this wound to be fatal, and it certainly kept him from engaging in further battle. He was not so severely wounded that he could not kill himself. He was wounded so badly that he despaired of living, or else he would have not asked his armor-bearer to slay him. The words used in the various translations as well as in the original text point to his being wounded under the breast cartilage. This would put the wound in his abdomen and bowels and probably would have resulted in his ultimate death.

4. *Why did the armor-bearer refuse to kill Saul?* 31:4

Saul wanted his armor-bearer to kill him so that the Philistines could not make sport of him (Judges 19:25). Cases such as his and that of Abimelech (Judges 9:54) indicate that enemies of the day quite often amused themselves with the helpless but conscious warriors whom they found. Whether the armor-bearer was in a too-distressed state of mind or had too much reverence for his lord cannot be made out with certainty. The latter seems more probable. When the armor-bearer refused to kill Saul, Saul fell on his own sword and died. When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell on his own sword and died with him.

5. *How did Saul die?* 31:6

The archers of the Philistines overtook him; and when they got him in range, they wounded him. Saul then called upon his armor-bearer to run him through with his sword, but the armor-bearer would not do this. Saul wanted to die at the hands of a friend rather than at the hands of the Philistines who would cool their courage by maltreating him; but the armor-bearer was afraid, since he was

supposed to be answerable for the king's life. Saul then inflicted death upon himself with his sword, and the armor-bearer also fell upon his own sword and died with his king. On that day then Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer all died. It is said that all his house, or all the warriors who went out with him as a part of his house or his household, were slain in this battle. Neither Abner nor Saul's son, Ish-botheth, was included: for the latter did not go out to battle, and although the former was Saul's cousin and commander-in-chief, he did not belong to his house nor was he considered his servant. Saul's taking his own sword and falling upon it is one of the very rare instances of suicide in the Old Testament. In view of it, the older commentators discuss the question of Saul's final salvation, generally with an unfavorable verdict.

*Saul's Burial.* 31:7-13

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.

8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, 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 Beth-shan.

11 And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead 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 Beth-shan, 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.

6. *What was the outcome of the battle of Mt. Gilboa?*  
31:7

The principal engagement of the war took place in the plain of Jezreel. When the Israelites were obliged to yield, they fled up the mountains of Gilboa and were pursued and slain there. The Philistines followed Saul, smote his three sons, and fought fiercely against Saul himself. When the men of Israel upon the hillsides that were opposite to the valley of Jezreel and the Jordan saw that the troops fled and Saul and his sons were dead, they took flight out of the cities; whereupon the Philistines nailed the bodies of Saul and his sons to the wall of Beth-shean. This presupposes the capture of that city, from which it is evident that they had occupied the land as far as the Jordan. All the northern part of the land of Israel, in other words, the whole land with the exception of Perea and the land of Judah, came into the hands of the Philistines when Saul was slain.

7. *Where was Saul's corpse gibbeted?* 31:10

On the following day, when the Philistines stripped the slain, they found Saul and his three sons lying upon Gilboa. Having cut off their heads and plundered their weapons, they sent them as trophies into the land of the Philistines, passing them round about among the different towns and hamlets of their land to announce the joyful news in the idol-temples and to the people. The corpses they fastened to the town-wall of Beth-shean, a city in the valley of the Jordan (see Joshua 17:11). It is not stated that the Philistines plundered the bodies of Saul's sons and mutilated them by cutting off their heads; but it is evident from verse twelve, where the Jabesh-gileadites are said to

have taken down from the wall of Beth-shean not Saul's body only, but the bodies of his sons also, that the Philistines had treated the corpses of Saul's sons in just the same manner as that of Saul himself. The writer speaks distinctly of the abuse of Saul's body, because it was his death that he had chiefly in mind at the time.

8. *Was Saul's body burned? 31:11-13*

The men of Jabesh in Gilead had special reason to remember Saul with gratitude (see I Samuel 11:1-11); and they undertook to remove the disgrace that had been heaped upon Israel by the gibbeting of the king's corpse. All the brave men of the town set out to Beth-shean, took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall, brought them to Jabesh and burned them there. It was not the custom in Israel to burn the corpse, but to bury it in the ground. The former treatment was restricted to the worst criminals (see Leviticus 20:14). Consequently the Chaldées interpreted the word "burned" as relating to the burning of spices, a custom which is met afterwards as a special honor shown to certain of the kings of Judah on the occasion of their burial (II Chronicles 16:14; 21:19; Jeremiah 34:5). In these later instances, however, it is written that the men did "make a burning for him"; whereas here it is stated distinctly that "they burned them." The reason for the burning of the bodies in the case of Saul and his sons is seen in the peculiarity of the circumstances. The bodies were mutilated by the removal of the heads, and therefore a regular burial of the dead was impossible. Moreover these men were anxious lest the Philistines follow up their victory, come to Jabesh, and desecrate the bodies still further. Then, too, this burning was not a complete burning to ashes, but merely a burning of the skin and flesh; so that the bones still remained; were buried in the ground under a shady tree; and were later fetched away and buried in Saul's family

grave at Zela, in the land of Benjamin (II Samuel 21:11 ff), as an act of kindness on the part of David.

9. *What judgment of God is seen in Saul's death?*

In the ignominious fate of Saul there was manifested the righteous judgment of God in consequence of the hardening of his heart. The love which the citizens of Jabesh displayed in their treatment of the corpses of Saul and his sons, had reference not to the king as rejected by God, but to the king as anointed of Jehovah, and was a practical condemnation, not of the divine judgment which had fallen upon Saul, but of the cruelty of the enemies of Israel and its anointed. For although Saul had waged war almost incessantly against the Philistines, it is not known that in any one of his victories he had ever been guilty of such cruelties towards the conquered and slaughtered foe as could justify this barbarous revenge on the part of the uncircumcised upon his lifeless corpse. Throughout the whole narrative one can almost hear the words of the prophet of God who had tried to admonish the king and had declared, "Behold, to hearken is better than sacrifice; and to obey is better than the fat of rams."

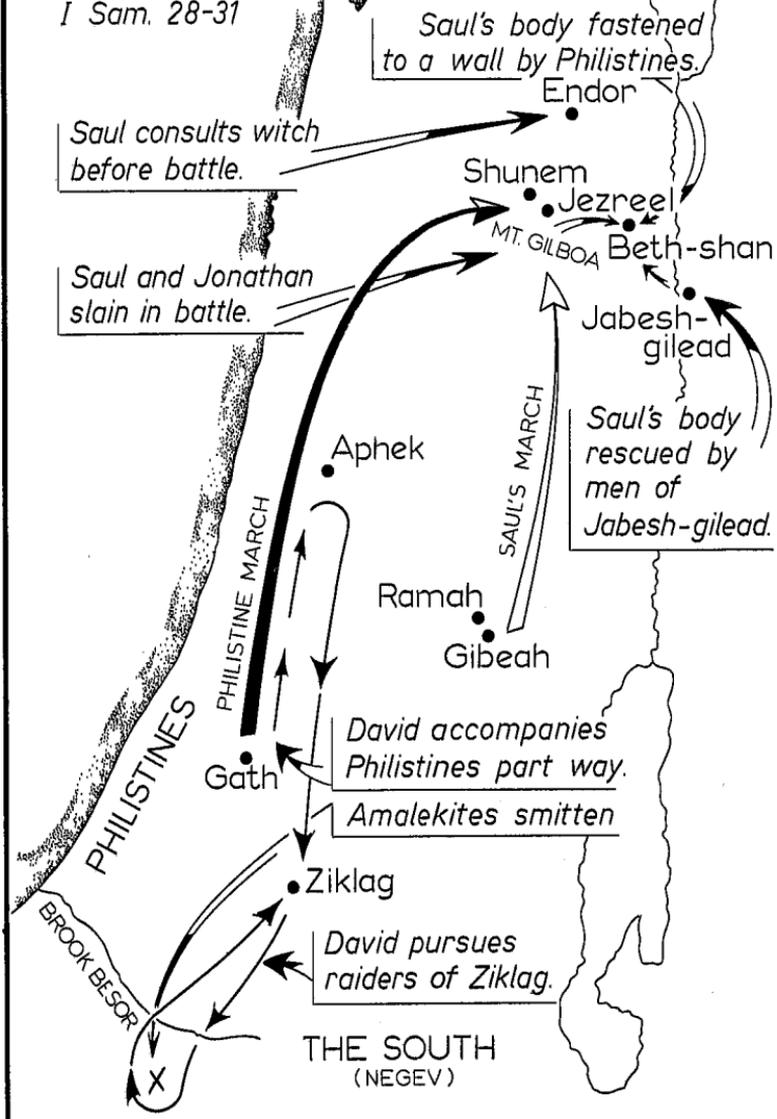
## CHAPTER 31 IN REVIEW

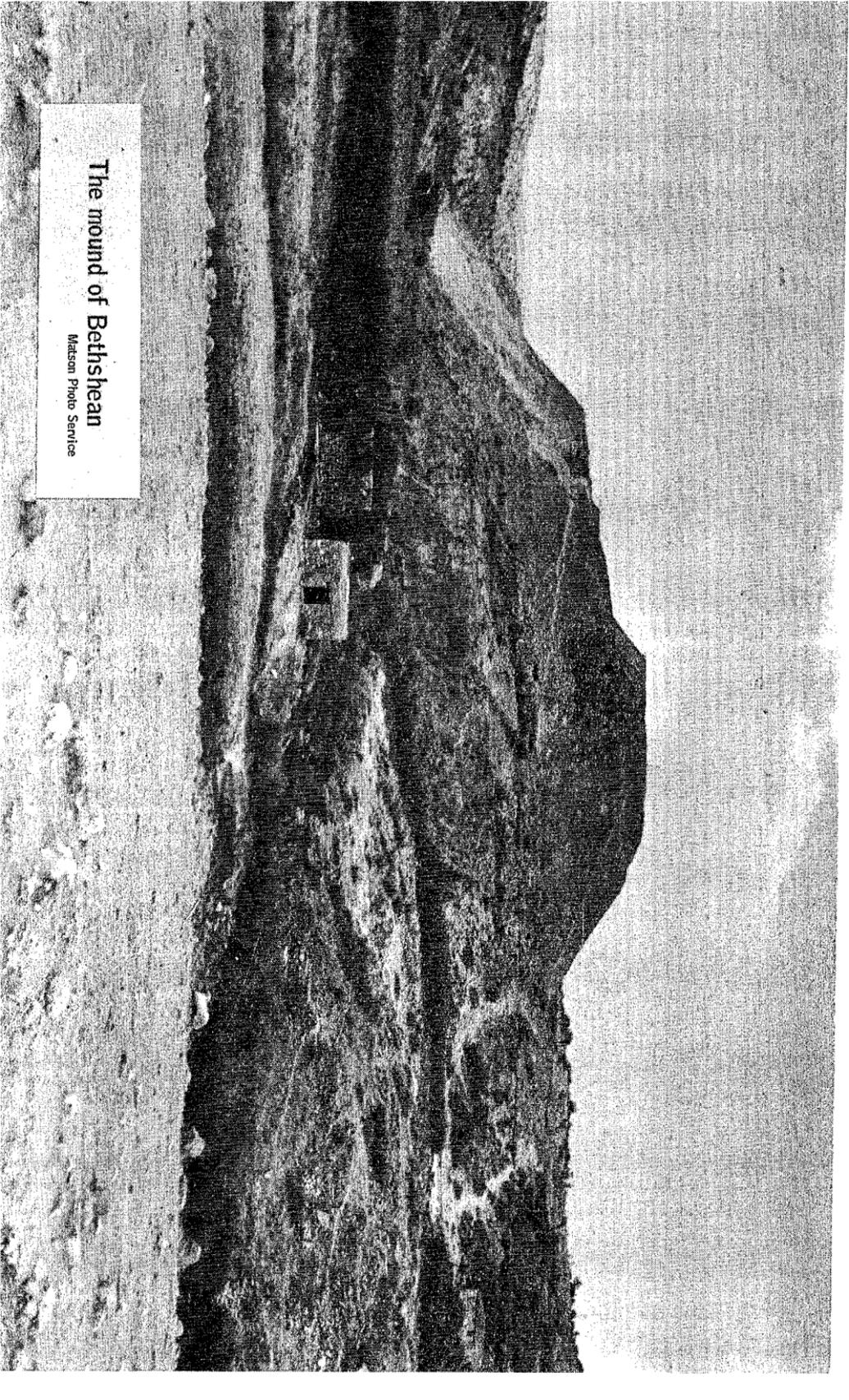
1. On what mountain did Israel fight the Philistines? \_\_\_\_\_
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3. Who wounded Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
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8. What men took down his body? \_\_\_\_\_
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10. How long did they mourn for Saul? \_\_\_\_\_



# SAUL'S THIRD PHILISTINE WAR

*I Sam. 28-31*





## The mound of Bethshean

Matson Photo Service

THE  
SECOND BOOK  
OF SAMUEL



The cave of Adullam

Matson Photo Service

# STUDIES IN SAMUEL

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PART ONE

DAVID  
MADE KING  
OF ISRAEL

1:1—5:25

## SECOND SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 1

- Vv. 1-12 *The Amalekite's account of Saul's death.* David was in Ziklag when he heard of Saul's death. An Amalekite came to him saying that he had fled from the field of battle. He told David that he had seen Saul lying mortally wounded and that Saul had asked him to kill him. The Amalekite said that he had actually slain Saul.
- Vv. 13-16 *David's punishment of the Amalekite.* David was not willing himself to lay a hand on God's anointed. He had no respect for anyone else who would destroy God's chosen servant. He ordered one of his men to fall upon the Amalekite and kill him.
- Vv. 17-27 *The Song of the Bow.* David mourned greatly over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. He wrote a lamentation that came to be known as the Song of the Bow. He taught it to the people of Israel, and they used this in their lamentation over Saul.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Abstain from all appearance of evil*" (I Thessalonians 5:22). God's men must be honorable. David's hands were entirely clean of the blood of Saul. He had much to gain by taking Saul's life, but on a number of occasions he had refused to lift up his hand against this king. He came to the throne in God's own good providence. It was in God's good time and was accomplished as the will of God had decreed. It is necessary for Christians to live in such a way that they cannot be accused of evil deeds. They must be men and women of good report among all.
2. *There is some good in all men.* Someone has said that there is enough good in the worst of us and enough

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

bad in the best of us that none of us can condemn the rest of us. Saul had been a very wicked man, but there were good things about him. These were the things that David praised in his Song of the Bow. We should shun the evil in others, but we should also praise and copy the good we see in them.

### I. DAVID MADE KING OF ISRAEL, 1:1—5:25.

#### 1. David Receives News of Saul's Death, 1:1-27.

##### *The Amalekite's account of Saul's Death.* 1:1-12

Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag;

2 It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

3 And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.

4 And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

5 And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

6 And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here *am* I.

8 And he said unto me, Who *art* thou? And I answered him, I *am* an Amalekite.

9 He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.

10 So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

11 Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him:

12 And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

*1. How long after the battle before David heard the news? 1:1*

David had abode in Ziklag for two days before he heard the news from the battlefield. This gave him time to return from his slaughter of the Amalekites and to establish his residence again in the Philistine city which had been given him by Achish. On the third day a man came from the camp and brought the news to David. It had taken a similar amount of time for David's men to move from Aphek to Ziklag when the Philistine lords insisted that he not go to battle with them.

*2. In what condition was the bearer of the news? 1:2*

The man had his clothes rent. He had earth upon his head indicating that he had not taken time to clean up after the battle. When he came to David he fell on his face to the ground and did obeisance. When he was asked about his activities he said that he had come out of the camp of Israel. Whether this was a disguise or the actual condition the man found himself in after the battle cannot be determined at this point.

*3. Did David believe the man? 1:5*

David asked him about the outcome of the battle. The man told him that the people of Israel had fled from the battle. He also announced that many of the people were killed. He especially noticed that Saul and Jonathan were dead. The man does not mention Malchishua or Abinadab. David evidently doubted the veracity of the man's account because he asked him how he knew that Saul and Jonathan were dead.

*4. How did an Amalekite get in Saul's army? 1:8*

Mercenaries were allowed to join in a campaign, especially if it were an unholy war in which the citizens had no interest. It is rather ironic that the man was a member of the tribe whom Saul was sent to exterminate. It was God's intention that these people be driven out of the land of Canaan, but Saul had failed to do his work thoroughly. His lack of thoroughness had brought about his downfall and rejection. At this point an Amalekite takes credit for having killed Saul.

*5. Where did the Amalekite get Saul's crown? 1:10*

An Amalekite came out of the midst of the battle and brought David the news. It was a common thing for foreigners to join with the armies of the Israelites. David had been back at Ziklag for two days when he received this word. Nothing is said in the account as to how long after the battle it was when David received the announcement. Very evidently the foreigner did not tell the truth about the death of Saul. More than likely he had obtained the bracelet and the crown by coming upon the body before the Philistines did.

*6. Why did the Amalekite bring the report to David?  
1:10*

The Amalekite called David his lord. He took the crown that was on Saul's head and the bracelet that was on his arm and brought them to David. He said that he had killed Saul. He said that anguish had taken hold

on him so he could not live. Evidently the Amalekite thought that David would appreciate his killing Saul. He also must have thought that David was to be the next king. It was for these reasons that he brought the evidence of Saul's death to David and made the report to him.

7. *How did Saul die? 1:10*

David was removed from the field of battle by at least a three-day journey. He had no way of knowing exactly how Saul had died, but he had heard the testimony of the Amalekite who said he had killed Saul. He certainly did not want anyone to say that he had been involved in planning or executing Saul's murder. The Amalekite evidently had not told the truth. The account of Saul's death in I Samuel 31 is an inspired account. The Amalekite's version varies in several significant details leading us to conclude that he did not tell the truth.

8. *What was David's reaction to the news? 1:11, 12*

David took hold on his clothes and rent them. This was the customary Jewish way of expressing deep emotions. David wept and fasted throughout the rest of the day. The men that were with him also mourned and wept and fasted. Their lament was for Saul, the fallen king, and his good son Jonathan. They were also weeping because hard times had befallen the people of Israel. The Philistines had beaten them in battle, and they were in a position similar to that in the days of Eli when the Philistines had captured the Ark.

*David's punishment of the Amalekite. 1:13-16*

13 And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence *art* thou? And he answered, I *am* the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

14 And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?

15 And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, *and* fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.

16 And David said unto him, Thy blood *be* upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed.

9. *Why did David ask the Amalekite who he was? 1:13*

The man had already told him that he was an Amalekite. He had said that Saul asked him who he was and he had replied that he was an Amalekite. David evidently interrogated the young man thoroughly after he and his men had recovered from their shock and grief. As he made inquiry, he asked the man who he was. The young man told him that he was the son of a stranger. This was another way of his saying that he was not a member of the commonwealth of Israel. He identified himself as an Amalekite.

10. *Why did David slay the bearer of the news? 1:15*

The Amalekite had come to tell the news of the death of Saul with the expectation of a reward from the hand of David. David slew the newsbearer. David felt that if he did not slay the Amalekite that the blood of Saul would be required of his hands. Such an occurrence as this shows that David still had a very, very deep regard for Saul.

*The Song of the Bow. 1:17-27*

17 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son:

18 (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah *the use of the bow*: behold, *it is* written in the book of Jasher:)

19 The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places:  
how are the mighty fallen!

20 Tell *it* not in Gath,  
publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon;  
lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,  
lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph

21 Ye mountains of Gilboa,  
*let there be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain, upon you,  
nor fields of offerings:

- for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away,  
the shield of Saul, *as though he had not been*  
anointed with oil.
- 22 From the blood of the slain,  
from the fat of the mighty,  
the bow of Jonathan turned not back,  
and the sword of Saul returned not empty.
- 23 Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives,  
and in their death they were not divided:  
they were swifter than eagles,  
they were stronger than lions.
- 24 Ye daughters of Israel,  
weep over Saul,  
who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights;  
who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
- 25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!  
O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places.
- 26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:  
very pleasant hast thou been unto me:  
thy love to me was wonderful,  
passing the love of women.
- 27 How are the mighty fallen,  
and the weapons of war perished!

11. *What was the "Song of the Bow?" 1:18*

The Song of the Bow is the name given to lamentation that David wrote at the time of the death of Saul and Jonathan. Why this title is given to this particular passage is not known. There is a mention of the bow in verse 22. It seems better to regard this verse as a notice of the fact that David commanded that the children of Judah learn this song than that he ordered all of them to have training in the actual use of the bow.

12. *What was the book of Jasher? 1:18b*

The book of Jasher was evidently a non-canonical book kept by the Israelites to record the outstanding exploits

of their national heroes. This book is mentioned also in Joshua 10:13. The word *Jasher* comes from a Hebrew root which signifies "the upright" or "the righteous." This is evidently another way of referring to the Israelites by calling them the righteous or upright people.

13. *In whom was the "beauty of Israel?" 1:19*

Later on in the song David refers to Saul and Jonathan being lovely and pleasant in their lives (verse 23). He may have been referring to the king of Israel who was indeed a handsome man. He stood head and shoulders above all the other Israelites. More than this David was lamenting the fact that the best young men of all Israel had fallen in battle.

14. *Why did he not want it told in Gath? 1:20*

The Philistines had taken Saul's head and sent it around to the various cities of Philistia (31:9). They published it in the house of their idols and among the people. David regretted this and he did not want it told. He was praying that they might not have reason to rejoice in Philistia. He did not want it told in Ashkelon or to see the daughters of Philistines rejoice.

15. *Why did he speak about the mountains of Gilboa? 1:21*

The mountain of Gilboa would stand for defeat to the people of Israel from this day forward. It was the place where their first king had fallen in battle. David prayed that there might not be dew or rain upon the mountains. He prayed that there might not be fields of offerings. Evidently he meant that he hoped that there would not be grain to grow, a portion of which might be used for an offering. This was David's way of saying that the mountain of Gilboa would stand for defeat as Waterloo did for Napoleon.

16. *Did David praise Saul? 1:22*

David did praise Saul. David had always praised Saul. He would not condone Saul's sin; he would praise those things worthwhile in the character of Saul. Saul's charac-

ter, up until the time that he became unmindful of the commandments of God, was worth praising. David said that Saul and Jonathan had been victorious in many battles. They had not come back empty from their campaigns. The bow of Jonathan had turned not back from the blood of the slain or from the fat of the mighty.

*17. What benefits had Israel received from Saul? 1:24*

David's mentioning of the women being clothed in scarlet and other delights indicates that some prosperity had come to Israel because of Saul's reign. David said that he had put on them ornaments of gold which would point to considerable prosperity. Many of Samuel's predictions of the nature of the kingdom must have come true. Samuel had said that if Israel had a king they would have to pay taxes (I Samuel 8:10-18). Samuel indicated that a king would become so oppressive that they would cry out for relief. This certainly came true in the days of Rehoboam (I Kings 12:1-4) when the people of Israel asked for relief from their taxes. Some indication of their chafing under the yoke of the king is seen from the fact that people who were distressed or in debt came to follow David (I Samuel 22:2). These people had to pay for some of the blessings which they had received, but they should have been thankful for the leadership which Saul gave to them.

*18. Why did David speak of Jonathan's love? 1:26*

Jonathan's soul was knit to the soul of David from the time of David's introduction to Saul after David had killed Goliath (I Samuel 18:1). At that time we read "Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Jonathan and David entered into a covenant which was renewed on a number of occasions. They pledged themselves to lifelong loyalty to each other and they also promised that they would not do harm to each other's descendants. It was for this reason that David spoke of Jonathan's love.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 1 IN REVIEW

1. How long was it after the battle when David heard of Saul's death? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where was David when he heard the news? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Of what nationality was the bearer of the news? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What possessions of Saul's did the man have? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How did David punish the bearer of the news? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the name of the song with which David lamented Saul's death? \_\_\_\_\_
7. In what other book was it recorded? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What Philistine cities are mentioned in the song? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What weapons of Saul and Jonathan did David mention? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What mountain did David curse in the song? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 2

- Vv. 1-7 *David, king in Hebron.* David inquired of the Lord concerning his every move. He asked him where he should go after Saul had been killed. The Lord told him to go up to Hebron. Hebron was one of the important cities of Judah, David's own tribe. David went up to this important city, and all the men of Judah came there to make him king over them.
- Vv. 8-11 *Saul's son, king in Gilead.* Abner, the son of Ner and captain of Saul's hosts, took Ishbosheth, Saul's son, and made him king in Gilead. Gilead was the land east of the Jordan river. There were thus two rival kings in Israel.
- Vv. 12-16 *The contest at Gibeon.* Abner was the captain of the Ish-bosheth's army, and Joab was the captain of David's army. The two armies met in a battle near Gibeon. A contest was suggested, and twelve men from each side went out

## SECOND SAMUEL

to engage in the battle. All these men fell mortally wounded, and nothing was decided by the contest. The two main armies then joined in battle.

- Vv. 17-32 *Asahel slain.* Asahel was the younger brother of Joab. He decided to pursue Abner from the field of battle. Abner did not wish to engage in hand-to-hand combat with Asahel. Asahel was a young man, and Abner was an experienced man of war. When Asahel continued to pursue Abner, Abner put out the back part of his spear. Asahel was running at full speed and ran against the sharpened end of Abner's spear. Asahel thus fell mortally wounded.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*With patience wait for it*" (Romans 8:25). David must have spent many years as a fugitive. He was anointed king over Israel while still a young man and living in his father's home in Bethlehem. He had gained rather immediate success as the slayer of Goliath. He was also prominent in Saul's court as a talented musician. Nonetheless he was forced to wander for years until finally the time was right for him to become king. All of us can learn a lesson of patience from this experience with David. We should not take things in our own hands but let God in His own good providence lead us step by step.
2. "*Be sober, be vigilant*" (I Peter 5:8). David had little time to rest on his laurels. A rival king was ruling in Gilead. It is ever thus with Christians. There never seems to be any time when they can let down their guard. Our adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion walks about continually seeking whom he might devour.

## 2. David's Reign begun in Hebron, 2:1-32.

*David, King in Hebron. 2:1-7*

And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

2. So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite.

3 And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabesh-gilead *were they* that buried Saul.

5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of the Lord, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

1. *Why did David go up to Hebron? 2:1*

Hebron was the principal city of a coalition of surrounding cities in Judah. Caleb took Debir (Judges 1:11; cf. Joshua 14:13) and settled in this area. Abraham had made his home near Hebron. It was near Hebron that Abraham bought the cave of Macpelah for a burial place for Sarah when she died (Genesis 23:1-20). Hebron was about half-way down the length of the Dead Sea and some

ten miles west of its western shore. It was central in Judah and far enough away from the home of Saul to make it safe from any who might support a Benjamite as a king to succeed Saul.

2. *What is the meaning of the word "Hebron"?* 2:3

The word "Hebron" means a "strong fortified city." There were little cities grouped around the larger city. We read of the "cities of Hebron." The city itself was the strongest and oldest city in Judah at this time. It was something of a sacred city. Although the fact that the name was appropriate did not make necessary the selection of this particular city, the position of the city, which no doubt influenced its naming, also made it the logical place for such a service as was held in it at the anointing of David.

3. *Why did Judah first anoint David?* 2:4

David belonged to the tribe of Judah. He had been in the midst of the tribe of Judah while he was in exile. The gifts that David had bestowed upon the tribe alone would have been enough to cause this particular tribe to want to be first to anoint David as their king. All of these reasons would contribute to this desire.

4. *What did David mean when he said, "I also will requite you."* 2:6

David was a diplomat. At the time he commended the men of Jabesh-gilead for their kindness toward Saul, he also announced to them that he was King of Judah. By promising these men of Jabesh-gilead that he would "requite" them (give them a reward) and by showing a regard for Saul, David hoped to win these men over to his side. These men had taken Saul's body from the walls of Beth-shan and buried it (I Samuel 31:13).

*Saul's son, King in Gilead.* 2:8-11

8 But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim;

9 And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin and over all Israel.

10 Ish-bosheth Saul's son *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David.

11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

5. *What was Abner's motive in proclaiming Ish-bosheth king? 2:8*

Abner was the son of Saul's uncle. A number of things contributed to his proclaiming Ish-bosheth king. In the first place, (1) he would want to defend the family's pride and interests. In the second place, (2) there were Abner's own personal ambitions. These could be more probably justified if Ish-bosheth ruled. Ish-bosheth was weak; Abner was strong. Abner might easily persuade Ish-bosheth to follow his own directives. In the third place, (3) Abner had a natural interest in the tribe of Ish-bosheth.

6. *Is there a previous mention of Ish-bosheth? 2:8b*

There is no previous mention of Ish-bosheth before the time that Abner had him proclaimed king. Ish-bosheth was quite young when Saul became king. This may account for the fact that he is not mentioned. He was weak; he may have been an illegitimate son. All of these things would account for the fact that his name had not been previously mentioned. He is listed as the fourth and last of Saul's sons in I Chronicles 8:33 and 9:39.

7. *Where was Mahanaim? 2:8c*

Somewhere east of the Jordan River near the Jabbok River would be the proper location of Mahanaim. At the time of Ish-bosheth's coronation, the kingdom was disunited. This was a small beginning for a king, but about all that could be had during that time. Jacob had camped

at this place which means "two companies" (Genesis 32:1). David fled to Mahanaim when he tried to get away from his rebellious son Absalom (II Samuel 17:27).

8. *Over what territory did Ish-bosheth rule? 2:9*

Ish-bosheth ruled over Gilead. He also ruled over the Ashurites. Gilead would indicate all of the land east of the Jordan river. The mention of the Ashurites causes some question. This may have been a reference to the house of Asher which was in Galilee on the west side of the Sea of Galilee (Judges 1:32). There is a city of Asher (Joshua 17:7). It was southwest of Jezreel. Ish-bosheth also ruled over Jezreel, that land between Mount Gilboa and Mount Carmel. His main jurisdiction was over Ephraim, the tribe formed from the descendants of the son of Joseph. He also ruled over Benjamin, his own tribe. This wide domain would mean that Ish-bosheth had jurisdiction over most of the northern part of Palestine on both sides of the Jordan river.

9. *How long did Ish-bosheth rule over Israel? 2:10*

Ish-bosheth was forty years old when he began to rule. He reigned but two years. David, however, ruled over the house of Judah for seven years and six months. David must have reigned in Judah for five years and one-half, after Ish-bosheth was slain. This difference in the length of David's reign over Judah alone and the reign of Ish-bosheth over the rest of Israel can only be accounted for by supposing that David was not anointed king over all Israel immediately after Ish-bosheth's death.

10. *What is the meaning of the name Ish-bosheth? 2:10*

The word "Ish-bosheth" means "man of shame." In I Chronicles 8:33 this man is called Esh-baal. This word Esh-baal would mean man of Baal. Baal is a name for a false god. One would hardly expect that the Israelites would put a man on the throne who had a name of Esh-baal. Abner may have changed his name to Ish-bosheth when he put him on the throne. Even so his name is not

at all flattering, and we are left to wonder if this man was of rather bad reputation. Perhaps his weakness or folly had been the reason for his not being in the army. These factors might explain his name.

*The Contest at Gibeon. 2:12-16*

12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

14 And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.

15 Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which *pertained* to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

16 And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and *thrust* his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which *is* in Gibeon.

*11. Who brought on the fighting at Gibeon? 2:12*

Gibeon was five or six miles north of Jerusalem and a small distance to the west. It is situated on a knoll with terraced slopes. The village itself stands among striking remains of antiquity. Some hundred paces from the village to the east is a large reservoir with a spring. Further down and among the olive trees are the remains of another and larger reservoir, which collected the overflow water from the first reservoir. More than likely this farther reservoir is the "pool" mentioned in verse thirteen. Thus Joab was in Abner's territory. Joab was the aggressor. Later incidents would also cause a judge to point the finger of accusation at Joab. Were he introduced a bit differently, none would have difficulty in deciding who brought on

the fighting. The way in which Joab was introduced into the narrative was common of the time; nothing different should be expected.

12. *What was the "play"?* 2:14

The "play" mentioned was nothing more than the customary round of individual contests held before a battle. To speak of what occurred at this time as "play" is most certainly sarcastic. The word "Helkath-Hazzurim" as it stands means "field of the sword edges." It is appropriate that this name is applied to the scene of the conflict in which twelve champions from the army of Joab and twelve champions from the army of Abner perished together, each slaying his fellow. Variations of this word have come to mean "field of the crafty," "field of the ambush," and "field of the adversaries." The form of the word together with its meaning as it now stands in the text of the Bible is probably correct.

*Asahel Slain.* 2:17-32

17 And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

18 And there were three sons of Zeruah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel *was as* light of foot as a wild roe.

19 And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.

20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, *Art* thou Asahel? And he answered, *I am*.

21 And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armor. But Asahel would not turn aside from following him.

22 And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?

23 Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth *rib*, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

24 Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that *lieth* before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

25 And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on top of a hill.

26 Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?

27 And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.

28 So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.

30 And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel.

31 But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *so that* three hundred and threescore men died.

32 And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulcher of his father, which *was in* Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

13. *Who won the battle? 2:17*

The Israelites were beaten by the men of Judah. This is the meaning of the statement that Abner was beaten. Abner was the leader of Ish-bosheth's army. They fell before the servants of David, the men of Judah who were under the leadership of Joab. Although there were ten tribes in the north and only one (Judah and Simeon combined) in the south, the southern armies were victorious.

14. *Who was Zeruiah? 2:18*

Zeruiah was David's sister. She had three sons, Joab, Abishai and Asahel. These men were David's nephews and valiant men. Asahel is described as being "as light of foot as a wild roe."

15. *Why did Asahel continue to pursue Abner? 2:19*

Asahel wanted to get the glory of having killed the commander of the opponent. Although Abner, shrinking from arousing the animosity of Joab, showed forbearance in asking Asahel to turn aside and pursue one of the younger men, Asahel continued to pursue him. Abner then thrust his spear behind him and stopped abruptly. Asahel ran against the spear and so died. The hinder part of the spear was pointed so that it could be stuck in the ground when not in use.

16. *What is the meaning of "under the fifth rib?" 2:23*

This is the King James picturesque way of stating that a man was smitten in the abdomen. The American Standard Version gives the translation of the phrase as "in the midst of his body." Repeatedly throughout this part of the Bible reference will be made to men who are smitten "under the fifth rib." A man who was wounded in this area would normally die from his wounds. This happened to Asahel as Abner stuck out the hinder end of the spear. The hinder end of the spear was also sharpened so that it could be stuck in the ground (I Samuel 26:7).

*17. Why did Abner call to Joab? 2:26*

Abner's calling to Joab indicates that Joab had been the aggressor. He asked Joab if he wanted to see the battle continued and more lives be lost. He reasoned with Joab that in the end there would be bitterness. He asked Joab how long he intended to press this battle. Joab indicated that the battle would have been over by the next day, but since Abner had spoken Joab blew a trumpet and stopped his men from pursuing Israel. This was the end of that particular battle.

*18. How many of David's men died? 2:30*

The Scriptures say, ". . . there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel." We cannot be sure that this mention of twenty who died included the twelve who also killed twelve of their opponents. More than likely it did; nothing definite is stated. Had there not been the gathering of the Benjamites on the top of the hill, the slaughter might have been greater. No doubt the Benjamites tried to check Joab in order that the rest might escape. Abner pled that humanity demanded the cessation of the pursuit. Joab replied that he intended to pursue until morning. Both armies did at length return to their headquarters. It was not customary for them to stay in the field. It was their duty to go home and guard the country against other invaders.

*19. How many men of Israel were killed? 2:31*

Abner's losses were much heavier than the losses of Joab. There were 360 of the men of Israel killed in the battle at Gibeon. The loss of Asahel was a very severe loss. He was not only the king's nephew, but he was the brother of Joab who became David's captain. Joab never quite forgot the fact that Abner killed Asahel. From that day forth he was determined to kill Abner. He really had no right to be the avenger of blood since Asahel died in battle and Abner slew him reluctantly.

SECOND SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 2 IN REVIEW

1. To what city in Judah did David go? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What tribe first anointed David as king? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which of David's wives went with him? \_\_\_\_\_
4. To what city in Gilead did David send word? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long did David rule over the one tribe? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which of Saul's sons ruled the rest of Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who was his captain? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what city was his capital? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who led David's men against the men of Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Near what town did David's men meet the men of Israel? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 3

- Vv. 1- 5 *David's family.* As David reaches a turning point in his career, the reader of the Bible is introduced to his family. Several sons were born to him during the seven years when he ruled in Hebron. At the same time the reader is introduced to other wives whom David had married and who became the mothers of some of his children.
- Vv. 6-11 *Abner rebels against Ish-bosheth.* Ish-bosheth accused Abner of improper actions with Saul's concubine, Rizpah. Abner neither admitted the charge nor denied it. He did refuse to suffer the embarrassment of being accused and announced that he was transferring his allegiance from the son of his former king to David.
- Vv. 12-21 *Abner contacts David.* Abner was a faithful soldier, and he acted honorably in making his open contact with David. David showed himself to be a man of honor inasmuch as he sent word back to Ish-bosheth so that the king in Gilead would be informed of what was transpiring.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

Vv. 22-30 *Joab murders Abner.* Under the pretense of avenging his brother's death, Joab took Abner aside and killed him in cold blood. Joab was assisted by his other brother, Abishai.

Vv. 31-39 *David mourns for Abner.* David made it plain that he did not have anything to do with the murder of the good soldier Abner. In fact he made personal lamentation of his death and ordered his people to mourn for this good man.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Children are like arrows*" (Psalms 127:4). As David composed the psalm under the direction of the Holy Spirit, he said that children were like arrows and that the man was happy who had his quiver full of them. God certainly blessed David's home with a fine group of sons and daughters.
2. "*A prince and a great man is fallen this day in Israel*" (3:38). This is a classic text of lamentation over a great soldier of God that has fallen in the line of duty. It is applicable to Christian workers today as they lay down their armor.

### 3. A Period of Two Kings in Israel, 3:1-39.

#### *David's Family.* 3:1-5

Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

2 And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his first-born was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;

3 And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;

4 And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

5 And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

1. *Who prevailed in the wars between Israel and Judah? 3:1*

The house of David prevailed in the series of wars between Israel and Judah. The campaign which was fought in Gibeon was indicative of the outcome of later conflicts. As David had grown stronger day by day while fleeing from Saul, more and more people saw that he would be the better king when he and Ish-bosheth held rival thrones. Saul's house had been rejected by God. It was inevitable that the house of Saul would wax weaker and weaker. David had been anointed king by Samuel, and it was equally inevitable that his house should wax stronger and stronger.

2. *Which of the wives of David was of royal blood? 3:2*

Significant it is that we read "house of Saul" instead of "house of Ish-bosheth." Ish-bosheth was insignificant; he was merely a member of the house of Saul. Noteworthy too, is the fact that we read of six wives and six sons of David.

We do not know when the last four wives were taken. *Maacah* was of royal blood. She was the daughter of a king; she was the mother of Absalom. Amnon was the natural heir to the throne of David, inasmuch as he was the oldest of the six sons mentioned.

*Abner Rebels Against Ish-bosheth. 3:6-11*

6 And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul.

7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Ish-bosheth* said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

8 Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head, which against Judah

do show kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me today with a fault concerning this woman?

9 So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him;

10 To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.

11 And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him.

3. *What was Abner's position in the house of Saul? 3:6*

Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul. The fact that Abner himself became strong, may indicate one reason why he had backed Ish-bosheth as the king in the first place. Abner was of the same family as Saul; both were members of the tribe of Benjamin. This fact alone would incline Abner towards supporting Saul's son as king. But the fact that Abner was able to make himself strong while serving Ish-bosheth indicates that Abner had personal ambitions.

4. *How had Abner strengthened himself in the house of Saul? 3:6*

Some translators view this as Abner's making himself overbearing in the house of Saul. Some say he must have fortified his own cause by using the house of Saul, but the weakness of the house of Saul is against this rendering. If he really wanted to advance himself, he would have used a stronger tool. Some translators even have said that this verse indicates that Abner ruled the house of Saul. He certainly was the strength of the opposition to David.

5. *Who was Rizpah? 3:7*

Rizpah is introduced as the daughter of Aiah. An Edomite clan bore this name (Genesis 36:24). Rizpah had been the concubine of Saul and evidently taken as a

part of the royal family of Ish-bosheth. It seems strange to us that a son would have his father's concubine, but this has been done. Absalom lay with David's concubines in order to show that his break with his father's house was full and complete (II Samuel 16:22). W. R. Smith discusses the proposition of the son marrying the wife of his father in his booklet, *Kinship and Marriage*. The custom seems strange to us, but these people were not living under the Christian dispensation. The practice did not prevail in Israel and is certainly contrary to God's intentions for the human family.

6. *What was the meaning of Abner's question? 3:8*

The alleged offense of Abner was a very serious one. At the death of a king, the wife of the king and the concubines of the king went to the successor on the throne. Treason was the crime of any other person who would dare to take them. Abner was charged with being guilty of such a crime. His question is an idle railing. It is typical of the stubbornness of the human heart rebelling against Divine will. All that Abner said was that he would not tolerate a rebuke from Ish-bosheth. By this question he made clear the fact that he had nothing but contemptuous hate in his heart for Ish-bosheth. This is the real meaning of his question.

7. *What title did Abner give to himself? 3:8b*

Abner asked Ish-bosheth if he considered him to be a "dog's head." The expression is not used elsewhere in the Bible and seems not to be a reference to his Calebite background. Some translate this as his asking if he were a Calebite captain or a turbulent free-booter. He evidently asks if he is to be considered a Judahite "dog's head." He means by this that Ish-bosheth evidently thinks that he is friendly with the enemy and despicable.

8. *Why had Abner dared to fight against God's purpose? 3:9*

Abner evidently knew that God had sworn to David that he would be the next king. He expressed this when

he said that he would translate the kingdom from the house of Saul and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah from Dan even to Beer-sheba. Abner had been motivated by personal and selfish reasons. These reasons often cause people to resist God's will for their lives and for the lives of others. Ish-bosheth was not able to resist Abner because Abner was stronger than the king himself. He also may have known that this was God's will and that it was foolhardy for him to attempt to thwart God's purposes.

*Abner Contacts David.* 3:12-21

12 And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose *is* the land? saying *also*, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand *shall be* with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee.

13 And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.

14 And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

15 And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from *her* husband, *even* from Phaltiel the son of Laish.

16 And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.

17 And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past *to be* king over you:

18 Now then do *it*: for the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.

19 And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron

all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

20 So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that *were* with him a feast.

21 And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

9. *Why did Abner negotiate so long with David? 3:12*

It was Abner who first sent an ambassage to David. David replied by sending messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son. Ish-bosheth met David's demands. Abner then counselled with the elders of Israel. Abner further contacted the Benjamites. Thereafter he went to David himself. The elders of Israel had already expressed a desire to anoint David king of all Israel, as well as over all Judah. They had been saying, "Jehovah hath spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies'" (II Samuel 3:18). This prophecy dates back to the time of the anointing of David by Samuel (See I Samuel 16).

10. *Why does the author give such a full account of Abner's negotiations? 3:12*

Some critics view this section as being filled with interpolations as if a little had been added here and there. The account is historically accurate, and it appears to be homogenous but the story may seem to some to be overfull. For this reason, it is suggested that there were various accounts worked into one. There are not two or more separate accounts, however, but a very careful series of negotiations on the part of David. David received Abner's first message; David then went directly to Ish-

bosheth. He was not willing that something be done behind the king's back. After the negotiations proceeded, then he received Abner in person. Abner's ill-fated journey climaxed the negotiations.

*11. Why did David want Michal back? 3:13*

David was shamed by Saul's giving his wife, Michal, to another man (I Samuel 25:44). The prohibition of a man marrying a woman who had once before been married to him and later given to another man does not prevail in this instance because the marriage was not terminated by mutual consent (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). Saul had simply taken David's wife and had given her to another man. The second man did not have any right to her, and she was still legitimately and rightfully David's wife. The fact that he informed both Abner and Ish-bosheth of this, does not indicate that there were two separate traditions of the account but that he informed both parties of the necessary provision.

*12. Who was the man with whom Michal had been living? 3:15*

The man to whom Saul had given Michal was named Phaltiel. He is given as the son of Leish. When Michal was given to him, he was introduced as being of Gallim (I Samuel 25:44). The only Gallim mentioned elsewhere is Isaiah 10:30, where a reference is evidently to a place in Benjamin.

*13. How far did Phaltiel follow Michal? 3:16*

This picture of a pitiable man reveals that he went along weeping behind the woman with whom he had been living until he got as far as Bahurim. This is a spot north of Jerusalem (II Samuel 16:5; cf 17:18). This was probably the last Benjamite village on the road they were traveling in Judah. He must have felt that it was unsafe for him to enter into David's territory and therefore turned back at that point. Abner commanded him to return thence; the man complied, although undoubtedly still weeping as he went.

14. *What was the wish of the elders of Israel? 3:17*

The elders of the land had already expressed their desire for David to be their king. This is intimated in the statement of Abner who said, "You sought for David *in times past* to be king over you." Abner again makes reference to the promise of the Lord indicating that the anointing of David by Samuel was rather well-known.

15. *How did David receive Abner? 3:20*

When Abner and the twenty men who accompanied him arrived in Hebron, David made a feast for them. He was glad that negotiations had proceeded to this point, and wanted to expedite the matter as much as possible. Later events revealed that David had high regard for Abner, probably the outgrowth of their many pleasant associations together when both were in Saul's service.

16. *What was Abner's final decision? 3:21*

Abner declared that he would arise and go and gather all Israel to make David king over them. This was the same thing that he had said to Ish-bosheth when he broke away from him (verse 10). At that time, Abner said he would make David king over Israel and Judah. He intended for him to rule from Dan, the farthest point on the north border, to Beer-sheba, the farthest point on the south of Judah. This was the entire promised land, and Abner said that David would then rule over all that his heart desired.

*Joab Murders Abner. 3:22-30*

22 And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

23 When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

24 Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?

25 Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.

26 And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not.

27 And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

28 And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my kingdom *are* guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner:

29 Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.

30 So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

17. *Was Joab sincere in making a charge against Abner?* 3:25

Joab hated Abner. The blood feud that was between them was probably insincere. Joab was expected to seek revenge for the death of Asahel. The fact that Joab was absent was probably as David planned it. The servants of David who were with Joab were military men who had been on the pursuit of an enemy troop. The bounty brought back was that which was taken from surrounding tribes. Such spoil made up the revenue of a monarchy to a considerable extent. Whoever reported Abner's visit to Joab may have given him misinformation, but there was nothing to indicate that Abner was planning to displace Joab. Abner was certainly friendly towards David,

and Joab had no reason to kill him. It was only the strong hatred for Abner on the part of Joab which led to his action. Joab's first point was that David had let Abner get away. His second point was that Abner must have come from an evil motive. Joab could not see Abner as anything but an enemy of Judah.

18. *Where was the well of Sirah? 3:26*

The well of Sirah was about a mile north of Hebron. This is the only mention of it in the Bible, and the only important thing that occurred there is the murder of Abner by Joab. The well is probably the *Ain Sirah* pointed out in modern times. The freedom with which Joab expostulated with David shows the position which he occupied both as a kinsman and as an officer in David's army. He moves about freely and acts on his own. David did not know what Joab was doing.

19. *Why was Abner so unsuspecting? 3:27*

Abner, no doubt, thought that the king had summoned him and so he turned back. The curious thing about the whole transaction is not that Joab would take blood revenge but that Abner should be so unsuspecting. We can account for his conduct only by supposing that he had a distinct certificate of safe conduct from David. An enemy would hardly move into hostile territory without such a permit.

20. *How was the death of Abner connected with the blood of Asahel? 3:27*

One of God's long-standing laws was that a murderer should not go unpunished. This statute was laid down immediately after the flood, when God said, "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Genesis 9:6). God also indicated that He would require the blood of life at the hand of every man's brother. Joab evidently thought it was his duty to avenge the death of Asahel. The fact that Hebron was a political city of refuge does not alter the situation. It is true that the city

of refuge was for the sparing of the life of a man who had slain another without premeditation (Numbers 35:11). Hebron was a Levitical city (Joshua 21:11-13) and Hebron was also designated a city of refuge. Neither is the situation altered by the fact that Joab took him aside in the gate (verse 27). Inside or outside the city of Hebron, Joab had no real reason to kill Abner.

21. *Why did David say that he was not to blame? 3:28*

David cried out that he and his kingdom were innocent before the Lord, who avenges those slain without cause (Psalms 19:9-13). He did not know that Joab had sent to call Abner back to Hebron. He had nothing to do with the murder of Abner. He regretted the action and wanted his people to know it.

22. *What was David's judgement on Joab? 3:29*

David really uttered a prayer that the murder of Abner should rest on the hands of Joab and all his father's house. It was his prayer that there would not fail to be a sickly member in his descendants. He specified that he hoped that there would be lepers among them. The one who leaned on a staff would be an effeminate person who was unfit for manly occupation, if the staff be considered a part of the spindle used in weaving. Aquila viewed this as being one who was blind, and therefore had to walk with a stick. At least one leaning on a staff would be infirm and old. David went on to say that he hoped that there would be those who would die in war and would be hungry and begging bread. It was a very full imprecation.

23. *What part did Abishai play in Abner's murder? 3:30*

Abishai may have been the one who ran out to call Abner back at Joab's command. Abishai was also the brother of Asahel, as well as Joab's brother. He was an officer in David's army, and involved with the plot to kill Abner. He does not take the lead as did Joab, but he is guilty of Abner's murder by reason of his following Joab's directives.

*David Mourns for Abner. 3:31-39*

31 And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed the bier.

32 And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.

33 And the king lamented over Abner, and said,  
Died Abner as a fool dieth?

34 Thy hands *were* not bound,  
nor thy feet put into fetters:  
as a man falleth before wicked men,  
*so* fellest thou.

And all the people wept again over him.

35 And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or aught else, till the sun be down.

36 And all the people took notice *of it*, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.

37 For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.

38 And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?

39 And I *am* this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruah *be* too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

24. *Did David justifiably mourn over Abner's death? 3:31*

People respected Abner. Abner's death in such circumstances would cast a cloud of suspicion over David. David did feel real grief at the death of Abner. The deep mourning into which David entered was a token of great sorrow. Rightfully did he grieve over the death of an able captain.

David's own captain, Joab, was a skillful leader, but David was not able to control him. Abner might have made a much better leader for the forces of Israel.

25. *How would a fool die?* 3:33

The fool brings an early death upon himself by his careless conduct (Proverbs 7:22). The Septuagint version puts the word *nabal* here for the word foe. A translation of *nabal* would give us a fool or a churlish man. It is doubtful that David asked if Abner died as Nabal died, but the death of Nabal was brought on by his own miserable conduct; Abner had done nothing to deserve death. Abner did not even have the honor of being made a prisoner of war. As David said, "Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters" (verse 34). He did not fall honorably on a field of battle, but was treacherously tricked.

26. *How did the people react to David's conduct?* 3:35

The people took notice of the king's mourning and they were pleased by it. They knew that David was not putting on a show. David refused to eat anything throughout the day. He fasted until sundown, when a new day began. By this kind of conduct, David demonstrated that he had nothing to do with Abner's death. The people understood that David was guiltless and the king's stature increased in their sight.

27. *What was David's evaluation of Abner's character?*

3:38

David said that Abner was a prince. He was not really eligible to succeed Saul, but he was from the royal family. His tribe was the same as that of Saul, Israel's first king. Both were from the tribe of Benjamin. He was also the cousin of Saul, and the son of Ner, brother to Kish, who was Saul's father. More than this, he was a great man. Little more could be said in appreciation of a person's character than to say that he was a great man. True greatness is hard to achieve, but Abner had proved him-

self to be this kind of person. David said this in spite of the fact that Abner had supported Ish-bosheth as successor to Saul and in spite of any suspicion with regard to Rizpah. Perhaps David's evaluation was influenced by Abner's final offer to support him as king. The estimation seems true and is quite often applied today to spiritual leaders who die untimely deaths.

28. *Why did David say he was weak?* 3:39

The word in the original text indicates a person who is tender in years, or delicately nurtured (Genesis 33:12 and Deuteronomy 28:54). Neither meaning is appropriate to David. It is, moreover, difficult to connect the word with what follows. He says that he was tender, though anointed king. Some commentators make this clause to apply to Abner, but it is better to leave it as a reference to David's appraisal of his own strength. He is comparing himself with Joab and Abishai who have proved to be too hard for him. He knows that he can hardly cope with these two vicious men, and so he prays that the Lord will reward the doer of the evil according to his wickedness.

## CHAPTER 3 IN REVIEW

1. Who was David's oldest son? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which of David's wives was of royal blood? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many sons were born to David in Hebron? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who was Saul's concubine? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What epithet did Abner apply to himself? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which of David's wives had been with Ish-bosheth? \_\_\_\_\_
7. To what other man had she been married? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who killed Abner? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where was Abner slain? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Whose blood were the men who killed Abner avenging? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 4

- Vv. 1- 4 *Mephibosheth introduced.* David had made a covenant with Jonathan that he would not destroy his descendants. In this passage of scripture we are introduced to one heir of Jonathan. He has sometimes been called the "little lame prince." The reader of the scripture is informed as to the manner in which he became lame and the man is properly introduced.
- Vv. 5-12 *Ish-bosheth slain.* Two wicked servants of Ish-bosheth's thought they would do David a favor by killing Ish-bosheth. They beheaded him and brought his head to David in Hebron. David reminded them of the punishment he had meted out to the man who said he had slain Saul. He could treat them in no better way. Their hands and feet were cut off and they were hanged up over the pool at Hebron as an object lesson to any others who might commit such crimes.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Men are of more value than many sparrows* (Matthew 10:31). Mephibosheth does not seem very important to us. He did have some later connection with David. We are impressed with the fact that he was important enough for his name to be mentioned in the sacred scriptures. He was a descendant of an honorable man and his associations with David are worthy of note. All of us count in the sight of God regardless of whether we seem important to men or not.
2. *The principle is more important than the policy.* David was a man of principle. He slew the man who said he had killed Saul, and he killed the men who said they had beheaded Ish-bosheth. God's people should always

be fair in their judgment and act on principle and not on shifty policy.

4. The King in Gilead Slain, 4:1-12.

*Mephibosheth Introduced.* 4:1-4

And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.

2. And Saul's son had two men *that were* captains of bands: the name of the one *was* Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin:

3 And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.)

4 And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *that was* lame of *his* feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* Mephibosheth.

1. *What was the effect of Abner's death on the rest of Israel? 4:1*

When Ish-bosheth heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, he felt weak; his hands were feeble. All the Israelites were troubled by this sudden turn of events. It is doubtful that the Israelites were afraid of what would happen, but they must have been disappointed and afraid that their wish for David's ruling over them might not be fulfilled. Such a tragic event would slow up the negotiations.

2. *Who were the Beerothites? 4:2*

Beeroth was an old Caananite city and one of the four controlled by Gibeon (Joshua 9:17). A modern *El Bireh*, a site with a fine spring of water, has been identified as the probable location. The town was reckoned as belonging to Benjamin (Joshua 18:25). The Beerothites had

fled to Gittim, also a city of Benjamin (Nehemiah 11:33). They, thus, became considered as a part of the Benjamite community, but evidently did not attain full citizenship. Later on, we learn that Saul had tried to exterminate the Gibeonites (II Samuel 21:1-11). This slaying of Saul's son by the Beerothites may be vengeance that they take into their own hands.

### 3. *Who was Mephibosheth?* 4:3

Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan. In I Chronicles 8:34, his name is Merib-baal. It is the same in I Chronicles 9:40. Merib-baal means "Baal's warrior." Mephibosheth means "one who puffs at a shameful thing." His name was probably changed when he was taken into David's family at a later time (II Samuel 9:1-13). Since he was five years old when his father was killed in the battle with the Philistines, he was about twelve years old at the time when David was made king over all Israel. He is mentioned at the time of Ish-bosheth's death, since he would be the only other survivors and heir apparent to the throne of Saul.

### *Ish-bosheth Slain.* 4:5-12

5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon.

6 And they came thither into the midst of the house, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth *rib*: and Rechab Baanah his brother escaped.

7 For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

8 And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy

life; and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

9 And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

10 When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings;

11 How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?

12 And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Bebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried *it* in the sepulcher of Abner in Hebron.

#### 4. *How was Ish-bosheth killed? 4:5-7*

Rimmon and Rechab pretended that they were making deliveries to the king's palace. They chose to enter the place at the heat of the day when the doorkeeper was probably taking a siesta. Ish-bosheth was resting at noon-time in his bed. When the assassins gained access to the interior of the palace, they beheaded Ish-bosheth and took his head with them as a trophy. Such a plot's being successful indicates that Ish-bosheth had a very modest establishment, affording probably only a maidservant as a porter; and she was obliged to do other work while keeping the door.

#### 5. *Why did they take the head to David? 4:8*

These men were like the Amalekite who brought news of Saul's death to David. They all thought that David would be glad to learn of the elimination of rivals to his

throne. They did not realize how much David respected the Lord's anointed, the king of Israel. Rechab and Rimmon had made an all-night trip through the plain of the Jordan, the Arabah, in order to travel from the territory of Israel to the land of Judah.

6. *What was David's reaction? 4:9*

David reminded these Beerothites of the action he took when the Amalekite brought him news of Saul's death. He said that he took hold of him and killed him in Ziklag. Even though the man thought that David would have given him a reward for his tidings, David went on to say that this Amalekite had pretended to do a service for Saul by killing him, when he was already mortally wounded. If David killed the Amalekite for doing what he did, why should the Beerothites think that they would get less punishment for their wicked deed. They had killed a righteous man in his own house while he was lying on his bed.

7. *Why did David cut off the hands and feet of the men? 4:12a*

David commanded his soldiers to fall upon Rimmon and Rechab; they slew them and cut off their hands and feet. They hanged up their bodies over the pool in Hebron. By putting their gibbeted corpses on public display, David was warning anyone else not to commit a similar crime.

The pool of Hebron was probably the larger of two in the lower part of town. Its wall is of very ancient masonry, and it is some 142 feet square and twenty feet deep.

8. *Why did David bury Ish-bosheth in Abner's tomb? 4:12b*

Ish-bosheth was also of the tribe of Benjamin. He was the son of Saul, and thereby a second cousin of Abner. Families were quite often buried together. Jacob said that he had buried his wife, Leah, in the same tomb where

## SECOND SAMUEL

Abraham had buried Sarah. Jacob wanted to be buried there along with Abraham. In addition to these patriarchs, Isaac and Rebekah were buried in the same cave of Macpelah (Genesis 49:28-33). David had evidently kept Abner's body in Hebron to assure that it was given a proper burial; it was fitting and proper that Ish-bosheth's head should be buried in the same sepulchre.

### CHAPTER 4 IN REVIEW

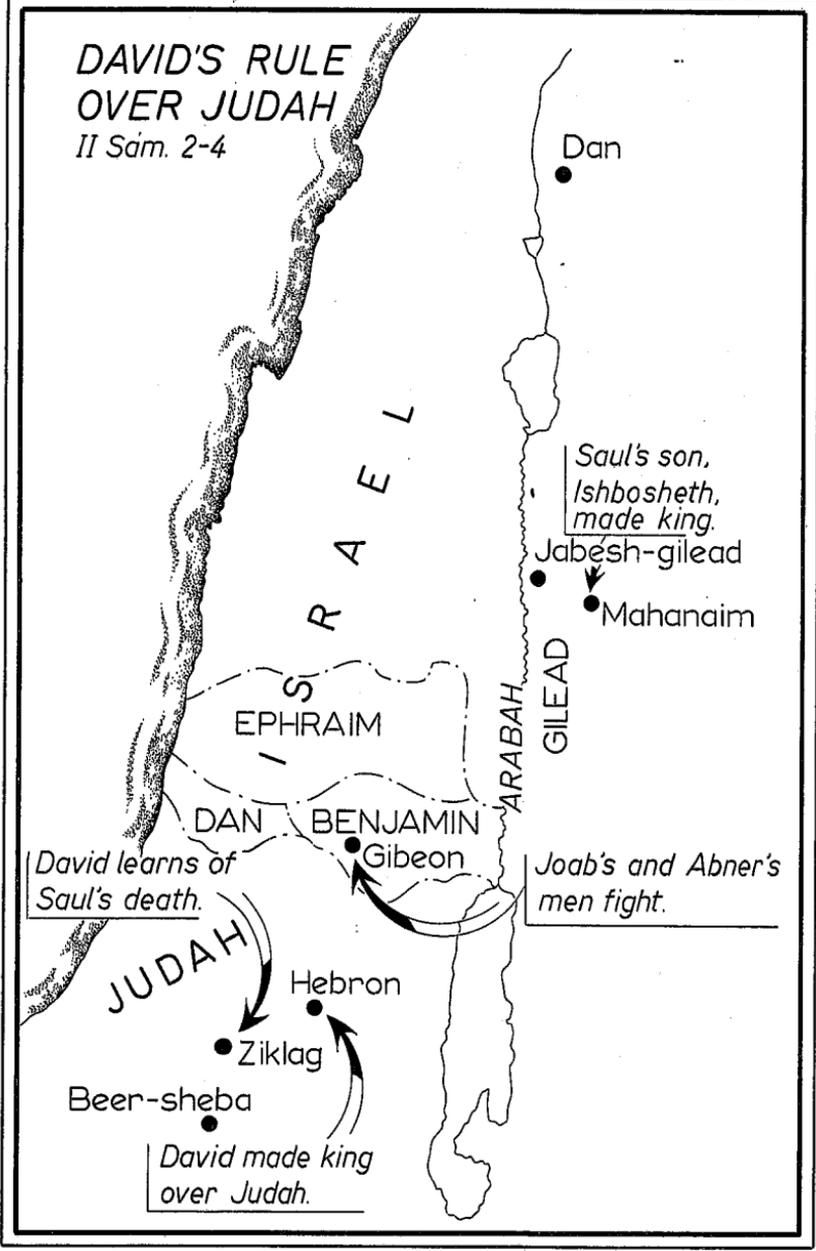
1. What two men killed Ish-bosheth? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Of what tribe were the men? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the name of their native village? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What grandson of Saul was still living? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Whose son was he? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How old was he when his father died? \_\_\_\_\_
7. In whose care was he when he was crippled? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What caused him to be crippled? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where was Ish-bosheth's head buried? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What punishment did David mete out to Ish-bosheth's murderers? \_\_\_\_\_

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 5

- Vv. 1- 5 *David king over all Israel.* After David had reigned for seven years in Hebron all the tribes of Israel came to him and asked him to be king over them. Since Mephibosheth was dead, they needed to unite under one king.
- Vv. 6-16 *David in Jerusalem.* David needed a capital city. Hebron was too far south to be reached easily by all the people of Israel. The Jebusites still held the stronghold of Jerusalem. David took this and made it his capital city.
- Vv. 17-25 *David against the Philistines.* When the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over Israel, they saw his rise to power as a threat to

# DAVID'S RULE OVER JUDAH

*II Sam. 2-4*





Bethshean and the mountains of Gilboa

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their safety. They attacked him, but God delivered the Philistines into the hands of David.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Goodness unites God's people.* David was a good ruler. He had ruled well for seven years in the South over the one tribe of Judah. The rest of Israel saw that God was with him. They needed a leader and they naturally turned to David. This is always true among God's people. They unite gladly behind a leader who is worthy of their allegiance.
2. *Blessings are heaped on blessings.* God has said that if we will give Him that which is rightfully His, He will open the windows of heaven (Malachi 3:10). He has done that in the lives of many of His followers. He did this for David. David moved from being king over one tribe to being king over twelve tribes. He moved from the city of Hebron to the well-fortified city of Jerusalem. More sons and daughters were born to him. God heaped blessings upon blessings, and He will do that for His followers today.

### 5. David Made King Over All Israel, 5:1-15.

#### *David King Over All Israel. 5:1-5*

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.

2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years.

5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

1. *By whom were the tribes represented at the anointing of David? 5:1*

The tribes of Israel were represented at David's anointing by the elders, the rulers of the tribes. David had previously been anointed by Samuel. At Hebron he had been anointed by the men of Judah.

Now David was anointed the third time. This time he was anointed by all the tribes and peoples of Israel. A fuller account of David's being made king of Israel may be found in I Chronicles 12:23-40.

David was thirty years old when he began to reign. He reigned seven and one-half years at Hebron. He reigned 33 years at Jerusalem. In all the reign of David over Israel can be counted at forty years.

2. *Why was David anointed again? 5:3*

David's anointing at Hebron by the elders of Israel was the third time that he had been anointed. He was anointed secretly first, by Samuel (I Samuel 16:1 ff.). He was anointed over the tribe of Judah only soon after the death of Saul (II Samuel 2:4). The third anointing was performed by all the tribes and leaders of the people of Israel. A fuller account of David's becoming king over Israel may be found in I Chronicles 12:23-40.

3. *What was the length of David's reign? 5:5*

David was thirty years old when he began to reign. He reigned seven and one-half years at Hebron over Judah only. He reigned thirty-three years over all the tribes of Israel. In all his reign was forty and one-half years. Reference is generally made to its being forty years in length, without counting the half year in addition. This was a joyous occasion for the chosen people of God. They came before David with a perfect heart, indicating that

there was none to oppose this move. The people brought bread on asses, camels, and mules, an indication of the festivities connected with the occasion. This was the beginning of a glorious period in Israel's history.

*David in Jerusalem. 5:6-16*

6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither.

7 Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion: the same *is* the city of David.

8 And David said unto that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are* hated of David's soul, *he shall be chief and captain*. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.

9 So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.

10 And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts *was* with him.

11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David a house.

12 And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

13 And David took *him* more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David.

14 And these *be* the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shammua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon,

15 Ibhar also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia,  
16 And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphalet.

4. *How was Jerusalem taken? 5:6, 7*

There was no better place in the promised land for a capitol than the city of Jebusites which had formerly borne the name, "Jebus." All former attempts to capture the city had failed. So secure did the inhabitants of the city feel that they taunted David by saying, "Except thou shalt take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither" (II Samuel 5:6). The men dwelling in Jerusalem thought that even those who were halt and blind and lame among them could successfully defend the city against the onslaughts of David's men.

Zion and Millo are both ridges in the city of Jerusalem. Zion is the more easterly and the higher of the two. Millo was a stronghold built up by David. This same stronghold was strengthened by Solomon and rebuilt by Hezekiah.

Joab, the son of Zeruah, first smote the Jebusites. He entered the city through a water main that emptied at a point below the main stronghold. David had announced that whoever was first to get into the city would become his captain. Joab performed this feat and thus became captain of David's armies.

5. *Where was the stronghold of Zion? 5:7*

In David's time the city of Jerusalem was confined to the summit of Mount Zion, and the stronghold of its defenses was a fortification called Millo. Recent excavations have been made at the southern end of Mount Moriah, leading to the erroneous conclusion that Mount Zion, the city of David, was down on Ophel. This was disproved by Warren and Conder in their excavations during the middle of the nineteenth century. Mount Zion itself, was completely isolated by surrounding ravines, except at the northwest corner, where a narrow saddle of rock connected it with higher ground, stretching off in that direction.

The modern Joppa gate stands at the top of this saddle. This would be the usual way to attack the city, but David went in from the south through the water course and was able to surprise the people. Josephus tells of David's capturing a lower city before he assaulted the citadel, but this cannot be verified. The city was indeed a great city, and found its way into the heart of David who praised it in such lines as those in the forty-eighth Psalm:

1. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.
2. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.
3. God is known in her places for a refuge . . .
12. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.
13. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this our God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death."

Psalm 48

The city has continued as one of the world's most ancient and most important centers of human activity. A run-down of some important incidents in the history of Jerusalem reveals these dates and events:

1010 B.C.	Taken by David
967	First Temple built by Solomon
587	City taken by Nebuchadnezer
537	Reoccupied by the Jews
516	Second Temple dedicated
168	City taken by Antiochus Epiphanes and Temple desecrated

165	Temple cleansed by Judas Maccabaeus
63	City taken by Pompey
11	Third Temple built by Herod
70 A.D.	City taken and Temple destroyed by Titus
136	City rebuilt by Hadrian
614	City taken by the Persians
629	Retaken by Heraclitus
637	Taken by the Mohammedans
1099	Taken by the Crusaders
1187	Taken by Saladin
1229	Surrendered to the Emperor Frederic II
1244	Taken by the Tartars
1247	Taken by the Sultan of Egypt
1517	Taken by the Ottoman Sultan Selim I
1917	Taken from the Turks by the Allied Forces of Great Britain, France, and Italy
1956	Divided between Israel and Jordan

6. *Why did Hiram, king of Tyre, send messengers to David? 5:11, 12*

Significant is the statement, "And David waxed greater and greater; for Jehovah, the God of hosts, was with him" (II Samuel 5:10). Hiram, the king of Tyre, could see that David was growing stronger and stronger. Hiram knew that the cedar trees, carpenters, and masons would be needed by a king of a growing empire. He knew too, that the new king would need a palace. He provided these and enabled David to have a place to live befitting a king. The people of Tyre depended upon the south-country for their food supply. The king of Tyre wanted to be a friend of David's.

7. *Why did David take more wives? 5:13*

David was taking his place among kings of the Near East; these kings normally had many wives. David already had seven wives, according to the account in II Samuel 3:2-5, if we include Michal. His family is not only men-

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

tioned here and in the third chapter, but throughout this narrative. We know that David later married Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah (II Samuel 11:27). In all of these listings we find that he also had nineteen sons. Mention is made of only one daughter, Tamar (II Samuel 13:1).

### *David Against the Philistines 5:17-25*

17 But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of *it*, and went down to the hold.

18 The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

19 And David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

20 And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said, The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

21 And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

22 And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

23 And when David inquired of the Lord, he said, Thou shalt not go up; *but* fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.

24 And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

25 And David did so, as the Lord had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.

8. *What was the purpose of the Philistine invasion?*  
5:17-21

The Philistines learned that David had been anointed king over Israel. They naturally desired to attack him before he was able to strengthen himself greatly. David went down to the stronghold. Had he already been in control of Jerusalem at this time he probably would not have left the city. As it was, he went down to meet the hosts of the enemy which were encamped in the valley of Rephaim.

The valley of Rephaim leads away from the west side of Jerusalem. Its main course extends toward the Philistine plain. The main body of the valley can be located not far from Bethlehem. The Philistines, who had seen David's rising power and desired to check him, evidently found this to be a likely spot for a pitched battle.

Baal-perazim, as a name, signifies, "The place of breakings forth." The Philistines gave way all at once, like water breaking loose. The people called the place, "the breaking away of Baal." It was here that the enemy left the images that they had brought with them into the battle. David and his men took them away to be burned.

9. *Where was the battle of the Mulberry Trees?* 5:22-25

In the second attack, the Philistines again encamped in the valley of Rephaim. They had gone farther north this time. Chronicles says that the place of retreat is Gibeon, a site farther west. The name "Geba" may have been mistaken for "Gibeah." Probably the names were confused. The location according to Chronicles would be some seven or eight miles from Jerusalem in a northwesterly direction.

10. *Where was Gazer?* 5:25

Gazer is another name for Gezer. Gezer was a very ancient city on the Shephelah. It lay just above the maritime plains, some eighteen miles northwest of Jerusalem and seventeen miles southwest of Joppa. The site was

strategic since it guarded one of the few roads of access from Joppa to Jerusalem. *Tel Gezer* is the modern town of Khirbet-yerdeh. It is called Gezer in II Samuel 5:25 and I Chronicles 14:16. The occupation of the site goes back to times of the Canaanites who occupied the area in the last half of the third millenium before Christ. Their descendants were in the area when the Israelites came into the land under Joshua. Joshua smote the king of Gezer (Joshua 12:12). Yet the Canaanites regained control of the city and remained safe behind their extensive fortifications (Judges 1:29). A famous calendar containing an agenda for a Palestinian farmer's activities in the age of Saul and David was translated by W. F. Albright from Hebrew characters dating around 925 B.C. Whether the Philistines were able to find refuge in Gezer or not, we cannot tell from this narrative, but it was apparent that David was not able to pursue them any further than this well-fortified settlement.

## CHAPTER 5 IN REVIEW

1. What leaders of Israel came to David? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How old was he when he began to rule all Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long did he reign altogether? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How long did he rule over all Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What city did David take as his capital? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What foreign king sent greetings to David? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did he build for David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many sons were borne to David in Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Over what country did he reign? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who first attacked David after he became king? \_\_\_\_\_

PART TWO:

THE  
PROSPEROUS PERIOD  
OF DAVID'S REIGN

6:1—9:13

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 6

- Vv. 1-11 *Uzzah smitten.* David wanted to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. It was in captivity in Philistia for a number of years, but had been returned by the Philistines and was kept by the men of Kiriath-Jerim. The venture was ill-fated. Uzzah stuck out his hand to steady the ark, and the Lord smote him.
- Vv. 12-19 *The ark brought to Jerusalem.* David was nonplussed by the death of Uzzah. He left the ark in the house of Obed-Edom. Later he learned that God had blessed the house of Obed-Edom. He also learned that he had been careless in trying to move the ark on an ox cart. God had ordained that the ark should be carried by the Levites. David followed God's directive and moved the ark without further mishap. He put it in the special tent which he had erected for it in Jerusalem.
- Vv. 20-23 *Michal cursed.* David had insisted that Michal be sent back to him from Gilead when he was negotiating with Abner and Ish-bosheth. Michal's pride overcame her. She was ashamed of David as he took part in the public ceremonies attending the return of the ark. When she upbraided David, she was evidently smitten of the Lord. At least she had no child unto the day of her death.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God's servants must not be careless.* It may seem a small thing to us that David tried to move the ark on an ox cart instead of having it carried by the Levites. Ultimately this carelessness led to the death of Uzzah. Too many people today become overly familiar with

## SECOND SAMUEL

the things of God. His ordinances and services should be observed with care.

2. *Man needs a place to worship.* God had ordained that there would be one central sanctuary for Israel (Deuteronomy 12). He told the people that He would choose a place to put His name there. They were instructed that they were not to offer sacrifices on every high hill. God chose the city of Jerusalem. He has given us a church as the center of our worship.

### II. THE PROSPEROUS PERIOD OF DAVID'S REIGN, 6:1—9:13.

1. David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem, 6:1-23.

#### *Uzzah Smitten.* 6:1-11

Again, David gathered together all *the* chosen *men* of Israel, thirty thousand.

2 And David arose, and went with all the people that *were* with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth *between* the cherubim.

3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart.

4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.

5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of *instruments made of* fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

6 And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*.

7 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the ark of God.

8 And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day.

9 And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?

10 So David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

11 And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the Lord blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.

*1. How many people went to fetch the ark? 6:1*

David gathered the chosen men of Israel to accompany him down to the west border of the land of Judah to get the ark. Thirty thousand are mentioned as being the number of these. The passage of I Chronicles 13:1 says only that David consulted with the captains of thousands and of hundreds. It goes on to declare that he consulted every leader and that he gathered all the people from throughout the land. If there was a full assembly of the people, there would be more than thirty thousand men. David evidently did invite all to be in attendance for this auspicious occasion, but he did his work largely through the thirty thousand chosen men. David had thirty captains over these; each would then be the captain of a thousand and were sometimes called a chiliarch (II Samuel 24:13).

*2. Where was Baal-Judah? 6:2*

The title Baal-Judah signifies "Lords of Judah." It was a city of Judah, from which David went out to bring the ark into Jerusalem. It is probably the same as Baalah; a city on the northern border of Judah (Joshua 15:10).

One of the religious centers of the ancient Gibeonites was here, and the name is evidently given to the same spot that is elsewhere called Kirjath-jearim (I Chronicles 13:6). This spot was out on the western border of Judah near the Philistine territory. The ark had been left here when it was brought back by the kine prepared by the Philistines (I Samuel 6:21).

3. *Why did David prepare a new cart? 6:3*

David evidently wanted to give the best for God's service. He prepared a new cart in similar fashion to the way in which the Philistines had made a new cart when they sent the Ark back to Israel (I Samuel 6:7). David was not careful enough. He should not have made a cart at all. He learned this later, much to his regret.

4. *What was the sin of Uzzah? 6:6*

Uzzah was the son of Abinadab, the man in whose home the Ark had been kept. He became overly familiar with sacred things. God had ordained that the Ark should be cared for only by the Kohathites, out of the tribe of the Levi. God had said that they were not to touch any holy thing, lest they die (4:15). Directions were given to indicate that when the camp of Israel set forward, Aaron was to come with his sons, take down the covering vail, and cover the Ark of Testimony with it. They were to put over the Ark a covering of badger's skins and spread over that a cloth made only of blue. They were then to put the staves in the ark. Only the sons of Kohath were to carry these sacred articles of the tabernacle furniture. These directions were not followed by David at all. Had the Ark been carried by Levites, it would not have been sitting on the oxcart in the first place. There would have been no danger of its falling when the oxen stumbled if it had been moved in the correct fashion. As the Scripture says, "God smote him there for his error" (verse seven).

5. *Why was David afraid?* 6:9

David was afraid of the Lord because of the ill-fated venture of moving the Ark. I Chronicles 13:11 says that David was displeased. He was naturally disappointed that his attempt to move the ark had resulted in tragedy. Later on David admitted his fault and carried the Ark in the correct fashion. He came to this conclusion as he said, "None ought to carry the Ark of God but the Levites" (I Chronicles 15:2). For the time being, however, he was distressed and carried the Ark aside and left it there.

6. *Who was Obed-edom?* 6:10

On the first attempt to bring the Ark of God up to Jerusalem, Uzzah put forth his hand and took hold of it; for the oxen stumbled. God's anger was kindled against Uzzah; God smote him there that he died.

David was afraid of Jehovah that day and refused to continue his attempt to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. Therefore he turned aside and placed the Ark in the house of Obed-edom, the Gittite.

Obed-edom was a Philistine. The fact that he was called a Gittite signifies that he was formerly a resident of that city of Gath in Philistia. Many of the Gittites emigrated to Judah. Six hundred of them formed a bodyguard to David (II Samuel 15:18 ff.). The Gittites seem to have been remarkable for their great stature (II Samuel 21:19; I Chronicles 20:5 ff.).

*The Ark Brought to Jerusalem.* 6:12-19

12 And it was told king David, saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

13 And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

14 And David danced before the Lord with all *his* might; and David *was* girded with a linen ephod.

15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

16 And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.

17 And they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

18 And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts.

19 And he dealt among the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of *flesh*, and a flagon of *wine*. So all the people departed every one to his house.

#### 7. How was the Ark brought to Jerusalem? 6:12

Having moved forward six paces with the Ark, the procession halted to make a sacrifice, so thankful were they that they had been permitted to make a start. By their leaping and dancing the members of the procession showed the Lord that they were pleased. Of course, all of this is known to be an expression of joy—a religious service.

When the procession reached Jerusalem, all the multitude that had gathered to witness the sight received presents of bread, flesh, and raisins. Inasmuch as the Levites had borne the Ark, God was pleased with all the respect that was shown for His commandments and blessed the day's activities. David had prepared a tent to house the

Ark, and the people must have returned to their homes that night with a feeling of God's blessings resting upon them and abiding with them.

The account of the day's activities as it is given in Chronicles contains more of the history of religious matters. This account also gives a table of numbers and goes more into detail than the account in Samuel.

8. *Why did they sacrifice after only going six paces? 6:13*

The men carrying the Ark were just starting their journey. It was a respectable distance from the point of debarkation. David evidently ordered the company to stop because they had made a successful beginning. On the first attempt they had met with tragedy, but now they were moving successfully. No doubt they stopped to give thanks to God for this successful beginning of the journey.

9. *Who bore the Ark this time? 6:13*

The Levites carried the Ark as God had ordered on the second attempt. David realized that God had smitten Uzzah because they had not made proper arrangements in the first place. The Levites who carried the Ark are listed by name in I Chronicles 15:5-11. Six chieftains from among the Levites are mentioned by name; and in that reference in addition Zadok and Abiathar, the chief priests, were summoned by David and given specific instructions with regard to the effort.

10. *Who officiated in the sacrifices? 6:17*

No doubt the priests officiated at the sacrifices; Saul had been rejected from ruling because he had presumed to offer sacrifices after Samuel had told him to wait for his coming (I Samuel 13:11). Specific mention is made of the fact that David called for Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to be with him when he brought the Ark to Jerusalem (I Chronicles 15:11). These men were probably in charge of the sacrifices.

11. *Where was the old tent of meeting?* 6:17

David had pitched a new tent for the Ark in Jerusalem. The old tent of meeting had been located in Shiloh. The tabernacle had been moved from that point to Nob in the days when David was fleeing from the presence of Saul (I Samuel 21:1). Because the Ark was not there, the people evidently did not feel that it was a permanent location, and it was finally located in Gibeon. Solomon had gone to Gibeon to sacrifice because it was the great high place (I Kings 3:4). It was necessary for him then to bring up the articles and furniture of the tabernacle to Jerusalem when he built the temple (I Kings 8:4).

12. *Why did David provide bread, flesh, and raisins?* 6:19

Everybody was involved in this momentous occasion. David had provided that every woman, as well as every man, should have a cake of bread, a sizeable piece of meat, and a flagon of wine to drink. There had been no festive occasion like this in Israel for many years. David saw it as a time for celebrating and made provisions for all to have a part of it.

*Michal Cursed.* 6:20-23

20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel today, who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!

21 And David said unto Michal, *It was* before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord.

22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honor.

23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

13. *Why did Michal reprove David? 6:20*

Michal had seen David as he danced before Jehovah in the body of people that accompanied the Ark to Jerusalem. She thought he had lowered himself by mingling with the people. This was not her idea of a king. Michal had been raised at the king's court. She had pride that David did not have. Although the narrative might indicate that Michal's barrenness was a punishment for her pride, the writer does not actually say that such was the case.

14. *Was David vile and base? 6:22*

Michal had said that David uncovered himself in the eyes of the handmaidens of his servants. She said that he had been as one of the vain fellows who shamelessly uncovered themselves (verse 20). David simply repeated her accusation and said that he would be more vile than this. He was glad to be base in his own sight and in the sight of the maidservants who were despised by Michal. He knew that he was held in honor by his people. David had not been naked; his uncovering himself amounted only to his taking off his kingly garments. David had worn an ephod as he danced before the Ark among the people (verse 14). A linen ephod was the distinctive garment of the priests. It was an abbreviated garment having no sleeves and reaching only to the thighs. It was much in the fashion of a jumper and enabled David to leap and dance about freely. Michal had thought this beneath the king's dignity and had rebuked David for this kind of action. He was glad to be counted among his people and made this defense of his actions.

## CHAPTER 6 IN REVIEW

1. On what means of conveyance did David try to move the Ark?

## SECOND SAMUEL

2. Out of whose house did he take it? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Near what town did the man live? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who stuck out his hand to steady the Ark? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What happened to the man who touched the Ark? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What name was given to the place? \_\_\_\_\_
7. In whose house did David leave the Ark? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How long was it left in his house? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What did David wear as he danced before the Ark? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who carried the Ark when it was brought to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 7

- Vv. 1-11 *David's desire to build a temple thwarted.* David wanted to build a temple as a place of worship for God's people. Nathan the prophet was in favor of this at first but God told him that this was not to be David's privilege.
- Vv. 12-17 *God's covenant with David.* Nathan the prophet came to David with the announcement that it was not to be his privilege to build the temple. He also told him that God would bless his house for generations to come. It was promised of David that there would not cease to be a man out of his loins to sit on the throne of Judah as long as there was a kingdom of Judah.
- Vv. 18-29 *David's response to the Lord's will.* David went in and sat before the Lord when he heard of His will for his life (v. 18). His disappointment over not being able to build a temple did not keep him from accepting God's will for his life.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God does not dwell in a house of stone.* David's purpose of building a temple was admirable, but God told him that He had not dwelt in any house since the time that He had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt (v. 6). When it was the Lord's will to have a temple as a center for worship, He made it known to the man who was to build it. Until it was his intention, God would not let man's pride or ambition take precedence. We need to remember that it is not necessary to have a grand building as a center of worship.
2. *God knows best.* The things that God did for David were much better for him than would have been the glory he achieved by building the temple. The fact that the House of David was established as the ruling house as long as the kingdom stood was a much greater blessing. When God refuses our requests, He always has something better in mind for us.
3. *"Thy will be done"* (Matthew 6:10). Jesus taught His disciples to pray in this way. This was David's prayer as he went in and sat down before the Lord. He gave God thanks for the blessings He had promised to him. He was willing for God's will to be done in his life. Christians need to have this same attitude.

### 2. God's Covenant With David, 7:1-29.

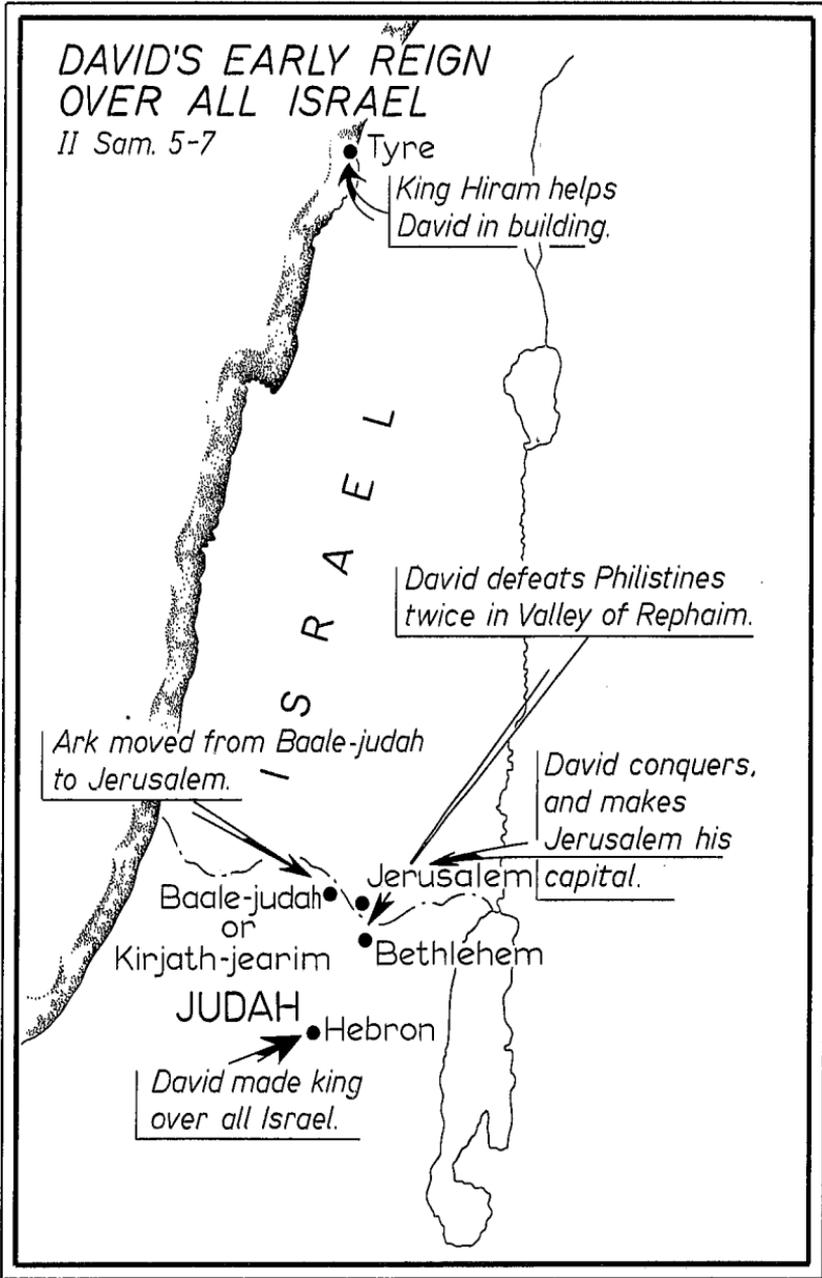
#### *David's Desire to Build a Temple Thwarted.* 7:1-11

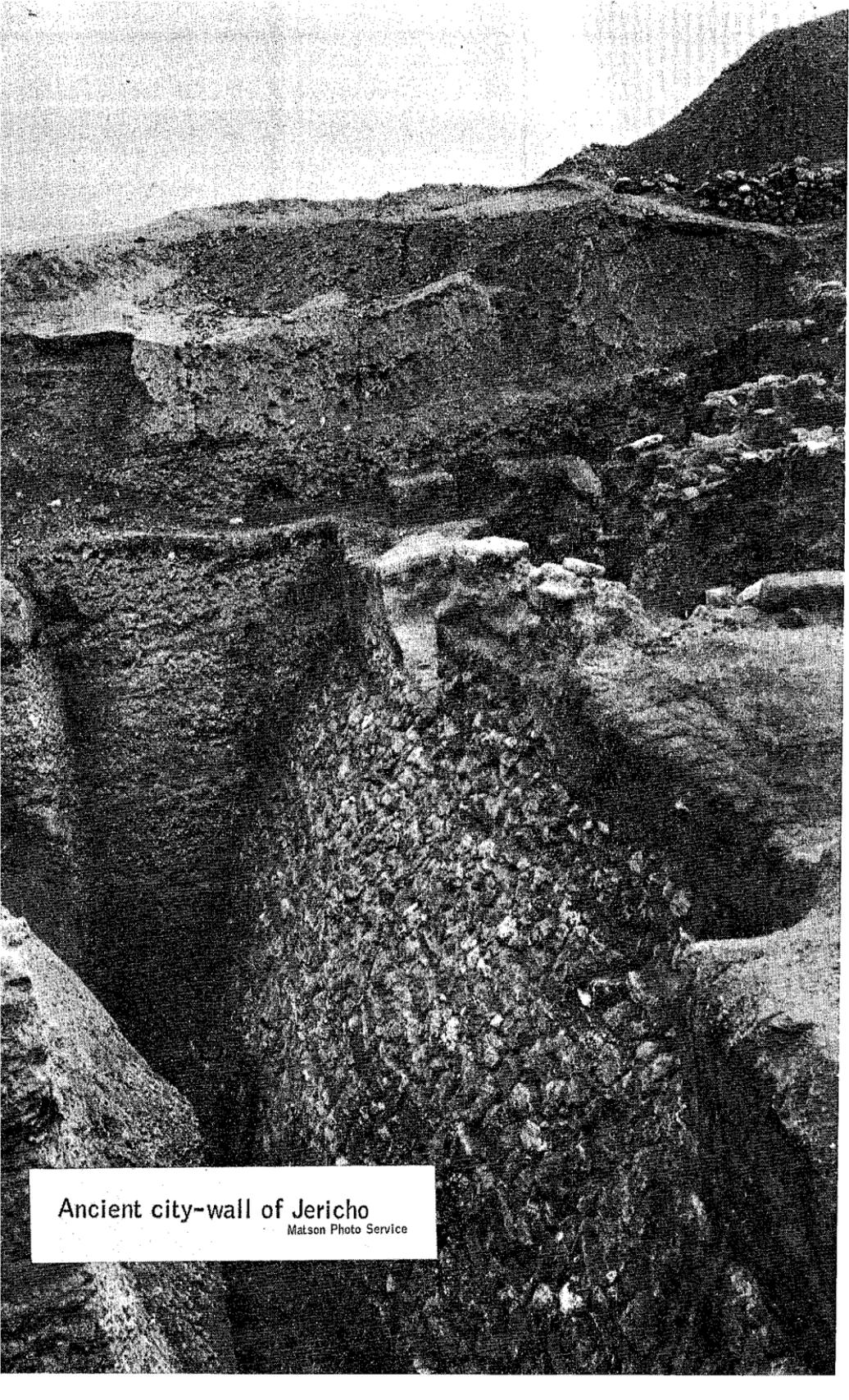
And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies;

2 That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.

# DAVID'S EARLY REIGN OVER ALL ISRAEL

*II Sam. 5-7*





Ancient city-wall of Jericho

Matson Photo Service

3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that *is* in thine heart; for the Lord *is* with thee.

4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying,

5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me a house for me to dwell in?

6 Whereas I have not dwelt in *any* house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

7 In all *the places* wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me a house of cedar?

8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:

9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth.

10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.

11 And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee a house.

1. *When did David express his desire to build a temple?*

7:1

The first part of David's reign was given over to conquests of surrounding territories. The first seven years of his reign were spent in Hebron as he ruled over the tribe of Judah only. David was obliged to take the city of

Jerusalem as his capital. Another of his duties at the beginning of his reign was the centralization of the worship in Jerusalem. He accomplished the major part of this purpose by bringing the Ark up from the house of Abinadab and Obed-edom. He built a temporary structure to house the Ark (II Samuel 6:17). David was entering into the prosperous period of his reign; and the Phoenicians at the instigation of Hiram, King of Tyre, sent cedar trees, carpenters, and masons. They built David a house (II Samuel 5:11). As David viewed his own personal prosperity, he realized that very little provision had been made for a house of the Lord. This prompted him to propose the building of the temple.

*2. How did the Ark dwell within curtains? 7:2*

The Ark was kept in a tent or a tabernacle (II Samuel 6:17). This had been the provision made by God for the housing of the Ark when the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness of Sinai. The original structure was described as being a tent with ten curtains (Exodus 26:1). This was the covering of fine-twined linen. Another curtain of goat's hair was laid over the tabernacle (Exodus 26:7). In addition, there was a veil hanging inside the tabernacle to separate the holy place from the most holy place (Exodus 26:31). The court itself was enclosed with a curtain (Exodus 27:5). It would be hard to find any better way to describe the tabernacle than to call it a dwelling of curtains.

*3. Who was the Nathan? 7:3*

Nathan was a prophet and a close friend of David's. He seems to take the place formerly occupied by Samuel in the affairs of the king. Some have called him a "court prophet." It is probable that his name was the shortened form of Nathanael, the name of one of Jesus' apostles (John 1:48, 49; 21:2). Nathan first came to David when he proposed to build the temple. Later, Nathan was sent to rebuke David for his sin with Bathsheba. It is also

known that Nathan wrote the history of David (I Chronicles 29:29). He was with David even at the time when David was dying (I Kings 1:11). At first David's proposal appealed to Nathan; he encouraged him to do all that he planned because it was apparent that the Lord was with David.

4. *How did the word of the Lord come to Nathan? 7:4*

God spake in times past in different ways and varied manners as he revealed His will to the fathers by the prophets (Hebrews 1:1). On occasions, men saw visions (Joel 2:28). This expression of the word of the Lord coming to a man was also used with regard to Samuel (I Samuel 15:10). The expression occurs frequently in Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and unless there is a definite statement in the Scripture, it is impossible to tell whether the word came by an audible voice, a dream, a vision, or some other manner. There was no question about its being the word of the Lord, and Nathan spoke what God had told him to reveal to David.

5. *Why did God oppose David's proposal? 7:5*

The first reason given for not building the temple was that it was contrary to precedent. God said that His dwelling place had not been a house from the time that He brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt until David's time. Through all those ages God had used a tent or a tabernacle as a place for His worship. Joshua had established the tabernacle in Shiloh (Joshua 18:1). The tabernacle had remained there throughout the three hundred years of the judges and it was still there when Samuel was born (I Samuel 1:3). God reminded David that He had not said anything about building a house.

6. *Who was to feed God's people? 7:7*

From the context it is apparent that God is speaking of different tribes whom he had commanded to lead His people Israel. Throughout the time of the judges, men of different tribes were raised up to be leaders. Othniel, the

first judge, was of the tribe of Judah (Judges 3:9). Ehud, the second judge, was from Benjamin (Judges 3:15). Deborah, the only female leader, was from Ephraim (Judges 4:5). Other judges were from Manasseh, Gilead, Naphtali and Dan. To none of these men from the different tribes had God ever given an order to build a permanent residence for the Ark.

7. *What blessings had God showered upon David?* 7:8, 9

God reminded David that he had brought him from the sheepcote. This was where Samuel had found him when he went to Bethlehem to anoint a king. God reminded David that he had made him ruler over Israel. First David had been king over only one tribe, but finally he was brought to the place where he ruled over all his people. God reminded David that He had been with him wherever he had gone throughout the wanderings as he fled from Saul. God had been with him and spared his life. God had cut off all his enemies, so that he had peace in his kingdom. Only recently in his career David had been victorious over the Philistines; these were the people who had oppressed most persistently; but in all his campaigns against them, he had been successful. Finally, God had made a great name for David. His reputation had reached to the Phoenecian kingdom in the north; and Hiram, their king, had sent messengers to express his good will (II Samuel 5:11). Remembering these blessings would soften the blow of disappointment which was to be David's as God told him that he could not build the temple.

8. *What blessings did God promise to Israel?* 7:10

God told David that He would appoint a place for his people. He gave them the land of Canaan as their inheritance. He also promised to establish them there. They were to be planted in Palestine. Their roots were to go down deep, and this was to be their perpetual inheritance. God said that these Israelites would dwell in a place of their own and move no more. They had been nomads,

driven from pillar to post. Abraham and Isaac had sojourned in tents. Jacob had died in the foreign country of Egypt. The descendants of Jacob had been slaves for four hundred years in a land that was not their own. God had brought them into a place that was their own, and this was to be their land. Although in later history they disobeyed God and were driven out, they have been allowed to return and establish the nation of Israel. In a very real and unusual sense Palestine belongs to the Jews. God said that the children of wickedness would not afflict His people any more as beforetime. How far into the future this reaches, man unheeded by Divine guidance cannot say for sure. The forty years of David's reign plus the forty years of Solomon's grandeur, would fulfill this prophecy. God's people were to enjoy a long stay in the promised land. The children of wickedness did not afflict them any more as they had in their former years.

9. *What blessing did God promise to David? 7:11*

God promised to build a house for David. Since David already had a building in which to live, this reference can only be to the fact that his family is to be established as a royal family. David wanted to build God a house out of stone and wood. He was not to be given this privilege, but God was to build him a house that would live for generations. Saul's house had been deposed. His family was not allowed to continue to rule over Israel. David's house was to be established as the ruling family in Israel.

*God's Covenant With David. 7:12-17*

12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chastise him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

10. *Who was to build God's house (in Israel)? 7:13*

Although David was not allowed to have the privilege of building a temple for God, David's son was to be given this privilege. God made it clear that after David slept with his fathers, his son would rule after him. His kingdom was to be established, and he would have the privilege of building the temple. God also repeated His promise to establish the throne of His kingdom.

11. *Whom did God call His son? 7:14*

God referred to Solomon as His son. Solomon was not His "only begotten son," the express image of His person; but Solomon was a man who walked with God as a son would walk with his father. David understood this, and referred to it on a number of occasions (I Chronicles 22:10; 28:6). The verse reached beyond Solomon and has an application in prophecy to Jesus Christ, the "only begotten Son of God." This idea is carried out as David spoke by the inspiration of the Spirit in Psalms 2. God fulfills the relationship of a father to all His children, but He was the Father of the Messiah in a unique way. The father and son relationship between Jesus Christ and the Lord God Jehovah, helps the Christian to understand his relationship to his heavenly Father.

12. *Was David's kingdom unending?* 7:16

As long as there was a kingdom in Jerusalem, there was a son of David to sit upon the throne. Twenty kings ruled in Jerusalem, and each of them was a direct descendant of David. David was succeeded to the throne by his son Solomon. Solomon's son, Rehoboam ruled over the Southern Kingdom when it was divided. To call the roll of the kings in Judah is to call the roll of the descendants of David. Since Jesus Christ sits on the right hand of the Father yet today, He rules the spiritual kingdom of Israel as a direct descendant of David (Daniel 7:13, 14 and Acts 7:55, 56).

13. *Why was David not permitted to build the temple?*  
7:17

Sometime after David had overcome all his enemies, he proposed to build a house to keep the Ark in and to be known as God's house. It seemed that God had "walked in a tent" because the Ark had been moved about so much.

At the first, the proposal sounded good to Nathan, the prophet. Jehovah answered by telling David that because he had been a man of war and had shed blood he could not build the temple (I Chronicles 28:2, 3). This was not a condemnation of David's method of warfare, but it showed that David's place in God's plan was to subdue Israel's enemies and establish the kingdom. Great consolation came to David, moreover, in the promise made by God that the kingdom of David should last forever. The kingdom would not be wrested from the hands of his heir as it had been wrested from the hands of Saul and his heirs. In Christ, known as David's son, was a kingdom set up forever.

*David's Response to the Lord's Will.* 7:18-29

18 Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who *am* I, O Lord God? and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And *is* this the manner of man, O Lord God?

20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant.

21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know *them*.

22 Wherefore thou are great, O Lord God: for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods?

24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel *to be* a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God.

25 And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast said.

26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts *is* the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

27 For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

28 And now, O Lord God, thou *art* that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

29 Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee:

for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken *it*: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

14. *What caused David's thanksgiving?* 7:18

Even though he was not allowed the blessed privilege of building the temple, David knew that he had received great blessings from the hand of Jehovah. Had not God promised him that his kingdom should last forever? Therefore had David taken a place in the tent in Jerusalem that he had placed there for the housing of the ark and rendered up to God a song and prayer of thanksgiving. His background was one of humble origins, but he had risen to a place of national and international prominence.

15. *Why did David sit before the Lord?* 7:18

David's gratitude for all the blessings of God overwhelmed him. He would not be allowed to go into the tabernacle proper and probably sat by the altar which was outside the temporary tent erected to house the Ark. Sitting is not the usual attitude of prayer in the Old Testament. The oriental mind does not see anything inappropriate in it, as is evidenced by the Mohammand ritual; where it is one of several postures. The Coptic Christians also practice this kind of posture. The fact that David was sitting would indicate that he may have been meditating as well as praying the prayer which is recorded. He may have spent quite an extensive time in rendering this thanksgiving to God.

16. *Why did David call this a small thing in God's sight?*  
7:19

David had a faith in God that was deep and abiding. He thought that God could do whatever pleased Him. It was a great thing to David, but nothing was impossible with God. God had not only cared for David in the immediate past, but He had also revealed to him the future. Martin Luther saw in this verse, an indication of the mystery of the incarnation as David said, "and is this the

manner of man, O Lord God?" Certainly the virgin birth of Jesus Christ was not "the manner of men."

*17. Why did David say no more? 7:20*

David did not make a long speech or prayer. The heart of a true worshipper is revealed without much speaking. David was overwhelmed by the revelation that was given to him and in a sense was left rather speechless. He simply said for God to do that which was best. He believed that God knew him even better than he knew himself.

*18. How could this be for God's word's sake? 7:21*

The word of God is true. God honors His word. Mankind should learn that when God speaks, man should listen. No word of God has ever yet been broken. Jesus said that heaven and earth would pass away, but His word would never pass away (Matthew 24:35). If God made a prediction about David's house and the prophecies came true, then God's word would be established. David viewed these things as coming to pass in order that God might demonstrate the veracity of His word.

*19. What was David's concept of God? 7:22*

David viewed God as being a great God. He expressed his faith in the fact that there is none like God. As a matter of fact, he did not believe that there was any God except the Lord God of Israel. David was a monotheist through and through. He had no images, as far as we have any record. He was not led astray, as was Solomon, to worship other gods. The faith of David was outstanding, pure, and deep. His faith was based on what he had heard. The faith of the fathers had been handed down to the children from generation to generation. David had experienced many manifestations of God in his own life. These things had led him to have the faith which he possessed.

*20. What was Israel's position? 7:23*

David believed that there was no nation as blessed as Israel. God had redeemed His people out of difficult

times. He wanted a people for His own possession. By this He had made him a name. As other nations viewed the fortunes of Israel, they would come to the logical conclusion that God was blessing His people. This would bring many people to worship the God of Israel. God had done many great and terrible things for Israel. He had redeemed them from Egypt; they had been spared from many nations—such as the Amalekites, Edomites, Ammonites, and Philistines. None of the superstitious practices of people who believed in false gods had been able to stop the advance of Israel. Israel was unique.

21. *What was God's purpose in all this? 7:24*

As Israel came out of Egyptian captivity, God said that He was to make of them a nation of priests (Exodus 19:6). They were to be a peculiar treasure unto God. God was looking forward to the time when they would say that they were God's people and that He was their God. This was the tragedy of the circumstances in the days of Hosea. They had turned their backs on God, and God had said to them that they were not His people. He said, furthermore, that He would not be their God (Hosea 1:9). Throughout the intervening years, God has been wooing people. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. His activities look forward to the time when they can say in truth that the tabernacle of God is with men, that He will dwell with them, that they shall be His people, and that God Himself shall be with them and be their God (Revelation 21:3).

22. *What was David's final prayer? 7:25*

David concluded his prayer by beseeching God to fulfill the promises that He had made. He prayed that the name of God might be magnified forever (verse 26). He saw this being fulfilled as people would say, "the Lord of Hosts is the God over Israel." David did not have overweening ambitions for himself. He put God first. He would not reject God, as the people had rejected Him when

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they asked for a king to rule over them (I Samuel 8:7). David prayed that it might be understood that the Lord God Himself was the ruler of Israel. He put himself second and then prayed that his house might be established forever before God.

### 23. *What assurance did David have? 7:27*

David rested his hope in the word of God. He said that God had revealed these things to His servant, and it was this that had given him confidence to pray his prayer to God. His final petition was that the words of God be found true (verse 28). As far as David was concerned, the fulfillment was as sure as the nature of God was true. God could not lie (I Samuel 15:29 and Hebrews 6:18). What God had spoken to David was sure to be fulfilled.

## CHAPTER 7 IN REVIEW

1. To what prophet did David tell of his plan to build a temple? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what had the Ark been housed? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Of what material was David's house made? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did God permit David to build the Temple? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Whom did God want to build the Temple? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What posture did David take as he prayed? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What title did David give himself as he prayed? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Out of what country had Israel been redeemed? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What title did David give to God? \_\_\_\_\_
10. In what way did David describe God's word? \_\_\_\_\_

## SECOND SAMUEL A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 8

- Vv. 1-13 *David's victories.* As a king David was just as effective as he had been when he was a soldier in Saul's army. He met every challenge that was thrown before him and was victorious over all the enemies which surrounded Israel.
- Vv. 14-18 *David's government.* David manifested a great deal of wisdom in organizing his kingdom. He placed officers over various responsibilities and functions of the government. Many of these men were very faithful to him and were still serving him at the close of his reign.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The battle is won by the strong.* David had many enemies. There were the Moabites to the south and east. The Syrians were to the north and east. The Philistines were on the west. None of these caused David to fear. He was a brave man, and he went out and did battle for the Lord. The Lord gave him the victory. Victory is promised to a Christian soldier as he goes out to fight for the Lord.
2. *"Done decently and in order"* (I Chronicles 14:40). David was anxious that his people have good government. He had a valiant captain for his army in the person of Joab. He saw to it that the government business was properly recorded and appointed Jehoshaphat as his recorder. Zadok and Abiathar were his priests. Seraiah was his scribe. Benaiah was over his mercenaries. David's sons were provincial governors. God has given elders and deacons as well as evangelists and teachers in His church. The church's work should be done decently and in order.

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### 3. The Throne of David Established, 8:1-18.

#### *David's Victories.* 8:1-13

And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Methegammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And *so* the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts.

3 David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.

4 And David took from him a thousand *chariots*, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot *horses*, but reserved of them *for* a hundred chariots.

5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

6 Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, *and* brought gifts. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.

7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

8 And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.

9 When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer,

10 Then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass:

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8:1-3

11 Which also king David did dedicate unto the Lord, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued;

12 Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David gat *him* a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, *being* eighteen thousand *men*.

### 1. *What was the "bridle of the mother city"?* 8:1 (ASV)

David took "the bridle of the mother city of the land of the Philistines." This statement is hard to understand unless it means that one of the cities of the Philistines ruled the other Philistine cities and that David then in turn conquered this leading city. The King James translators transliterated the Hebrew word as Methegammah, but this hardly is the name of a Philistine city. More than likely Gath was the mother city.

### 2. *What was David's treatment of Moab?* 8:2

When David conquered the Moabites, he caused all the men to pass along to be measured. The actual procedure he used is not clear. It may have been that he caused all the men to lie on the ground and then taking a measure counted off two measures of men to be put to death, leaving every third measure to live. Or, it may have been that all the men that were tall enough to reach the upper two measures were put to death and only those that were short enough to come within the third measures were left alive.

### 3. *What battle did David fight in the north?* 8:3

David also warred against Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah. We are told that he had gone to recover his dominion at the river. David very evidently was extending his rule to the Euphrates river. This being true, the dominion was still within the land promised to

Abraham. Because horses were not very valuable in Palestine, David hocked all the chariot horses, reserving only enough for a hundred chariots. By so disabling the horses, David made them of no use to the king of Zobah. When the statement is made that “. . . the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Hadadezer . . .” (II Samuel 8:5), light is thrown on the fact that Syria used to mean either all of Palestine or country about Damascus. Such a specific statement makes clear which Syrians so came to Hadadezer.

4. *Where was Hamath?* 8:9

Hamath was the extreme northern boundary of the land of Israel. It lay near the Orontes River and was considered the most important town of upper Syria. The modern name is Hamah, and from this site inscribed stones have been taken by archaeologists. The civilization that was most outstanding was of Hittite background. Whether David's kingdom quite extended to the city or not, we can not tell; but his borders reached to the edge of the territory of Hamath.

5. *What did David do with the spoils of war?* 8:11

David dedicated the silver and gold which he took in his wars to make a treasury for God's house. These things were dedicated to the Lord. As David neared the end of his career, he encouraged Solomon and his subjects to enter into the building effort. He gave a pattern for all that was to be built, and gave gold and silver for the work itself (I Chronicles 28:16).

*David's Government.* 8:14-18

14 And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.

15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.

16 And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder;

17 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Seriah *was* the scribe;

18 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.

6. *What was the extent of David's Kingdom? 8:13, 14*

The land of Edom reached from the southern part of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqabah. The borders may be set as having extended from south of Akabah to the Euphrates river after David's extensive conquest. No student need wonder at the terrible severity shown with regard to the Edomites when it is remembered that the Edomites and the Israelites had always been enemies. Garrisons were needed in the land of Edom, because it was such an important country. The garrisons would provide means for controlling the country.

Thus it was that under the mighty hand of the warrior David as he was blessed by God the kingdom came to its mightiest influence. The land that was at times subdued first by the Egyptians and then by the Chaldeans, the land that was so important to link together the civilizations of the Nile and the Euphrates valley was now under the control of a people who knew Jehovah and feared him. The Promised Land became a glorious reality to the seed of Abraham.

7. *How did David organize his kingdom? 8:16-18*

In this passage we have a very accurate listing of the offices and officers instituted by David to care for the military, religious, and civil functions of the kingdom. A listing of these officers is as follows:

Joab	Chief of Staff (over the host)
Jehoshaphat	Recorder (Chronicler)
Abiathar (at Zion)	Priests
Zadok (Gibeon)	

Seraiah	Secretary of State (Scribe)
Benaiah	Provincial Governor (over the Cherethites and Pelethites)
David's sons	Chief Ministers

Most interesting is the way in which Seraiah, the scribe is mentioned. With all the other ministers, notice is made of their ancestry. No mention is made of the name of the father of Seraiah. It is possible that he was a foreigner. It was the duty of the recorder to keep the annals of the kingdom and call David's attention to the needs of the kingdom. The scribe's duty was the writing of the official documents. Other men were entrusted with the oversight of subdivisions of the kingdom. The Cherethites and the Pelethites were a part of the Philistine peoples.

Benaiah had been distinguished through his killing of two prominent men of Moab. He had also killed a lion in a pit, the account of which is one of the very interesting sidelights of the Scripture. It was this same Benaiah who met an Egyptian, disarmed him, took his spear from him, and killed him with his own weapon. Benaiah was a descendant of Eleazar, the son of Aaron.

8. *Who was the high priest? 8:17*

The listing of these names says, "Ahimelech the son of Abiathar." This is the mistake of taking the son for the father, for according to I Samuel 22:11, 20, Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech.

Keil and Delitzsch in their *Commentaries on the Old Testament*, suggest that Zadok officiated at the tabernacle at Gibeon (I Chronicles 16:39), and Abiathar probably tended the Ark of the Covenant upon Mount Zion. Even so, it is very strange to find an Ahimelech named since Abiathar was the son of an Ahimelech, according to I Samuel 22:20; and in other passages, Zadok and Abiathar are mentioned as the two high priests under David

(II Samuel 15:24, 35 and 17:15; 19:12; 20:25). Some commentators transpose the names and read here Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech. Such a solution to the problem is ruled out by the fact that in I Chronicles 24:3-6, 31, Ahimelech is mentioned along with Zadok as head of the priests of the line of Ithamar. According to verse six, in that reference, an Ahimelech was the son of Abiathar. It would, therefore, be necessary to change the name Ahimelech to Abiathar, and this is too great a change to ascribe to a copyist. It is possible that Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, also had a son named Ahimelech. It is, by no means, uncommon for grandfather and grandson to have the same name (I Chronicles 5:30-41). The younger Ahimelech may have performed the duties of the high priest in connection with his father who was still living at the beginning of Solomon's reign (I Kings 2:27). Probably Ahimelech is mentioned here as the titular holder of the office, but since he was killed by Doeg, in the days of Saul, his son was serving in his place. Later references then attribute the office of priest to Abiathar.

## CHAPTER 8 IN REVIEW

1. What did David take from the Philistines? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many of the Moabites did David put to death? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What king of Zobah did David attack? \_\_\_\_\_
4. To what river did David extend his kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many chariots did David capture? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What did David do to the horses? \_\_\_\_\_
7. To what northernmost point did David extend his border? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who was David's captain? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who were David's priests? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who was David's recorder? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 9

- Vv. 1- 4 *David seeks Saul's heirs.* It was customary for a king to seek out the heirs of his predecessor. Generally the motive was to exterminate them. David had a different reason for looking for the heirs of Saul. He had made a covenant with Jonathan that he would deal kindly with any descendants of the royal family.
- Vv. 5-13 *Mephibosheth brought to David.* David's courtiers knew one heir of Saul's. He was a lame prince, the son of Jonathan. He was introduced to the narrative in Chapter four (v. 4), and the nature of his lameness was explained. David gave Mephibosheth a place in his court. He was treated as one of the king's own family.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Pay thy vows*" (Psalm 58:14). David wrote in a psalm that the God-fearing man should pay his vows "unto the most high." David had made a covenant with Jonathan that they would befriend each other and the descendants of their families. This was a sacred vow to David. As soon as he was in a position to do so, he sought out the heirs of Saul's family. God-fearing people through the years have considered their words as their bonds. They try to make good on their promises. This is a quality that is sorely needed in today's society.
2. "*The king's favor is towards a wise servant*" (Proverbs 14:35). Ziba showed himself to be a wise servant. He spoke kindly concerning the king and his master, Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth came before David with all the humility of a servant. David made him as one of his own sons. Although none is expected to grovel at the feet of his superiors, Christian people will do well to give honor to whom honor is due (Romans 13:7).

## 4. David's Kindness to the House of Saul, 9:1-13.

*David Seeks Saul's Heirs. 9:1-4*

And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

2 And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant whose name *was* Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, *Art* thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant *is he*.

3 And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? and Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, *which is* lame on *his* feet.

4 And the king said unto him, *Where is* he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.

1. *Why was David interested in survivors of Saul's house?*  
9:1

Quite often a king would seek out survivors of his predecessor's royal house in order that he might put all of them to death. David's motive was quite different as he made inquiry about any survivors of Saul's house. David knew that Saul's sons—Jonathan, Malchi-shua, and Abinadab—were all slain in the battle on Mount Gilboa. Ish-bosheth's head had been brought to him by his assassins, and this was the fourth member of Saul's house to die. David had made a covenant with Jonathan that he would show kindness to any of his house; and so when he was settled in his kingdom, he made inquiry about any survivors. David would probably have spared not only descendants of Jonathan but any other of the house of Saul, for he had made essentially the same covenant with Saul when they parted after David spared Saul's life the first time (I Samuel 24:21, 22).

2. *Who was Ziba?* 9:2

Ziba was a former servant of Saul's who knew about the existence of Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth. The word Ziba is apparently from Semitic stem of a word meaning "branch" or "twig." Since he was Saul's servant, it is reasonable to suppose that he was from the tribe of Benjamin. He had been left behind when Saul went to battle, but had kept a record of the activities of the family.

3. *What had caused the boy's lameness?* 9:3

The nurse, taking care of the five-year-old boy, had dropped him while fleeing from the invading Philistines. This was made clear in II Samuel 4:4, but it does not indicate that she was actually carrying him in her arms or on her back. She may have lost her hold on his hand as they were fleeing from the mountains, causing the lad to fall and become permanently injured. The exact nature of the injury is not given, but when David returned from his successful suppression of Absalom's revolt, Mephibosheth said that he had not gone with David because he could not walk. He also said that he had not dressed his feet all the time David was gone (II Samuel 19:24). Such a circumstance would indicate that his feet had open sores.

4. *Who was Machir?* 9:4

Machir was a former friend of Saul. Mephibosheth had been living in his house. Machir was the son of Ammiel, a resident in the area of Lo-debar. We gather from this fact that Mephibosheth was in his house and from a reference in II Samuel 17:27, that he was a man of wealth and prominence. The home was beyond the Jordan, and probably not very far from the Mahanain.

*Mephibosheth Brought to David.* 9:5-13

5 Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

6 Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and

did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!

7 And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

8 And he bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I *am*?

9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.

10 Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread always at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

12 And Mephibosheth had a young son, who name *was* Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants unto Mephibosheth.

13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

5. *What was Mephibosheth's attitude toward David? 9:6*

Mephibosheth showed reverence for David. When he came unto David's presence, he fell on his face and honored the king. Later, David told him that he should not be afraid and assured him that he would show kindness to him. Mephibosheth was not like Ish-bosheth, his uncle, who had tried to keep David off the throne. He evidently harbored no ill will towards David, although Ziba later

accused him of staying behind in Jerusalem at the time of the revolt of Absalom in hope that the people of Israel would make him king. Mephibosheth denied this after David returned, and so it is impossible to tell whether he ever had any hope of ruling himself (II Samuel 16:3). Had anybody else become king, he might well have killed Mephibosheth as the sole surviving heir of the preceding regal family.

6. *What land was owned by Saul?* 9:7

With all the misfortune self-inflicted upon Saul and his family, he would retain possession of the ancestral home of Kish. This land was restored to the house of Saul in the person of Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was grateful. He asked David why he had deigned to look upon “. . . such a dead dog.” The character displayed by Mephibosheth here and in the later appearances he makes in the Biblical narrative depict the results of chronic disappointment, disaster, suspicion, and treachery upon a sensitive mind. Mephibosheth was broken in spirit, and taking possession of the family's tract of land in the tribe of Benjamin was small compensation for all he must have suffered.

7. *Was David's kindness unusual?* 9:8

It was very uncommon for any member of a kingly family to treat the heir of a rival house in such consideration. This was a very unusual kindness. It is almost without parallel in the history of mankind.

Receiving this kind of treatment at the hand of the new king was so surprising to Mephibosheth that he referred to himself as a “dead dog.” He knew that he did not personally deserve the treatment that he received from David, but he was grateful for it. The recognition afforded Mephibosheth was sufficient to humble even the proudest oriental. The special mark of favor in giving him a place at the king's table is all the more noteworthy in view of Mephibosheth's physical imperfection.

8. *What duties were given to Ziba?* 9:10

Ziba had cared for the land of Saul at one time, and so David arranged that Ziba should cultivate the land and bring its produce to Mephibosheth. The income from the property would provide for his support, since his presence in the court of David would rather increase than diminish his expenses. The extent of the estate is indicated by the force that is needed to cultivate it—Ziba's fifteen sons, and twenty servants (verse 10 b).

9. *Who was Mephibosheth's son?* 9:12

Verses twelve and thirteen are something of an appendix to the actual narrative of chapter nine, although they are evidently by the same author. The verses give further information as to the line of Saul. Mephibosheth had one son whose name was Micha. He is also mentioned in the genealogy in I Chronicles 8:34. David had remembered his covenant and had shown kindness to Jonathan's descendants. Mephibosheth was given the rank of a prince, eating at the king's table and having jurisdiction over suitable property as well as a group of servants. The unfortunate nature of his infirmity was the only thing that could detract from his happy state, and it is mentioned as the final statement of the chapter.

## CHAPTER 9 IN REVIEW

1. What was the name of Saul's servant? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the name of Saul's living heir? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Whose son was he? \_\_\_\_\_
4. With whom was he living? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where did he live? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was his physical ailment? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many sons did Ziba's servant have? \_\_\_\_\_
8. By what figure did Saul's heir refer to himself? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What position did David give to Saul's heir? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What land was given to Saul's heir? \_\_\_\_\_

PART THREE

TROUBLE IN  
DAVID'S FAMILY

10:1—14:33

## SECOND SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 10

- Vv. 1- 5 *David's Ambassadors shamed.* The king of Ammon died and David sent ambassadors to express his sympathy. The princes of the country persuaded the new king that David was really seeking opportunity to spy out their land. They treated his ambassadors shamefully and this was taken as a cause for war.
- Vv. 6-19 *David's army was divided into two companies.* One was under the direction of Joab, and the other was led by Abishai. The armies of Israel were victorious, and the Syrians from Damascus came to aid the Ammonites. David then gathered his entire host together and crossed over the Jordan himself to direct the campaign. The Israelites were victorious and the Syrians withdrew.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Ambassadors for Christ*" (II Corinthians 5:20). The treatment of a country's ambassadors is tantamount to the same treatment of the country. When the people of Ammon cut off the beard of David's ambassadors and sheared their robes just slightly below the waist, they caused the men to be so ashamed that they were not willing to be seen in public. David took this treatment to be the same as shameful treatment of himself and of his entire nation. He therefore went to war. We are sometimes surprised to read that Jesus said to Saul, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9:5). As far as we know Saul never saw Jesus; but when he persecuted the followers of Jesus, it was as if he were persecuting Jesus. We need to realize that our treatment of God's workers is equal to the same treatment of God himself.

2. *Playing the man.* When the armies of Israel saw that the Syrians had joined with the Ammonites, they knew that the odds were overwhelmingly against them. Joab said, "Be of good courage and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God" (v. 12). When Christians are overwhelmed by the forces of evil, they need to begin playing the men for the sake of their brethren and for their God whom they serve.

### III. TROUBLE IN DAVID'S FAMILY, 10:1—14:33.

#### 1. The War With Ammon, 10:1-19.

##### *David's Ambassadors Shamed.* 10:1-5

And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.

2 Then said David, I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

3 And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David *rather* sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?

4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, *even* to their buttocks, and sent them away.

5 When they told *it* unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

#### 1. *Who was Hanun?* 10:1

Hanun was the new king over the people of Ammon. David had subdued these people in one of his campaigns

(II Samuel 8:12). As the son and successor of Nahash, the king of the Ammonites in the days of Saul, he showed himself to be of the same warlike nature. He was not able to withstand the agitation of courtiers who misjudged the object of David's mission, and he treated David's ambassadors shamefully.

2. *Who was Nahash? 10:2*

A man named Nahash is mentioned in I Samuel 11:1-3. We cannot be sure that this is the same Nahash mentioned in II Samuel 10:2. We suppose that it was the same person. It may have been that the latter mention of the name refers to a son of the man formerly mentioned. It would be hard to understand how this man had helped David, since no specific mention of it is made. He may have befriended David during the time that David was in hiding from the presence of Saul. Nahash could have helped David in order to spite Saul, who had wreaked such vengeance on the Ammonites after they had gone out against the men of Jabesh-gilead.

Other tribes had fallen under the sword of David and Hanun was afraid to trust David because the other tribes had suffered such a fate. When the Ammonites mistreated the ambassadors from Israel, ample cause for war was present. The abuse of an ambassador was considered a just cause for war.

3. *Why did they doubt David's motives? 10:3*

The young prince was ready to act on suspicion. His advisors thought that David would hardly be so sympathetic as to send ambassadors to console the king when his father died. They thought that he had come to search out the city, to spy on it, and to overthrow it. The record in Chronicles indicates that they thought that he had come to spy out the entire land. This was the same motive attributed to Abner by Joab who came on a mission of peace to David at Hebron. Their suspicions are a reflection upon their own attitudes and motives, but David had

given them no reason to have such fears. Their suspicions were founded on national hatred and enmity which had possibly been increased by David's treatment of Moab and other neighbors of Ammon.

4. *How did Hanun treat David's servants?* 10:4

Hanun treated David's servants shamefully. He shaved off half of their beards and cut off their garments in the middle. Whether the men were shaved down one side of their faces or their beards were cut off so that they were only half as long as they were designed to be cannot be determined. Their garments were cut off so that they were ashamed to be seen in public. For that reason, David told them to stay in Jericho, near the Jordan river, and wait until their beards were grown and they could be outfitted with other clothes. They would then be free to return to Jerusalem and make a report of their mission.

*David's Army Divided Into Two Companies.* 10:6-19

6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men.

7 And when David heard of *it*, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

8 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishtob, and Maacah, *were* by themselves in the field.

9 When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice *men* of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians:

10 And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put *them* in array against the children of Ammon.

11 And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee:

12 Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.

13 And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him.

14 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

15 And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together.

16 And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond the river: and they came to Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them.

17 And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.

18 And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew *the men of* seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there.

19 And when all the kings *that were* servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

5. *What caused the war with the Ammonites? 10:6*

When a nation treats ambassadors shamefully, it is all the same as though they had treated the country in the

same way. David was furious, and then these steps were taken:

- a. Ammonites hired the Syrians—verse six
- b. The enemy's army divided—verse eight
- c. Israel's army divided to meet the enemy—verses nine and ten
- d. Joab routed the Syrians (verse thirteen); Ammonites fled before Abishai as a result—verse fourteen

Although the Ammonites hired Syrians to fight for them, they were unable to overcome the Israelites. The Ammonites and Syrians put an army into the field under separate commands and in segregated positions. To meet this strategy, Joab delivered a part of the army of the Israelites to the command of Abishai. Joab thought of the God of Israel as a God of battle and so trusted His deliverance. When Joab pressed the battle against the Syrians which were before him, the Syrians fled. The heart of the Ammonites failed within them when they saw that the Syrians were being defeated. They, too, retreated before the onrushing forces of Abishai.

Had the Israelites been prepared for a siege, they might have come to final grips with the Ammonites and Syrians soon after this first encounter. The Israelites were not ready to besiege the city, however, and the Ammonites were able to find refuge in Rabbath-Ammon. It was not until later that the siege was laid.

#### 6. *Who was King Maacah? 10:6 b*

The Ammonites not only were able to hire men from the Syrians of Beth-rehob and Zobah, but they were able to get men from Maacah. Maacah was a city and small Syrian kingdom at the foot of Mount Hermon near Geshur (Joshua 13:13; I Chronicles 19:7). This territory was the land around the southern and eastern slopes of Hermon; it also took in a portion of the rocky plateau called Iturea. The land really belonged to Israel, but it was not possessed by them in Joshua's day. Its king con-

tributed 1,000 men to the Ammonites as they fought against David, but they were all defeated (verse 19).

7. *Who were the men of Tob? 10:6 b*

*Isb-Tob* is not to be considered as one word and translated as a proper noun, but rather it should be thought of as a reference to the "men of Tob." Tob was a district between Assyria and Ammon. Jephthah had taken refuge here when he fled from his brethren (Judges 11:3). Hanun was able to band all the Syrians together to stave off the attack David was about to make.

8. *Who were hosts of mighty men? 10:7*

David mustered all his mighty men. These mighty men were more than those listed as David's heroes (II Samuel 23:8-39). Here is a reference to the fact that David called all his army into this battle. This naturally meant that the militia was considered a different body from the veteran force. Later on, David was able to count 1,300,000 men of military age (II Samuel 24:9).

9. *What was Joab's strategy? 10:9*

Joab saw that two fronts were being formed by the enemy. One group was closing in before him; another was chasing him from the rear. He therefore took the best fighters from the men of Israel, and set them in a battle line against the better equipped and more experienced Syrians. He put the rest of the men under the leadership of Abishai and ordered them to go out against the Ammonites. Joab felt that the Syrians were the real threat and that it was important to beat them. Probably the bulk of the army went against the Ammonites.

10. *What was the meaning of Joab's remark to Abishai? 10:12*

Joab was a good soldier; he urged his men to be courageous. He exhorted them to fight like men. This was the battle cry of the Philistines when they learned that the ark had been brought out into the field of battle against them (I Samuel 4:9). They exhorted one another saying:

"Be strong and quit yourselves like men." Joab's reference to fighting for the "cities of our God" is very unusual, leading some to conjecture as to whether the original text made reference to the Ark of God. There is no real evidence for making any change in the word, however, and it appears that Joab was encouraging his people to fight for their towns. He did say that they ought to play the men, "for our people." He left the outcome of the battle in the hands of God saying, "The Lord do that which seemeth Him good."

*11. What was the outcome of the battle? 10:13*

Joab was victorious over the Assyrians, and they fled from him. The children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were beaten and then gave way before Abishai. The Ammonites withdrew to their city; probably the city of Rabbah. Joab called off the battle and he and his men returned to Jerusalem. The Israelites were not prepared for a siege; they had come out for a battle in the open field.

*12. Who was Hadadezer? 10:16*

Hadadezer was the king of Zobah. Having been defeated once by the Israelites, he was not satisfied until he had gathered another Syrian army which included the Syrians beyond the River Euphrates. The extent of the Syrian principality cannot be exactly ascertained, but it is generally concluded to have extended from the border of the Ammonites to the Euphrates River and beyond.

*13. Where was Helam? 10:17*

Helam is a spot that is not known for sure today. The Hebrew was rendered "their army," by Thenius. Cornill, an Old Testament scholar, restores the name to the text in Ezekiel 47:16, which would place it on the boundary of Hamath and Damascus. Hoffmann, another Old Testament geographer, identifies it with Aleppo. Another spot known as Alema (1 Maccabees 5:26), now the modern Alma in Hauran, is a third suggested location. Undoubt-

edly it was on the northeast border of David's territory and centrally located to those who had come together to avenge the initial defeat handed them by the Israelites under Joab and Abishai.

14. *What caused David to go out to battle? 10:17*

Hadadezer sought help from other Syrians. David considered the second engagement important enough to demand his own time and leadership. Naturally, the Israelites would be more valiant in the presence of their king. It was said that the courage of the men of England was so much greater when the Duke of Wellington was on the field that his presence was equal to an additional troop of one thousand men.

15. *Who won the second battle? 10:18*

Once again the Israelites were victorious over the Syrians. There is no word in the text for *men*, the original reading would say David slew seven hundred chariots. The object of this throughout the Bible is always something that has life. The King James translators have rightfully supplied the word *men* here, and indicated that David slew seven hundred charioteers. In addition, he slew 40,000 horsemen and also killed Shobach, their captain. It was a decisive victory.

16. *What was the outcome of the war? 10:19*

Syria was made a vassal of Israel. The Syrians were afraid to enter into a league with the Ammonites after this campaign. David still had a matter to settle with Ammon, and this was the reason for the campaign mentioned in the following text. The fact that David was able to subdue these Syrians makes it clear that he was indeed a very strong ruler. Israel was coming to her most prosperous time. The indication is that all the Syrian kings were servants to Haderezer. This implies that he was the chief ruler and had subject monarchs under him. Once David had subdued him and his coalition, he had nothing to fear from the Syrians.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 10 IN REVIEW

1. What king died in Ammon? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the name of the new king? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What officers of David's were treated shamefully by the Ammonites? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where did David's officers tarry before returning to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What other people joined the Ammonites to fight Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who led David's men against Ammon? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What other captain led part of David's men? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who won the battle? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Did David himself go to the battle? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many horsemen did David slay? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 11

- Vv. 1- 5 *David's sin with Bathsheba.* David was in Jerusalem while his army was besieging Rabbah in Ammon. He was attracted to Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his soldiers. He brought her to his court and committed adultery with her.
- Vv. 6-11 *David's attempt to cover his sin.* In an effort to hide the fact that Bathsheba was to bear a child which David had fathered, he called Uriah to Jerusalem from the field of battle. He attempted to get him to go to his own house while he was in Jerusalem, but Uriah refused and thwarted David's attempt to make it appear that the child was Uriah's.
- Vv. 12-21 *Uriah killed in battle.* A last desperate effort was made by David. Uriah carried instructions back to Joab which resulted in his own death. Uriah was sent to the front of the battle near the city walls, and then Joab

## SECOND SAMUEL

ordered the other troops to withdraw. Uriah fought valiantly on and was killed.

Vv. 22-27 *Bathsheba becomes David's wife.* As a widow, Bathsheba was free to marry David. After the period of mourning for Uriah was ended, Bathsheba became David's wife.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *In idle brain is the Devil's workshop.* The armies of Israel were in the field, but their leader was at home in Jerusalem. In this period of idleness, David was lured into a trap which meant the ultimate downfall of his period of prosperity. No doubt he may have wished many times that he had been in the field of battle rather than free to walk on the walls of his palace in Jerusalem. We need to be busy for the Lord, lest in our periods of laxity we are led into sin.
2. *Sin bears compound interest.* After adultery came the enticing of a man to become drunk and ultimately the committing of murder. One sin led to another. As it was with David, so it is often in the everyday life of a Christian. The wages of sin, of course, is death (Romans 6:23b).
3. "*So they wrap it up*" (Micah 7:3). The devious ways of a sinner are so intertwined and so interwoven that it is difficult to discern his path. David's sinful ways were so camouflaged that the man on the street did not know what was happening. Only the pure white light of God renders accurate judgment on such devious ways.

#### 2. David's Sin With Bathsheba, 11:1-27.

##### *David's Sin With Bathsheba.* 11:1-5

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab,

and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and beseiged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

2 And it came to pass in an eventide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon.

3 And David sent and inquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, *I am* with child.

1. *When did the kings go out to battle? 11:1*

Certain seasons of the year were not suited to the most efficient prosecution of a campaign. At the right time during the year the kings would ordinarily go forth to battle. When this most suitable season came around, David set out to settle his score with the Ammonites.

2. *Where was Rabbah? 11:1 b*

Rabbah was the chief city of Ammon. It lay twenty miles east of the Jordan and was east by north of Jericho. The city is first mentioned in the Bible as the location of the bed of Og (Deuteronomy 3:11). The land around the town was not included in the territory at Aroer which faced Rabbah (Joshua 15:25). Joab had pursued the Ammonites to this point at the conclusion of the first campaign against the Ammonites. The city became the main point of attack at the beginning of the second campaign.

3. *Why did David tarry in Jerusalem? 11:1 c*

David had gone against the Syrians and Ammonites only because it appeared that a major coalition was being formed against the Israelites by the united powers of their enemies

east of the Jordan. When Israel had successfully beaten the Syrians and the Syrians had demonstrated that they were afraid to enter into another league with the Ammonites, David must have felt that he was not needed on the field of battle. Later on in his career, David was subjected to some very fierce treatment at the hands of the enemies, being rescued once and again by his valiant mighty men. These people thereafter insisted that he not go into battle with them any more (II Samuel 21:17). Joab did not let David go into the battle against Absalom, and at that time he said that the enemy would rather kill David than kill hundreds of them (II Samuel 18:3). Since David had been away from his capital while he led the former campaigns, his services were likely more needed with regard to the affairs of state than on the battlefield, and for that reason he must have remained in Jerusalem while Joab led the army against Rabbah.

4. *In what way was Bathsheba washing herself? 11:2*

From the mention of the fact that she was purified from her uncleanness (verse four), Bathsheba's washing must have been one of ceremonial nature. In Jesus' day, the Jews had many practices of ceremonial nature. Mark says that the "Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables" (Mark 7:3, 4).

5. *Who was Uriah? 11:3*

This man's name means "Jehovah is my light." Uriah was a great foreign warrior in the service of David. He was a man of fixed purpose. Through the narrative we can well imagine that he exhibited great loyalty to his fellow soldiers on the field of battle as well as off. As a Hittite, he was a descendant of Heth, a descendant of Canaan (Genesis 10:15).

6. *Who was Bathsheba? 11:3*

Bathsheba is called Bath-shuah in I Chronicles 3:5. She is introduced as the daughter of Eliam, or Ammiel. According to II Samuel 23:32, Eliam was the son of Ahithophel, the Gilonite. Ahithophel entered into Absalom's revolt against David and became his counselor (II Samuel 17:1). If he were the grandfather of Bathsheba, he may have had a settled hatred for David on account of his associations with Bathsheba. This animosity may explain why he aided Absalom in his rebellion. Bathsheba was already married; she was the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, one of David's valiant soldiers.

7. *Why is this sin recorded? 11:4*

Strange is the action of David. Holy men of God writing as they were moved of the Holy Spirit would not be so dishonest as to attempt to cover up for the subject of their narrative. The truthfulness of the narratives is upheld by the fairness exhibited. Men today can only sit and ponder the terrible results of sin coming into their lives. This happened to David. David's sin with Bathsheba was intensified by his purpose to send Uriah into the thick of the battle. David ordered Joab to get rid of Uriah. Joab was strong-minded and daring, and although he was not always easily controlled, he was faithful to David. Because he must have realized that some sin or some intense hatred lay back of David's action, he was constrained to do David's bidding.

*David's Attempt to Cover His Sin. 11:6-11*

6 And David sent to Joab, *saying*, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.

7 And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded *of him* how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.

8 And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's

house, and there followed him a mess of *meat* from the king.

9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.

10 And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from *thy* journey? why *then* didst thou not go down unto thine house?

11 And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as* thou livest, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.

8. *Why did David send for Uriah? 11:6*

David called Uriah back from the battlefield in an effort to have him in Jerusalem at a time when the public would think that the child born to Bathsheba was fathered by Uriah. It was the desperate effort of a desperate man to cover up his sin. David underestimated the valiant nature of Uriah. He thought that he would be glad to have a furlough from the battlefield and that he would go down to his own house as a matter of course. Little did David realize the outcome of this move on his part. It marked the turning point in his life. From this point forward his reign was marked with adversity and hardship. His first false move was to send for Bathsheba and to lay with her. His second false move was to call Uriah back from the battlefield; ever after this his hand seems to shake as he holds the reins of government.

9. *What inquiries did David made of Uriah? 11:7*

David made general inquiries about the outcome of the fighting. He asked how Joab was conducting the campaign. He asked how the soldiers were getting along, and in general he asked if the war was going in Israel's favor.

David was evading the real issue which was before him; he made these normal inquiries in order to cover up his fiendish purposes.

*10. Why did Uriah disobey the king? 11:8*

David told Uriah to go down to his house and to enjoy a bit of leave from the hardships of the battlefield. No significance should be attached to his telling him to wash his feet; it would be the normal way of relaxing and preparing to enjoy normal domestic and civilian life. The privilege of bathing was often denied men on the field of battle, and he thought that Uriah would relish this routine convenience. David tried to show his goodwill towards Uriah by sending a mess of meat to his home for his meal. Uriah went out from the king's house, but he slept at the entrance with the guards of the palace and did not go down to his own house. Uriah was a loyal subject of his king; he was also a faithful soldier, unwilling to forsake his companions in the field and to enjoy the pleasures of civilian life while his comrades were fighting.

*11. Why did David's servants report Uriah's actions? 11:10*

David's servants could hardly have known the purposes of the king in telling Uriah to go to his house. His affair with Bathsheba was not generally known at that time. But Uriah's actions had been very strange; one would hardly expect a soldier to sleep with the guards of the palace when he had the opportunity to go down to his own house. When David heard what Uriah had done, he called him back to his palace and asked him about his activities.

*12. What reason did Uriah give for his actions? 11:11*

Uriah said that the men of Israel and Judah were out in the battlefield living in tents. He also made mention of the Ark abiding in a tent. It is doubtful from this reference that the Ark was really taken into battle. When the sons of Eli had carried the Ark into battle against the Philistines, the results were catastrophic. The Philistines stiffened their resistance and not only beat the Israelites

but captured the Ark itself (I Samuel 4:10, 11). David had given this reason for wanting to build the temple. He said that the Ark of God was dwelling within curtains (II Samuel 7:2-6). Uriah said that Joab and the other captain of the hosts were encamped in the open fields. He, therefore, felt it quite out of place for him to go down to his own house to enjoy the good food that was provided for him and to enjoy his wife's company. Uriah abhorred the idea of his doing anything like this.

*Uriah Killed in Battle.* 11:12-21

12 And David said to Uriah, Tarry here today also, and tomorrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow.

13 And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

14 And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah.

15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

16 And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men *were*.

17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell *some* of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

18 Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war;

19 And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,

20 And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city

when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?

21 Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

*13 Why did David keep Uriah for two more days? 11:12*

David dismissed Uriah from his presence for the time being, but asked him to stay in Jerusalem for the rest of that day and for the next day. David evidently needed time to collect his thoughts and to devise a plan. David's new plan was as wicked as his first. He conceived the idea of having Uriah to eat and to drink with him. He encouraged him to drink intemperately and then dismissed him from his presence. Even though Uriah was in a drunken state, he still did not go down to his own house. He went out to sleep with the guards of the palace, the servants of David. The old rabbis of Israel said that the soldiers divorced their wives when they went out to battle. No evidence can be gathered to support this from the Scripture, but it is true that a man who had recently married was exempted from going to battle (Deuteronomy 20:7). The apostle Paul also stated a general truth when he said, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him, who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (II Timothy 2:4). Uriah was of this mind. As long as he was engaged in a battle, he did not want to divert his attention to domestic affairs. David was completely stymied by Uriah's actions.

*14. What was David's final plan? 11:14*

David wrote a letter to Joab, the captain of his army, and sent it back to the commander by Uriah himself. In the letter he wrote that Joab should send Uriah in the place where the battle was most severe. Joab was then to

order the rest of the men to withdraw, leaving Uriah to fight and die. David hoped that Uriah would be killed and then he would be free to marry Bathsheba. When the child was born, it would be thought to be the legitimate child of David and Bathsheba.

15. *Why did Joab comply? 11:16*

Joab was an unscrupulous soldier but completely loyal to David. Joab was David's nephew and therefore inclined to do his uncle's bidding, even had David not been king. Joab himself had killed Abner without just cause, and he was not above murdering in order to achieve the ends he had in mind. Joab therefore took careful note of the city and of the battle. He assigned Uriah to a place where he knew the most capable soldiers of the Ammonites were defending their town. As Israel drew near, the men of the city fought fiercely. Some of the Israelites were killed, and Uriah was among them. David's scheme was succeeding.

16. *How did Joab send the news to David? 11:18*

Joab sent a messenger from the battlefield to Jerusalem to tell David about the outcome of the battle. He gave the messenger only general news; since he could hardly justify sending a messenger all the way back to the king simply to tell him that Uriah was dead. Joab carefully instructed the messenger to observe the king's reaction; and if he became angry when he learned that the Ammonites had defeated Israel in the battle near the city, he was to give him additional news. This additional news would include the fact that even Uriah was killed. All of this was done to prevent arousing the suspicions of the messenger—or anybody else.

17. *Who was Abimelech? 11:21*

The folly of Abimelech was well known in Israel. He was Israel's first king. He had seized the throne unlawfully in the days of Gideon. The people of Israel wanted Gideon to rule over them, but Gideon had refused and

reminded the people that God was their king. Abimelech had gone to Thebez to put down a revolt there. A strong tower was in the city, and some of the men fled to it along with their women and children. As Abimelech drew near to the city to fight against them, a certain woman dropped a piece of millstone on his head and crushed his skull (Judges 9:53). Such action was poor military strategy, and Joab expected David to mention this when he became furious over the way the battle had gone at Rabbah.

*Bathsheba Becomes David's Wife. 11:22-27*

22 So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for.

23 And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

24 And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

25 Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

27 And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

18. *What was David's reaction? 11:25*

When David got the full message delivered by the man sent by Joab, he sent word back to Joab in order to allay any suspicions which may have been aroused. He told the

messenger to assure Joab that the king understood the reason for the strategy. He urged him not to be displeased on account of the outcome of the battle and became quite philosophical as he said, "For the sword devoureth one as well as another." He sent word then that they should fight more valiantly against the city and overthrow it. Such would have been the normal message of a good king to a valiant soldier, and probably the messenger did not suspect anything.

19. *What was the apparent outcome of the matter?*  
 11:26, 27

Bathsheba entered into the usual period of mourning for her husband. Her mourning may have been sincere, for she was a victim of circumstances to a great degree. After the period of mourning was over, David sent for her and brought her to his palace. Bathsheba became his wife, and the child which was to be born would have been considered as theirs rightfully. The final verses of the chapter point out the true circumstances. What they had done was a sin against God. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

## CHAPTER 11 IN REVIEW

1. What city of Ammon did Israel besiege? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did David abide? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who was Bathsheba's husband? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What was her father's name? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was Uriah's nationality? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many nights did Uriah spend in Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How was Uriah killed? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What man in Israel's earlier history had died beneath a city wall? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

9. Did Bathsheba mourn for her husband? \_\_\_\_\_  
10. Did David marry Bathsheba? \_\_\_\_\_

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 12

- Vv. 1-6 *Nathan's parable.* Nathan came into David's presence to tell him a story that brought out a great truth. The story so intrigued David that he was caught in his own judgments.
- Vv. 7-23 *God's judgment.* Nathan delivered to David the judgment of God upon David's sin. David was not able to hide his sin from God. The child born to David and Bathsheba out of their adulterous union was smitten. Eventually it died.
- Vv. 24-25 *The Birth of Solomon.* David repented of his sin and God blessed his marriage with Bathsheba. Solomon's other name, Jedidiah, means "Beloved of the Lord."
- Vv. 26-31 *The final siege of Rabbah.* The armies of Israel were finally victorious over the Ammonites. The citizens of Rabbah, their leading city, were besieged and finally put under the strictest kind of servitude. We can well imagine that David may have wished he had never heard of the country of Ammon.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *A beam in the eye* (Matthew 7:1-5). David wanted to punish a man who had killed another man's lamb. He did not realize that Nathan was talking about him, but he was one who was guilty of a far greater sin.
2. *"Thou are the man"* (v. 7). The apostle Paul urged the preachers of the gospel to be sure that they did not

condemn themselves when they condemned others (Romans 2:21-24).

3. *The iniquities of the fathers* (Exodus 20:5). God does not visit the ultimate condemnation of a father's sin upon the children, but many fathers cause much suffering for the children. David and Bathsheba in their sin brought on the death of their first child.

### 3. David's Repentance, 12:1-31.

#### *Nathan's Parable.* 12:1-6

And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

2 The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds:

3 But the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4 And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* shall surely die:

6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

#### 1. *What kind of story did Nathan tell? 12:1*

The story that Nathan told David was a parable. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. It is a story of what actually did happen or could have happened. It is different from a fable, inasmuch as a fable

is generally some kind of story that is quite definitely fictitious. Whether or not there were two men in a city of Nathan's acquaintance should not alter the meaning of the story. The setting is typical of life. One man was rich, the other was poor. This parable was the setting for a message that God had given Nathan to deliver to David.

2. *Who was the rich man?* 12:2

The rich man in the parable must have been David. Although we must be careful lest we err in forcing all the points of a parable to have some significance, this central truth is clear. The parable was directed against David. Later, Nathan said, "Thou art the man" (verse seven). David certainly fit the picture; he had exceeding many flocks and herds. God had given him prosperity above anything he could have hoped for or imagined in his fondest dreams.

3. *Who was the poor man?* 12:3

The poor man who had nothing save the one little ewe lamb must have been Uriah. Uriah was a Hittite. He was a foreigner to the commonwealth of Israel and was a soldier in David's army. Naturally, the rest of the picture does not fit exactly. Uriah had not raised Bathsheba in his own home, and it does not seem appropriate to view her being with his children as one of his own family. Neither is it appropriate to liken Bathsheba to a poor man's daughter.

4. *Who was the poor man's lamb?* 12:4

Even though we cannot make all points of the parable fit the true life situation, the poor man's lamb must have been a reference to Bathsheba. David had taken Bathsheba away from Uriah just as the rich man had stolen the poor man's lamb. Of course David did not "dress" the "lamb" and serve it to his guests, as did the rich man in the parable when the traveler came to him. Pressing the points of the parable too far would make Bathsheba absolutely innocent and of the same nature as a lamb.

Although Bathsheba did not lure David into the sinful situation that was theirs, we cannot absolve her of all blame completely. She apparently made no resistance, and entered into the adulterous union without revealing the heinous nature of the crimes that had been committed.

5. *What was David's reaction? 12:5*

David's anger was greatly kindled. He thought Nathan was telling him a true story of the events transpiring in his kingdom. As ruler of the land, he judged that the man who had done this terrible thing was worthy of death. He pronounced the sentence of death upon him. He also ordered that the lamb be restored fourfold. This was the statute laid down in Exodus 22:1. If an ox had been involved, then five oxen were to be used to make restitution. In the case of sheep, only four sheep were to be repaid. This quick action on David's part is typical of him when he was at his best. He was a man of action and took immediate steps to rectify wrongs which were done in his kingdom.

*God's Judgment. 12:7-23*

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

11 Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

12 For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die.

15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

17 And the elders of his house arose, *and went* to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshiped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, *while it was alive*; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

22 And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

6. *What was Nathan's announcement? 12:7*

Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man." The Septuagint in one of its texts adds, "Who has done this!" Nathan would hardly have needed to add this latter clause, when he said that David was the man that he was talking about. David caught the point. The robbery of the darling is the real point of the parable, but the guilt of the man was the thing that Nathan brought to David's attention. David had judged the man worthy of death, and then Nathan told him that he was the man he was talking about.

7. *Why did Nathan recall God's blessing on David? 12:8*

God had made David like the rich man of the parable who had herds and flocks. Nathan reminded David that God had given him his master's house. He had inherited everything that had been Saul's except for the bit of land that was his family's heritage. Nathan even said that David had been given Saul's wives. We have no other indication of David's possessing the concubines of Saul. Rizpah, one of Saul's concubines, had been in the care of Ish-bosheth, and Abner was charged with having tried to take her for his wife (II Samuel 3:7). More than likely, this is a reference to the fact that David had received Michal, Saul's daughter, as his wife, since there is no specific mention of David having any of Saul's wives or concubines.

8. *How had David despised the command of the Lord?*  
12:9

One of the Ten Commandments was "thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). David had broken this commandment. He had lain with another man's wife. Another commandment was "thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). David had brought about the death of Uriah. It was specifically stipulated in the law that a man should not covet his neighbor's house, his neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his ass, or anything that was his neighbor's (Exodus 20:17). David had broken all these commandments and conducted himself in a very sinful way.

9. *What penalties were pronounced? 12:10, 11, 14*

The penalties pronounced on David were manifold. Some were personal and immediate; some general and to be fulfilled in the future. All brought grief to David. This is a list of them:

- a. The sword should never depart from David's house.
- b. God would raise up evil against David in his own house.
- c. David's own wives were to be taken from him by a neighbor.
- d. The child which was to be born was doomed to die.
- e. The penalty of death was put away for the time, yet David suffered the indirect consequences of it.

10. *How did David receive these penalties? 12:13*

David cried out, "I have sinned against the Lord." Echoes of this cry are found in Psalm 32:5, where David said, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin," and in Psalm 51:4 where David said, "Against Thee and Thee

only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest." One can only wonder if this were also in the mind of Solomon as he wrote, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

*11. How would the enemies of the Lord blaspheme? 12:14*

David was a "man of God." He was a man chosen by God to lead the people of Israel. Men round about would come to hold God Himself in disrepute because of His selection of such a man as David. It is the old story of people blaspheming the name of God as they say, "Look at the preacher. See how sinful he is. Surely the God he talks about is not righteous or just." A Christian is often the only "Bible" a careless world will read. What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?

*12. Why did David pray against God's decree? 12:16*

God's promises are sometimes conditional. When man changes, God's purposes are seen in a different light. Jonah went into Nineveh preaching that in forty days the great city would be destroyed. The king and all his subjects repented of their wickedness and clothed themselves in sackcloth putting ashes upon their bodies, and fasting before the Lord. They prayed mightily unto God and repented of their evil. They stopped the wicked things which they were doing, saying, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?" (Jonah 3:9). God saw their works and Nineveh was spared. The tense of the verb used in describing David's beseeching God on behalf of the child, his fasting, his going in and lying all night upon the earth, points to the fact that he made a habit of doing these things. It became his daily routine.

*13. Why did the elders interfere? 12:17*

The leaders of the kingdom had great influence on David and they were concerned for his physical and mental

well-being. Their concern was on his behalf, but they were not trying to interfere with his spiritual life. It was the same kind of concern that Saul's servants had for him when he had eaten nothing as he made his ill-fated trip to see the witch of Endor (I Samuel 28:23).

14. *Why did the servants think David's actions were strange? 12:18-21*

The crisis came on the seventh day, and the child died. The servants were afraid to tell David that the child was dead. They had seen his extreme grief and agony while the child was ill, and they were afraid that he would not be able to stand the shock of the news that the child had died. David heard the servants whispering, and reached the conclusion that the child had died. He asked them directly if this were so, and they affirmed that it was. At that point, David arose from the earth where he had been lying, bathed himself, anointed himself, changed his clothing, and went to the house of God to worship. After that he came back to the palace and ordered that they should give him something to eat. David's journey to the house of the Lord must have been to the temporary tabernacle which David had made to house the Ark of the Covenant. All of this was contrary to what the servants had expected. They had expected that after the child had died he would be even more vexed and grieved.

15. *Did David believe in a future state? 12:23*

None will doubt that David had faith in prayer. None will doubt that David believed that God could be prevailed upon to answer a fervent, earnest prayer. None can doubt that David believed in a peaceful, complete home in heaven. Did David not say, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me"? (II Samuel 12:23). His conduct after the death of the child was therefore only what might be expected. While the child lived, he was in deep anguish of soul, hoping that God would spare him. When the child

died, David knew that he could not bring him back to life. His hope was thereafter fixed on a reunion in Heaven.

*The Birth of Solomon. 12:24, 25*

24 And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him.

25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord.

*16. Why call Solomon Jedidiah? 12:24, 25*

In some way God must have shown that He loved the second child born to David of her who had been the wife of Uriah. The name Jedidiah means "beloved of Jehovah." Perhaps God had again spoken to Nathan, who in turn spoke to David, telling him of God's good intentions for Solomon. Solomon's birth was the fulfillment of a promise (see I Chronicles 28:8-10). Solomon was to be a man of rest. It was he who was to build the temple.

*17. What is the purpose in giving this narrative? 12:1-31*

The Old Testament is a "tutor" to lead us to a better understanding of Christ and His mission and message. Christ died for our sins. A black narrative like this should teach all men everywhere that if men like David were not spared the consequences of sin, no man can expect more. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse man from his sin. Furthermore, as men of good will read the account, they are assured of its trustworthiness. No fabricated account of the lives of Israel's heroes would contain a notice of sin like this.

*The Final Siege of Rabbah. 12:26-31*

26 And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.

29 And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.

30 And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was *set* on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.

31 And he brought forth the people that *were* therein, and put *them* under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

18. *Explain Rabbah's being called "the city of waters."*

12:26

The river Jabbok flows near the city of Rabbah. This river would supply water to sustain many people. There was, as a matter of fact, a higher as well as a lower city. The city nearer the river was of lesser importance. The city sitting back some 300 feet higher in elevation was the principal city. The city was probably built to protect the formation. The unusual site of the city prompted the name. It was a royal city since it was the residence of the king. Once it was taken, the Ammonites were beaten.

19. *Why was Joab so considerate?* 12:28

Joab preferred that David have the glory which would come from capturing the city. He said that if he were to take it the city might later be called after his name. Conquerors quite often named cities after themselves. In other cases of historical note, the people have acclaimed

the liberator by naming their city after the man who drove out their enemies. Such names as Caesarea, Tiberias, and Philippi bear testimony of the fact that the Romans captured and ruled over these places. Joab may have thought the king's fortunes were ebbing and he needed this additional boost to his popularity.

20. *Why did the king have such a great crown? 12:30*

After the Israelites conquered the Ammonites, they took the king's crown from off his head, so that he had either been taken a prisoner or slain at the time of the capture of the city. The weight is mentioned specifically, and it has been calculated to be something like eighty-three pounds. The strongest man could hardly have worn a crown of this weight on his head, even for a short time; and David would scarcely place it upon his own head. The crown must have been more for ornamental purposes than for actual use, but it would have symbolized the king's greatness and was very befitting to David's exalted position. It may have been placed on his head in ceremonial fashion as men stood around to hold it, and this would signify that David was the ruler over this vassal state in the land east of the Jordan.

21. *How did David treat the captives? 12:31*

David treated the people very harshly, but he did not torture them. Some commentators view this as David's actually sawing the people into pieces, and dragging harrows of iron over their bodies, or chopping them with axes. They even view this punishment as one of severe torture whereby they were caused to walk through heated brick kilns. David only made these people to do all kinds of servile work. He made them to serve as woodsmen. They dragged harrows through the field, and labored at the debilitating work at the brick kilns. They literally performed slave labor and thus, augmented the services available to the kingdom of Israel.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 12 IN REVIEW

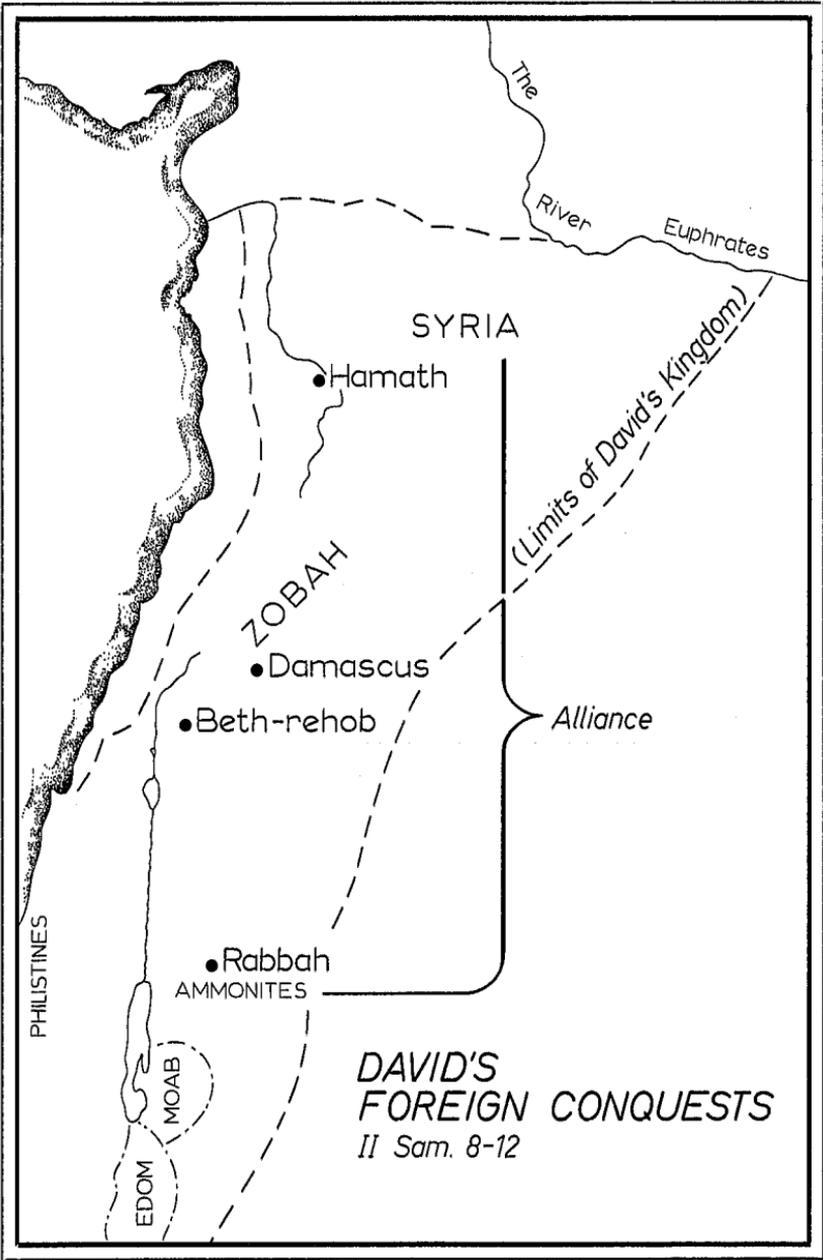
1. What kind of story did Nathan tell David? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Whom did the poor man represent? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Whom did the rich man represent? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Whom did the lamb represent? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What did Nathan say David had caused God's enemies to do? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What did Nathan say would happen to David's son by Bathsheba? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Did David admit he had sinned? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many days did the child live? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What was the name of the second child of David and Bathsheba? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What name did Nathan give to the child? \_\_\_\_\_

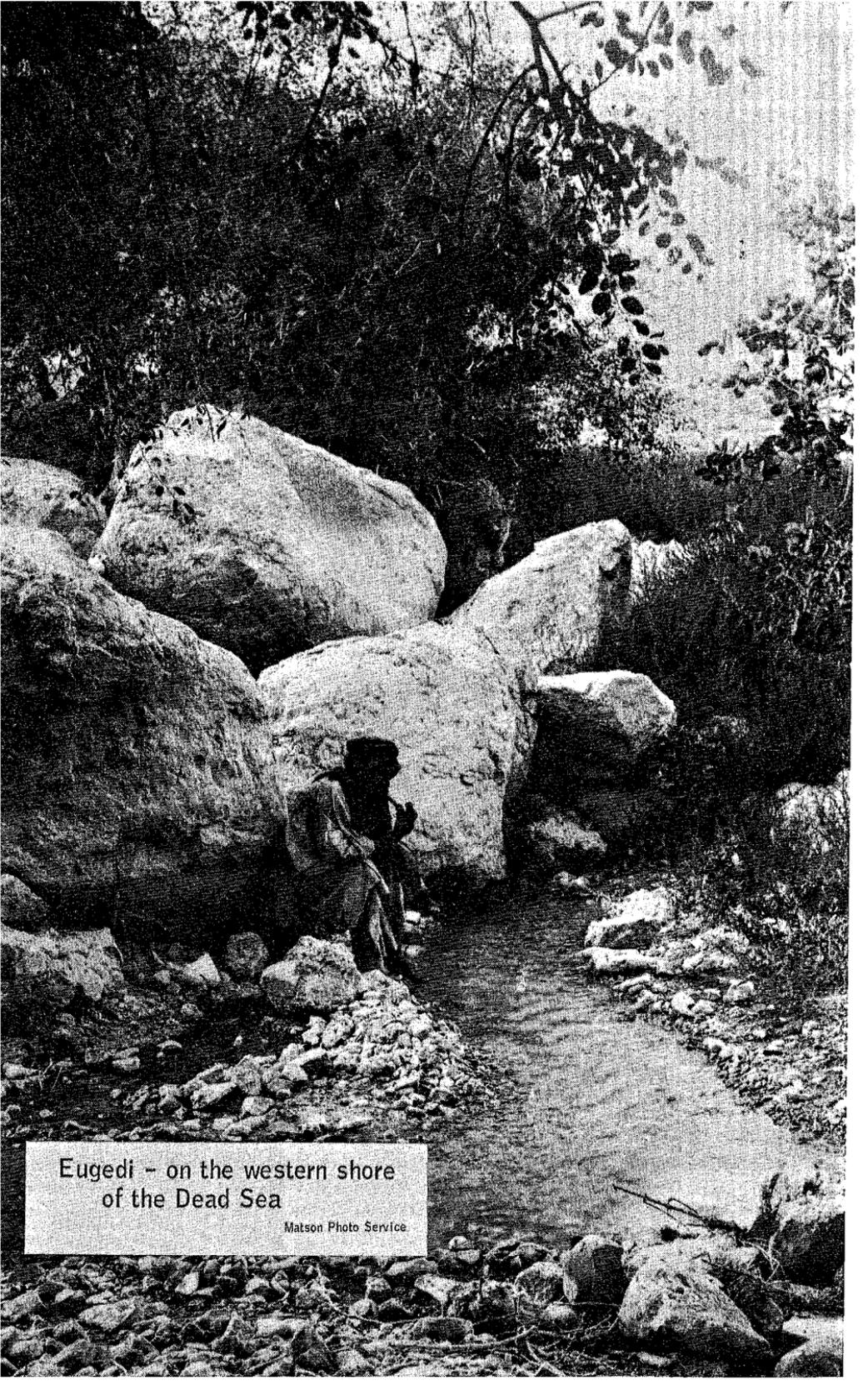
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 13

- Vv. 1-14 *Amnon's sin with Tamar.* Amnon was David's oldest son by Ahinoam, his Jezreelite wife. Tamar was the daughter of David and his wife Maacah. Tamar was the sister of Absalom. Amnon was a vicious young man and forced Tamar and lay with her.
- Vv. 15-29 *Absalom kills Amnon.* Absalom took judgment into his own hands. He waited for an opportune time and then killed his half-brother, Amnon.
- Vv. 30-39 *Absalom flees to Talmai.* Realizing that his own life was in danger because he had killed Amnon, he fled to his grandfather, Talmai, the king of Geshur. Here he found refuge.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Forbidden fruit is bitter.* Immediately after Amnon had committed his heinous crime against Tamar, we





Eugedi - on the western shore  
of the Dead Sea

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read that "he hated her exceedingly so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her" (v. 15). This is often true in life today. Temptation is very alluring, but the fruit of sin is dust, ashes, and death.

2. *Like father, like son.* David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Amnon committed fornication with his half-sister. Absalom killed Amnon. We are left to wonder if Amnon would have been bold enough to commit his crime if David had lived a holier life. We also doubt that Absalom would have taken judgment into his own hands if his father had acted to punish Amnon. Too often the sins of the children are but reflections of the sins of the parents.

### 4. Amnon's Death, 13:1-39.

#### *Amnon's Sin With Tamar.* 13:1-14

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.

2 And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she *was* a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.

3 But Amnon had a friend, whose name *was* Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother; and Jonadab *was* a very subtle man.

4 And he said unto him, Why *art* thou, *being* the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

5 And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar

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come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*, and eat *it* at her hand.

6 So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand.

7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat.

8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes.

9 And she took a pan, and poured *them* out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him.

10 And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* into the chamber of Amnon her brother.

11 And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister.

12 And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly.

13 And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.

14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.

### 1. *Who was Tamar?* 13:1

Tamar was the full sister of Absalom, both being the children of David by Maacah (II Samuel 3:3). Amnon was the son of David and Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, and David's first-born, thereby the heir apparent to the throne,

and Israel's crown-prince. Tamar was therefore the half-sister of Amnon. A significant notice of Tamar's beauty was made; for the handsome features of Absalom, her brother, were also outstanding.

2. *Why was Amnon vexed?* 13:2

Amnon's lust for Tamar was so intense that he literally became ill as he harbored these wicked thoughts. Later on, he added a sickness that was feigned to his natural sickness (verses 5, 6). Klostermann, a commentator of some years back, suggested that the root word was very close to another word which means "to become insane." It is doubtful that Amnon became an idiot, but his illness was brought on by his state of mind. His vexation was caused by the fact that Tamar was a virgin, and he thought it would be impossible for him to seduce her and lay with her, since being a virgin Tamar had less public freedom. She was kept closer to home, as a matter of custom, and for her own protection. Amnon seems to have no personal inhibitions about forcing her and lying with her, and it probably did not seem hard to him to do anything to her because of his own conscience. Rather, he was stymied by the circumstances of the situation.

3. *Who was Jonadab?* 13:3

Jonadab was another of David's nephews. He makes the fourth nephew to be connected with David's rule—Joab, Abishai, and Asahel all being in David's army. Shimeah, Jonadab's father, was the third of Jesse's sons to pass by Samuel when Samuel was seeking the Lord's anointed to be king over Israel (I Samuel 16:9). Such a circumstance would point to his being the third-born of Jesse's sons and David's older brother. Jonadab is described as being a subtle man, and it is better to consider him full of subtlety and guile, than to think of him as being the possessor of actual wisdom.

*4. What did Jonadab ask Amnon? 13:4*

Jonadab asked Amnon why he was thin and haggard from morning to morning. Jonadab had noticed the way in which Amnon was becoming lean and haggard but did not know the cause of it. Amnon told him that it was because of his misplaced affection for Tamar, his half-sister, and Absalom's full sister. Jonadab thought that such a condition was not becoming to a king's son. The royal family should have the appearance of being well-fed and properly nourished. Amnon's vexed condition led Jonadab to make his inquiry.

*5. What was Jonadab's scheme? 13:5*

Jonadab advised Amnon to go to bed and pretend that he was ill. David's concern over his condition would bring the king to visit him, and this would afford Amnon an opportunity to make his request. Amnon followed Jonadab's instructions and laid the trap for Tamar. His request for his sister's coming to him to prepare his food might have seemed quite unusual, but David would think it only the whim of a sick man.

*6. How could Amnon carry out such a dastardly plot?  
13:6*

There was a bit of plausibility in his request. First, he was sick. Second, anyone would know that a sick man often has peculiar whims especially with regard to food. He simply decided that it was right to grant the sick man's request. The actual preparation of the meat in the house would fill the dwelling with the appetizing aromas and add to the appeal of the food. One of the king's own household might well be more careful in the preparation of the food. The plot seemed logical, and the arrangements were made.

*7. What kind of cakes did Tamar make? 13:7*

Some evidence is gathered from the text to support the belief that the cakes were heart-shaped. The Greek trans-

lation indicates that they were cylindrical-shaped cakes. The original text described the cakes with a word which was at the root of our English word for the heart. Too much cannot be made of this, and it would be a stretching of the actual indication of the text to make them any kind of love-cakes. They were, no doubt, appropriate. The verb used to describe the preparation of the cakes generally means "to boil." The Greek translation has a word which often means to "set fire to," but the translation in the King James is accurate. They were baked, or boiled, and prepared in such a way as to make them tasty and appetizing.

8. *Why did Amnon refuse to eat? 13:9*

Amnon acted very strangely. He must have taken steps to insure that all his servants were gone from the house. If Tamar sent the food to him by the servants, he may have sent it back to her with instructions that these men were to leave, and she was to bring the food into his bedchamber. The fact that she baked the cakes "in his sight" (verse eight) would not mean that he had only one room in his dwelling and that she baked the cakes where he was lying in his bed or that he was in the room where food was prepared. Her being in his house would suffice for the meaning of the phrase. Her pouring them out "before him" might have been done in the room where food was prepared and not necessarily where he was lying.

9. *Why did Tamar yield to Amnon's request? 13:10*

Amnon's refusal to eat the food which was set before him was not an unusual action for a sick man. Once again, he was acting whimsical; she could hardly suspect anything when he asked that she personally feed him his meal. This is in keeping with the way sick people act, often refusing to eat their meals unless it is fed to them by a certain person or in a certain way. By this fiendish scheme, Amnon was able to entice Tamar into his bed-

chamber, and at the same time, be sure that all others were out of the room. When she brought his food to him, he grabbed her, and forced her to lie with him.

10. *Why did Tamar suggest speaking to David? 13:13*

There was nothing particularly effective in Tamar's suggestion that Amnon ask for her hand in marriage from her father, the king. She was probably devising some way to escape for the time. She had remonstrated with Amnon saying that such a crime ought not to be committed in Israel, thereby implying such may have been customary among the Canaanites. She looked upon his actions as folly, but all of this was to no avail. She appealed to Amnon on her own behalf, saying that she would be ashamed if he carried out his intentions. She even told him that he would be as one of the fools in Israel. Amnon refused to listen to her. Since he was a man and stronger than she was, he forced her and lay with her. The description of his crime is similar to that committed by Shechem with Dinah the daughter of Jacob (Genesis 34:2).

*Absalom Kills Amnon. 13:15-29*

15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.

16 And she said unto him, *There is* no cause: this evil in sending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her.

17 Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her.

18 And *she had* a garment of divers colors upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins appareled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.

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19 And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.

20 And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he *is* thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

21 But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.

22 And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

23 And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which *is* beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

24 And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant.

25 And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.

26 Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?

27 But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

29 And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.

11. *What were the effects of this sin on the parties affected? 13:15*

The following after-effects of Amnon's sins are typical of those seen in the lives of those who commit similar crimes today:

1. Amnon despised Tamar. With the intensity that he had before seemed to love her, he now hated her. It is usually true that men hate those whom they have injured. Here is proof that lust is not love.
2. Absalom spoke kindly to his sister to comfort her. There was nothing he could do immediately, but he was very angry.
3. David was angry. His hands were tied. He could not punish his son for this crime, when he himself had only recently committed a similar, but worse, one.
4. Tamar was utterly humiliated. She put ashes on her head, tore her beautiful robe, laid her hand on her head, and went away crying. Her sorrow and shame were overwhelming.

Such scenes are often repeated—the criminal hates his victim, the brothers of the wronged sister seek revenge, the parents are angry but helpless, and the victim is shamed.

12. *Why was Amnon's sending Tamar away a greater evil? 13:16*

When Amnon tried to get rid of Tamar, she rebuked him saying that it was worse for him to send her away than to force her and lie with her in the first place. If Amnon's love had been sincere, he would not have treated her this way under any circumstance. Tamar was a very clear-minded girl; and although she knew that it was not customary for a half-brother to marry his half-sister, she would certainly have considered this less of a folly than what Amnon was doing. His abrupt command, "Arise,

be gone," indicates that he was contemptuous of her and that her presence was burdensome to him. He could hardly wait to get rid of her after he had humbled her. His twisted state of mind is further brought out in the fact that he finally called his household servant and commanded him to put Tamar out and to bolt the door so that she could not return. He was thus left alone in the cesspool of sin that he had made for himself.

13. *What was her garment of many colors? 13:18*

Tamar's coat of many colors reminds the Bible reader of the coat which Jacob made for Joseph (Genesis 37:3). Bible translators have understood this description in various ways. Aquila, in his Greek translation, rendered the phrase as describing a long coat with sleeves. It was also viewed this way by Jerome in the Vulgate. Tamar's garment was probably an upper coat reaching to the wrists and ankles and was a distinctive garment of the noblemen and king's daughters. Tamar rent this coat as a sign of her deep grief.

14. *What action did Tamar take? 13:19*

Tamar did not know what to do. In her bewildered state, she left Amnon's house in tears. Like the captives described in Babylon (Ezekiel 27:30), "she cast up dust upon her head." Her beautiful princess' robe was ripped in the customary way of showing deep grief. She held her head as if it were to burst and went through the streets weeping.

15. *Why did Absalom suspect Amnon? 13:20*

Jonadab had been observant of Amnon's strange actions, and it would not be unlikely that Absalom was also aware of something unusual in his conduct. He calls him Amnon, a diminutive of contempt. Absalom asked Tamar if "little Amnon" had forced her. He asked her not to do anything about it, but let him take vengeance.

His motive for asking Tamar to hold her peace, grew out of his desire to prevent Tamar from interfering with his designs. He tried to comfort her by asking her not to regard the thing or to make any plans on her own. Tamar was therefore kept in seclusion in Absalom's house while he sought an opportunity to avenge the crime.

16. *What did David do about the situation? 13:21*

David's conduct reminds one of the conduct of Jacob when Dinah was defiled at Shechem. Jacob held his peace when he heard about the sin and waited until his sons had come in from the field (Genesis 34:5). Jacob seemed more concerned for his reputation and physical safety among the Canaanites and Perizzites than he was for the punishment of the sinners. David was very angry when he heard what had happened to Tamar, but he did nothing about it. Perhaps he felt that he was helpless, since he had committed a similar sin himself. On this account his rebuke of Amnon would be ineffective. The Septuagint has an additional statement indicating that David did not rebuke Amnon because he was his first-born son and he loved him. As a matter of fact, if David had really loved the boy, he would have rebuked him. The father chastens the son whom he loves (Hebrews 12:6, 7). David was probably overindulgent towards his son, especially the one he thought would succeed him to the throne.

17. *Why did Absalom refuse to say anything to Amnon? 13:22*

Absalom was so angry about the crime which was committed and hated Amnon so much that he was afraid to say anything to him either good or bad for fear that he would reveal his intentions to him. His motive for silence would seem to be a desire that his designs would not be suspected, and he kept this silent attitude as he laid plans to kill Amnon.

18. *In what way did Absalom take revenge? 13:23*

Absalom slew Amnon. He did not take revenge personally. He commanded his servants to slay Amnon when his heart was merry with wine and he was not cautious. Amnon was slain at the time of sheep-shearing. Sheep-shearing time was a time of feasting (I Samuel 25:36). Absalom showed himself to be a crafty, cunning, hypocritical sort of fellow. For a long time he hid his anger of heart and spoke softly to Amnon and Tamar. He deceived David.

Absalom was just as guilty of the murder of his brother as if he had taken the life himself. What a man does through his agents may be charged to him.

19. *Why did Absalom invite the king and all his sons? 13:24, 25*

The king's sons were the chief rulers of the land (II Samuel 8:18). The Greek translation again has an additional statement that Absalom asked the king and his sons as well as his servants to go to the sheep-shearing feast. David refused saying that if all went there would be great inconvenience to Absalom. Even though Absalom insisted, David refused to go. He did send him away with his blessing suspecting nothing of Absalom's real motive for holding the feast.

20. *Why should Amnon especially be invited? 13:26, 27*

The request for Amnon's presence seems to have aroused David's suspicion, because he asked why he should go. Absalom did not give a direct reason, according to the record, but he continued to urge that he be allowed to go. It may have been that he asked for him and the other sons to be present since David himself had refused to go. Amnon was the heir-apparent to the throne, and Absalom could ask for his presence especially without arousing too much suspicion. David was satisfied by Absalom's explanation and finally gave his consent. Once again, the Greek translation has a phrase which has not come down

to us in our English translations. This phrase states that Absalom made a feast that was fit for a king.

21. *Why did the king's sons ride on mules? 13:29*

Baal-hazor (verse 23) was in Ephraim, some twenty miles north of Jerusalem. Such a long distance to travel would necessitate the king's sons having some means of transportation. The employment of these animals not only for war (II Samuel 18:9), but also in times of peace was an indication of growing luxury in David's kingdom. Previously the ass had been the customary mount for persons of dignity (Judges 5:19; 10:4; 12:14). The horse was used largely for military purposes. The rearing of hybrid animals was prohibited (Leviticus 19:19). Absalom was especially fond of the mule as a means of transportation and employed it when he made his effort to steal the hearts of the men of Israel. He was riding on a mule when his head was caught in the branches of a tree and he was left suspended (II Samuel 18:9). When Absalom gave the order to kill Amnon and his servants actually killed the crown prince, the other princes might have thought that all were destined to be slain; and for that reason, they all fled immediately.

*Absalom Flees to Talmi. 13:30-39*

30 And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.

31 Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.

32 And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose *that* they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.

33 Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

34 But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hillside behind him.

35 And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is.

36 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.

37 But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day.

38 So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

39 And *the soul* of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

22. *Why did anyone think that all had been killed? 13:30*

Rumor exaggerated the calamity. Confusion reigned at the feast; and by the time word got to David, twenty miles away, the report was made that Absalom had killed all the king's sons. Such catastrophic news left the king in deep mourning. Like Tamar, David tore his garments and lay on the earth. He was brought low, as he was when his son died. The servants stood by helplessly in a similarly bereaved condition.

23. *How did Jonadab know the truth? 13:32, 33*

Jonadab was deeply involved since he had helped Amnon in the original plot. He may have heard expressions from Absalom's lips which made him certain of how the matter stood. He knew that murder was committed according to

the orders given by Absalom. He did not imply by his report that Absalom had, from the first, avowed his purpose of killing Amnon. As matters had developed, the conclusion was reached by an observant man like Jonadab, and he was correct in what he had surmised.

24. *Why would David "take the thing to his heart"?*

13:33

David might well be expected to blame himself for what had happened. Jonadab was anxious, however, that David know the truth. Only Amnon was dead. It is easy to see that David's punishment for his own sin in slaying Uriah is increasing. David was not able to punish Amnon; therefore a double punishment comes on him for his own sin. His son born to Bathsheba died in infancy, and his heir to the throne was killed by another of David's sons.

25. *Why did Absalom flee to Talmai? 13:37*

In II Samuel 3:3 is the note: (speaking of David's sons) ". . . and the third, Absalom, the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur." Absalom fled to the home of his mother's father, his maternal grandfather. Here he hoped to find protection against any punishment David might seek to mete out to him.

26. *What did David do after Absalom fled? 13:39*

David did not send messengers to bring Absalom back; he did not take any overt action. He longed to go forth himself to Absalom. The verb is in a feminine form, to indicate that David's spirit, or his soul, longed to go forth; and the King James translators rightfully show the insertion of the phrase, "the soul of," in italics, meaning that they supplied this subject of the verb. He wanted to do something. He pined away over it, but he did not do anything immediately.

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CHAPTER 13 IN REVIEW

1. What was the name of David's daughter? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was her full brother? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the name of David's son who forced her? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What was the name of David's nephew who encouraged his sinful son? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What kind of food did David's daughter prepare for his evil son? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What kind of distinctive garment did she wear? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How did the girl describe the man's sin? \_\_\_\_\_
8. At what kind of feast was the son killed? \_\_\_\_\_
9. By what corruption of the evil son's name did the daughter's brother describe him? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what city did Absalom flee? \_\_\_\_\_

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 14

- Vv. 1-20 *Joab and the woman of Tekoah.* Joab took steps to bring Absalom back from exile. He discerned that David was longing to see his son. He evidently believed that David needed an excuse for bringing the young man back from his grandfather's country. Joab therefore engaged the services of a woman who posed a case of blood revenge, which was quite similar to what prevailed in the house of David. When David gave judgment to the woman, she asked him to be of like mind in his own case.
- Vv. 21-33 *David recalls Absalom.* David understood that Joab had instituted proceedings to bring Absalom from Geshur and he had indicated that he would be willing to let the young man come back to Jerusalem. Joab then saw that Absalom came back and after two years Absalom was given an audience with the king.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*The voice is Jacob's voice*" (Genesis 27:22). When Jacob deceived his father Isaac by clothing his hands in kid skin, Isaac said that the voice was the voice of Jacob, but the hands were the hands of Esau. A woman from Tekoah came to David for a judgment in her case, but David saw through the incident and discerned that Joab must have been behind it all. Too often we find Christian people who are deceptive. They may have the hands of Esau, but the voice of Jacob. We need to be straightforward in all our dealings.
2. *Time heals all wounds.* It was two years after Absalom's return before David would consent to see him.

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Finally, the king called the young man to him. This delay indicates the grievous nature of the crimes involved. Sometimes a great deal of time is needed to alleviate a situation.

### 5. Absalom's Exile Ended, 14:1-33.

#### *Joab and the Woman of Tekoah.* 14:1-20

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* toward Absalom.

2 And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead:

3 And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

4 And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king.

5 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I *am* indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.

6 And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and *there was* none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him.

7 And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband *neither* name or remainder upon the earth.

8 And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house and I will give charge concerning thee.

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9 And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's house: and the king and his throne *be* guiltless.

10 And the king said, Whosoever said *ought* unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more.

11 Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.

12 Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak *one* word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on.

13 And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished.

14 For we must needs die, and *are* as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect *any* person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.

15 Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, *it is* because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid.

16 For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man *that would* destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.

17 Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so *is* my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the Lord thy God will be with thee.

18 Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask

thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.

19 And the king said, *Is not* the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid:

20 To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all *things* that *are* in the earth.

1. *What was David's attitude towards Absalom? 14:1*

The first verse of this chapter is understood by the majority of commentators as signifying that David was favorably disposed towards Absalom. The Syriac translation as well as the Vulgate translated the passage to show that David was inclined towards Absalom. Keil and Delitzsch take the position that David was against Absalom and therefore Joab took action to bring him back where his case could be presented to the king. Joab's part in this is hard to understand.

2. *What was Joab's motive in bringing Absalom back?*  
14:2

Joab could see that David was mourning for his son. This fact alone might have prompted Joab to effect Absalom's return. More than likely there was some hidden personal interest on Joab's part. David was able to see through the woman's story, for the whole thing sounded like something that Joab would plan. He did not believe the woman, and he asked whether or not Joab plotted it. Even though David did accede, a complete reconciliation was not effected at once. Absalom was not permitted to see the king.

*3. Where was Tekoah? 14:4*

Tekoah was a town in Judah some eight miles south of Bethlehem. This was the home of the prophet Amos (Amos 1:1), and has been identified as the modern Tekua. No significance was attached to the fact that the woman was a wise woman, so far as making her a prophetess, wizard, or necromancer is concerned. She was to pretend to be in mourning, wearing the proper clothing and giving every appearance of having been in grief for a long period of time.

*4. How could the woman have access to the king? 14:5*

Although a number of officers were appointed by David to take care of the affairs of state, many seemingly incidental matters were brought to his attention. His trying to care for all these judgments was a source of aggravation to some of the people, and Absalom capitalized on the king's inability to take care of some of their appeals (II Kings 15:2-6). Moses had tried to sit in judgment on all the affairs of the Israelites in his day, but the staggering load of responsibility was too much for him. He appointed rulers of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands, to hear the minor cases; only the most important cases were brought to him (Exodus 18:26). Joab may have been able to bypass all these subordinate officers and bring the woman's case directly to the king.

*5. Why would the family want to kill her son? 14:7*

The woman pretended to have two sons, one of whom had killed the other. There was nobody to part them, since the father was said to have been dead. The rest of the family were asking that God's immutable law be followed. God had said that He would require the life of man at the hand of every man's brother (Genesis 9:5). Manslaughter was recognized as the unpremeditated killing of a man, and provision was made for the manslayer to flee to the cities of refuge (Numbers 35:1-34). The

relatives had judged the surviving son to be worthy of death, and they were crying out for his execution. In the primitive society, the nearest relative of the slain man had the solemn responsibility of avenging the murder. Had the family carried out the law in this, they would have left this woman without any heirs. This is what she meant when she said that they would "quench my coal." The candle of life would flicker and go out as far as she and her husband were concerned. They would have neither name nor remainder on the earth.

6. *What was David's decision? 14:8*

The woman was sent away with David's promise that he would pass judgment in the matter. She understood that to mean that he would prevent the family from avenging her son's death. Although this was an unusual sentence, the woman was grateful for it; and she assumed full responsibility for it, leaving the king and his throne guiltless for suspending the normal processes of law in this case. David indicated to her that those who objected to his decision should be brought to him. Should the woman suffer any persecution on account of the decision, the culprit was to answer to David. The matter was fully discussed and brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

7. *What was the woman's final request? 14:13*

Having received her initial request from David the woman went on to show the inconsistency of David's conduct. David also had a son who was being sought by those who were the avengers of blood. Some of his subjects must have been calling for him to execute Absalom; and although he had not done this as yet, he had rendered no judgment in the case. The woman showed David that he was sparing her fictitious son; she could not see any reason why he should not spare Absalom.

8. *What was the woman's view of life? 14:14*

The woman was very philosophical about life and death. She knew that death was inevitable. She regarded man's

life as being very fragile, describing man as being "as water spilt on the ground." Once it has been spilled, of course, it cannot be gathered up again. She also believed that God was not any respecter of persons, and she did not understand why it would be legitimate for David to spare her son and not spare his son.

9. *Why did the woman call David an "angel of God?"*  
14:17

The Israelites had a very deep respect for their kings and all their national leaders. The fact that this woman and Mephibosheth (II Samuel 19:27) gave this title to David was not an indication of their having an unholy respect for David. Neither was it an indication of their considering him as being the angel of the covenant, the mediator of the blessings of Divine grace to the people of Israel. God had said that He would send His angel before Moses, and His angel did lead them through the wilderness (Exodus 14:19). This woman was not identifying David with that angel but looking to him as God's messenger and servant. She thought that he did have unnatural and unusual grace and ability.

10. *Why did David suspect Joab? 14:19*

In some way Joab had learned the king's mind in the matter of Absalom's exile. From day to day, he had the opportunity for conversations with him; and in some of these exchanges he could have expressed his view which would have been similar to that which he prompted the woman to express. The woman was honest and affirmed that Joab had instigated the entire affair. Once again, she was impressed with David's wisdom and said that it was as the wisdom of the "angel of God" (verse 20).

*David Recalls Absalom. 14:21-33*

21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.

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22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, Today thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.

23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

24 And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

25 But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

26 And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it*: because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

27 And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.

28 So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.

29 Therefore Absalom sent of Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.

30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?

32 And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? *it had been* good for me *to have been* there still: now therefore

let me see the king's face; and if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me.

33 So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

11. *What was David's final decision? 14:21*

Since David had already committed himself to the woman, he followed through by giving Joab the order to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem. Joab was grateful for this turn of events and expressed his thanks to the king. His profuse conversation about it revealed that he made this request to the king either before the coming of the woman or at least through her partitions.

12. *Why did David refuse to see Absalom? 14:24*

David was acting contrary to the letter of the Law. The Law stipulated that a man who had done what Absalom had done should be put to death. It was an overruling of the king which permitted him to live. David must have felt somewhat conscience-stricken about this and refused to see Absalom. He felt that it was enough that he was permitted to live without his being reinstated to his full rank in the king's house. Absalom was returned to his homeland; but he was not restored to the favor of the king, his father.

13. *What kind of man was Absalom? 14:25-27*

Absalom proved to be crafty, fearless, vengeful, murderous, strong-willed, and very vain. He had cunningly schemed to bring about Amnon's death and had fearlessly executed his plot. He harbored a hatred that cried out for revenge, until finally he achieved his ends, not even stopping at murder. He was a handsome man, there being none in all Israel so much to be praised as Absalom for

his beauty. No blemish was found in him; every feature was manly. An outstanding part of his person was his hair, which was exceedingly heavy; and he ceremoniously cut it every year. This shaving of his head at the year's end may have had some religious signification, as was true with the Nazarites (Numbers 6:5). The weight of his hair would be six pounds or three pounds according to whether the shekel was the sacred shekel or the royal shekel. He must have worn it as a sign of his manly power.

14. *When did Absalom finally come before the king?*  
14:28-33

Absalom was in exile for three years. He was in Jerusalem after his return for two years. In all, it had been five years since he last saw the king. Joab probably refused to come at Absalom's bidding, because he felt that he had done enough for him. Absalom forced Joab to come to him by burning Joab's barley field. His destructive action marked him as a man who would stop at nothing to gain his objective.

15. *Why did David finally agree to see Absalom?* 14:33

Only after Joab came to the king and told him of Absalom's actions and attitude did David agree to see the young man. Absalom had told Joab that he might as well have stayed with his grandfather in Geshur. He still did not know whether he was safe from the king's wrath, since the king had not agreed to see him. He wanted a final settlement in his case; and if there was iniquity in him, he was willing to go to the gallows to pay for his crime. When David learned of Absalom's extreme measures in setting Joab's field on fire and the gist of his conversation with him, he agreed to see him. David fully accepted Absalom and forgave him for killing Amnon. This was evident from his receiving him into his presence and kissing him when he saw him.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 14 IN REVIEW

1. Who instituted proceedings to bring Absalom home? \_\_\_\_\_
2. From what city did he fetch a woman to aid him? \_\_\_\_\_
3. By what adjective is the woman described? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What prophet later came from the same town? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many sons did the woman once have? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What happened to one? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did the family want to do with the remaining son? \_\_\_\_\_
8. By what figure did the woman refer to her posterity? \_\_\_\_\_
9. By what title did the woman refer to David? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many years did Absalom live in Jerusalem before he saw David again? \_\_\_\_\_

PART FOUR

ABSALOM'S  
REVOLT

15:1—19:43

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 15

- Vv. 1-13 *Absalom's conspiracy.* Absalom stole the hearts of the people by sitting in the gate in the capital city and indicating that he was sympathetic to their causes. When he had gained sufficient support, he went to Hebron, where his father had first ruled. His trip to Hebron was under the pretense of paying a vow, but in reality he went there to assemble his forces and begin his rebellion.
- Vv. 14-28 *David's flight.* David did not choose to stay in Jerusalem and defend the capital city. It is doubtful that he wanted to meet his son on the field of battle. He also would be reluctant to see street fighting in the city of the great king. His decision was to flee across the Jordan into Gilead.
- Vv. 29-37 *David's counterplot.* David sent some of his faithful friends back into Jerusalem to act as spies. He especially instructed Hushai to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The fickleness of multitudes.* Men and women who had been soundly in support of the government of David suddenly turned to support the cause of his rebellious son. Some of them went along with the revolt without really knowing what was happening. Absalom was a demagogue, and many of the people were deceived into following him. Those who want to please God must be careful lest they follow along with the crowd.
2. "*Let him do to me as seemeth good*" (v. 26). David was willing to let God discipline him as it seemed good

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to Him. He was resting his case in the hands of the righteous judge. He knew that he had sinned against God, and he was willing to pay whatever penalty should be exacted. This surrender of life is commendable.

### IV. ABSALOM'S REVOLT, 15:1—19:43.

#### 1. The Rebellion's Beginning, 15:1-37.

##### *Absalom's Conspiracy.* 15:1-13

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood by the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *art* thou? And he said, Thy servant *is* one of the tribes of Israel.

3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee.

4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh *to him* do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray the, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron.

8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.

9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

13 And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

1. *Why did Absalom have fifty men run before him? 15:1*

The Eastern way of calling attention to the position of a man included having men to run before him as he proceeded through the streets. Absalom was not nearly as democratic in spirit as David. There was more showmanship in his makeup. He was promoting his own personal ambitions. Absalom's personal appearance was very striking, his beautiful hair being explicitly mentioned in the Scripture.

There may have been something of personal satisfaction in his naming his daughter Tamar (14:27). It would be natural for her to be so named inasmuch as they were of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 38:6), but the name may have had a deeper significance to Absalom and those who knew the events causing Absalom's exile. Many of those things done by Absalom were to attract the attention and win the love of the people.

2. *What was Absalom's campaign plan? 15:2-6*

Absalom set out to steal the hearts of the men of Israel. His main effort was to win the confidence of those who had had cases to be brought to the attention of the king.

Absalom was very energetic and industrious in this as he arose early in the morning and stood by the gate so that he could meet any man who came up to Jerusalem to present a case. He made specific inquiry into each man's background finding out all he could about his home, city, and tribe. He made every effort to agree with each man and express his wish that he were made a judge in the land so that he could render decisions in the cases. He did not allow the man to do obeisance to him, but rather stretched forth his hand and drew the man to him and kissed him. This demeanor was very pleasing to the people, and he did win the favor of many of the men of Israel.

3. *How was the rebellion begun?* 15:7-12

The text reads that the rebellion began after a period of forty years, but it is hard to understand the point from which the time is counted. Absalom may have revolted when he was forty years old, but it could hardly be forty years after his return from Geshur.

Absalom was dishonest in asking to go to Hebron. He wanted to go for the purpose of instigating a rebellion, not to make a vow or pay a vow. Absalom knew that he had to get away from Jerusalem, and he knew that David would consent under such a pretext. A signal was given whereby the men of every tribe would know when the time to arise had come.

One wonders why Ahithophel would consent to such a plot. His son was Bathsheba's father, and he may have keenly felt the insult that David had put on his family (11:3; 23:34).

4. *Why did Absalom go to Hebron to begin his revolt?*  
15:9

David began his rule in Hebron; and it would be in the tribe of Judah, where David's family had its origins. The city would be filled with men who were loyal to any good son of a man of Judah. Furthermore, it was far enough away from Jerusalem to be out of immediate

danger of reprisal from David. Ahithophel's home was southwest of Hebron (Joshua 15:51). Ahithophel may have been able to arouse a great deal of sympathy for him and his cause as he opposed David on account of his taking Bathsheba as his wife.

5. *How did some of them go in their simplicity? 15:11*

They had gone along not knowing Absalom's full intentions, not knowing that he intended to make an armed rebellion against his father. They knew that he was rallying men to support him and his cause. They knew that the sound of the trumpet was a signal for his saying that he was the ruler of Judah and that he was establishing a kingdom in Hebron. With such a group assembled the conspiracy was described as being very strong, and the people increased continually with Absalom. He had made them very attractive promises, and this allured many to follow him.

6. *Why did David flee from Jerusalem? 15:13*

David was not prepared for a siege. His company included some of the former residents of Gath, who may not have been ready to fight. They had come to him soon after his capture of that city. Even with all the faithful followers he had, he was still not in a position to defend the city. The steadfastness of men like Ittai would be useless against the hordes with Absalom. The priests were with David, but he would not allow them to take the Ark from its resting place. Some of the Israelites may still have been holding the idea held by some of the older Israelites who believed that where the Ark was, there God was. David knew this was not true. David forced the priests themselves to turn back. They stayed in the city as spies. Beyond all these reasons was the fact that David would not want to subject his capital city to a siege. The shock to David must have been great, and he was willing at almost any price to avoid a direct confrontation in battle with Absalom.

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### *David's Flight.* 15:14-28

14 And David said unto all his servants that *were* with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

15 And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants *are ready to do* whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, *which were* concubines, to keep the house.

17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

18 And all his servants passed on beside him; all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

19 Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou *art* a stranger, and also an exile.

20 Whereas thou camest *but* yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth *be* with thee.

21 And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

22 And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him.

23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and the people passed over: the king also himself passed over

the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

24 And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites *were* with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

25 And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favor in the eyes of of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me *both* it, and his habitation:

26 But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, *here am* I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest, *Art not* thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

28 See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.

7. *Why did David leave ten women behind? 15:16*

David left ten women of the concubines to keep his house in Jerusalem. He could hardly have known that Absalom would misuse these women and take them as a part of his household. Absalom was advised to do this by Ahithophel, who knew this would show all Israel that Absalom had completely severed his relations with his father. Absalom spread a tent on the top of his house and went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel (II Samuel 16:22). David must have thought he would be able to return to the city, or else he would hardly have been willing to leave these women behind.

8. *Why did David stop Ittai? 15:19*

Ittai, the Gittite, was one of David's soldiers and a former resident of Gath, as the name indicates. Gath was a Philistine city, and such a civil war as the conflict between Absalom and David would have no real meaning

to a foreigner. David instructed him to go back and to serve with Absalom, since he was in the position of a mercenary anyway. The man was loyal to David, however; and David allowed him to go with him.

9. *Who were Ittai's brethren? 15:20*

Ittai's brethren were the Cherethites, Pelethites, and the other Gittites, six hundred men of which had come to David from Gath. They had passed in review before the king, and David was reluctant to subject them to the fortunes of a vagabond and fugitive. His action, at this point, was similar to the action of the Philistine lords who had stopped David and his men from going into the final battle with Saul (I Samuel 29:4). The Cherethites and Pelethites were hired soldiers from Philistia who had been serving as David's bodyguard. These men made excellent personal attendants for the king, since they had no political axes to grind and would hardly be a party to court intrigues and vendettas. Their situation would be different as they were fleeing in the midst of civil strife; but when David saw their determined purpose, he allowed them to go with him. Ittai assured David of his loyalty as well as the loyalty of his men, and David allowed them to go before him (verse 21).

10. *What was the attitude of the people? 15:23*

Israel was in deep distress; the people that were with David were weeping with a loud voice as they journeyed on towards the valley of the Jordan, and crossed the brook Kidron. They made their way towards the wilderness which lay around the Dead Sea. The affairs of the nation had turned from the prosperity and peace which they had known under David and were brought again to times similar to those in the early days of Saul when the people had to hide in caves, thickets, rocks, in high places, and in pits (I Samuel 13:6).

*11. Where was the brook Kidron? 15:23 b*

The brook Kidron runs along the eastern side of the ancient wall of the city of Jerusalem. The valley begins about a mile north of the city as a mere depression in the surface. It turns southward just northeast of the city and becomes a smooth, broad valley covered with green fields and olive orchards. As it reaches a point opposite the northeastern corner of the city, it becomes quite narrow. The sides are steep, and the depth beneath the wall is as great as attained at any point farther along. The bed continues to descend, but the surface along the edge of the city also descends equally rapidly. Walls have been built across it at intervals to check the rush of the water and to accumulate some soil. After the brook Kidron passes Ophel, it widens again and makes room for additional building sites and vegetable gardens. A company leaving Jerusalem would have to cross this brook some place in order to go to a point east of the city. David and his followers made their sad journey down into this brook and up over the mount of Olives which lies just east of Jerusalem.

*12. What plan did David formulate? 15:28*

David asked Zadok, the priest, to take the Ark back into the city. He believed that if God blessed him in his flight from Absalom, he would have the opportunity to return and worship Him in Jerusalem. If God were not favorable to him, then he was willing that God's will be done in his life. He asked Zadok to help him in his campaign by observing the movements of Absalom. Zadok, in turn was to report these to his son Ahimaaz and to Jonathan, the son of the other priest, Abiathar. These young men would serve as couriers to bring news to David. David planned to wait in the Jordan valley until he could find out what was happening in Jerusalem under Absalom.

*David's Counterplot. 15:29-37*

29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.

30 And David went up by the ascent of *mount Olivet*, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

31 And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

32 And it came to pass, that *when* David was come to the top of *the mount*, where he worshiped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

33 Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me:

34 But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; *as I have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

35 And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

36 Behold, *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's *son*, and Jonathan Abiathar's *son*; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.

37 So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

13. *Trace David's journey out of the city. 15:30*

David went with his head covered and his feet bare. Such actions were signs of sorrow. David knew of Ahithophel's going with Absalom. He feared his actions, for he

was a wise man and could foresee very well how the rebellion would turn out.

Hushai, the Archite, met the company. Gladly would he have gone with David. David constrained him to turn back and enter into the city of Jerusalem. He was of much more help to David as a spy in Jerusalem than he would have been as a member of David's company in flight.

The company went over the mount of Olives in the direction of Jericho. The road, after it passes Bethany, leads down the slope of a hill. A valley comes between it and the opposite hill. Both hills are very steep and difficult to climb.

This route of the journey made it possible for Shimei to be above the company and cast stones at David. At the same time, he was out of reach of the company.

David took this humiliation as a punishment from the Lord. At the same time, he expected a blessing.

14. *What instructions did David give to Hushai? 15:33*

Since Absalom had the services of Ahithophel, a trusted counselor, David suggested that Hushai, an Archite, go back to Jerusalem and pretend to be loyal to Absalom. No town of Arka is known in Palestine. One by this name is found north of Tripoli in Phoenicia. A mention of the borders of Archi, near Bethel and Luz, is made in Joshua 16:2. David recognized Hushai as a trusted counselor, and the fact that he would be a burden to him in his flight indicated that he was a man of some years, unable to undergo the rigors of the life of a fugitive. David trusted him to find a way to outwit Ahithophel and defeat his counsels. These three men—Zadok, Abiathar, and Hushai were to do their best to undermine Absalom's plans. Jonathan, Abiathar's son, and Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, were to carry messages back and forth. This was David's scheme for putting down Absalom's rebellion.

SECOND SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 15 IN REVIEW

1. How many men ran before Absalom? \_\_\_\_\_
2. To what city did Absalom go to start his revolt? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What instrument did Absalom use to signal the beginning of his revolt? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many men went with Absalom? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What councilor of David joined Absalom? \_\_\_\_\_
6. From what town was he? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many Philistine men went with David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What was the name of the man from Gath? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What two priests took care of the Ark? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What was the name of the councilor whom David left in Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 16

- Vv. 1-14 *The people divided.* David had many fast friends who supported his cause. He also found that division came into such houses as that of Mephibosheth. Ziba came to David saying that Mephibosheth had stayed behind hoping that the people would champion his claim for the throne. Ziba himself wanted to support David. On the road out of Jerusalem David was cursed by a man named Shimei who called David "a bloody man" (v. 8). This man was supporting the house of Saul as the regal family.
- Vv. 15-23 *Absalom ruling in Jerusalem.* Absalom took over all the reins of government. He claimed David's concubines as his own household and showed to all of Israel that the break between him and his father was complete and final. His faithful counselor in this conspiracy was Ahithophel.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*The Lord will look on mine affliction*" (v. 12). This was David's belief. He trusted that it would be so that the Lord would see what was happening to him and would requite him good for the cursing which he was receiving at the hands of some of his people. It is enough for the Christian to trust God to heal his hurts.
2. *There is a true oracle of God.* Absalom's people followed Ahithophel as if he were God's true spokesman. His counsel was good over all, but it was not the counsel of God. Hushai was thwarting a man who was usurping the throne.

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3. *False prophets arise in every age and multitudes follow them as if they were the oracle of God. Only one could say, "I am the way, the truth and the light" (John 14:6).*

### 2. The Role of Absalom in Jerusalem, 16:1-23.

#### *The People Divided. 16:1-14*

And when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred bunches of raisins, and a hundred summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

2 And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.

3 And the king said, And where is thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, Today shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.

4 Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came.

6 And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

7 And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

8 The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou *art taken* in thy mischief, because thou *art* a bloody man.

9 Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

10 And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it*? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.

12 It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.

13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

14 And the king, and all the people, that *were* with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

### 1. *Why did Ziba come to David?* 16:1

Ziba came to bring provisions for David and his men. He also gave a report on Mephibosheth. Ziba may have misrepresented Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth later came before David in the same submissive manner he manifested when David first befriended him (II Samuel 19:24). On the other hand, Mephibosheth may have felt that he could step into the breach between David and Absalom and usurp the throne in the name of his father Saul, Israel's first king. His tribe had been honored by having Israel's

first king selected from her ranks. Abner had championed their claim by putting Ishbosheth on the throne in Mahan-ain. Sheba led a revolt of Benjaminites against David later (II Samuel 20:1), indicating there was some opposition to David and Judah. If this feeling were strong enough, Mephibosheth may have had some hope of becoming a king.

2. *What reward did David give to Ziba? 16:4*

Since David was convinced that Mephibosheth was turning against him, he gave everything that belonged to Mephibosheth to Ziba. Ziba was grateful for this, and asked that he might find favor in David's sight. What Ziba brought was a substantial gift, inasmuch as there were 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 bunches of summer fruits, and wine for such as might become faint in the wilderness. He also provided a couple of asses on which David might ride. David rewarded Ziba at this time, but later he was not sure that he had told him the truth. He divided Mephibosheth's inheritance between him and Ziba at that time (II Samuel 19:29).

3. *Where was Bahurim? 16:5*

Bahurim was a spot near the road which ran from Jerusalem to Jericho. Ruins in the *Wady Ruwaby* have been identified as this spot. The name signifies "a young man's village." Shimei was a native of this town which indicated that it belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. His father was named Gera, a name that was quite common in Benjamin, and probably stemmed from the root "ger" which means, "a sojourner." Being of this background Shimei was a champion of the house of Saul and happy to see any kind of misfortune come to David, since he viewed him as one who had usurped Saul's throne.

4. *What epithet did he hurl at David? 16:7*

Shimei called David a bloody man and a man of Belial. The latter term was a common epithet used to describe a

shameful and worthless fellow. It was the equivalent of calling him a son of Satan. His hatred for David was deep.

5. *What caused Shimei's hatred for David? 16:8*

Shimei blamed David for the demise of the house of Saul. Such a misconstruing of the facts demonstrates why David was so careful to prevent his being linked directly in any way to the death of Saul. Even though David had slain the Amalekite who brought him word of Saul's death, and killed the two assassins of Ish-bosheth, some of the people still thought that David was responsible for the fall of the house of Saul. Shimei viewed David as reigning where a son of Saul ought to be reigning. Shimei believed that God had brought a just penalty on David, and delivered the kingdom into the hands of Absalom, his son, as a punishment for David's having taken over the throne from Saul. In other words, Shimei was saying that it was good enough for David that he was driven out from Jerusalem.

6. *What was Abishai's proposal? 16:9*

Abishai called Shimei a "dead dog." He thought it terrible that he was cursing his king. He proposed to go over and behead the man. Such a proposal was typical of Abishai's spirit. It was Abishai who had suggested killing Saul as he lay sleeping as he and David slipped into his camp (I Samuel 26:8). Abishai had also been involved in killing Abner at Hebron (II Samuel 3:30).

7. *Why did David stop Abishai? 16:10*

Once again, David said that the sons of Zeruah were too hard for him. This is the same thing he had said when Joab and Abishai had killed Abner (II Samuel 3:39). David felt that Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruah, David's sister, were too anxious to put people to death. He stopped them from killing Shimei because he felt that God had a hand in the situation. David said that Absalom his own son, had turned against him, and he was not surprised that a man from the tribe of Benjamin would

curse him. David believed that if injustices were being done to him in such matters as Shimei's cursing, then God would see that justice was done. He believed that God would repay him with good things for all the evil things which were befalling him.

8. *Why did Shimei throw dust on David? 16:13*

Shimei was in a position above David, as the trail wound along the descent down into the Jordan valley. He threw stones at David with some expectation of injuring him, but the main emphasis of his actions was not to inflict bodily injury, as much as to heap imprecations and shame on David. His dusting him with dust could hardly injure him, but it would be a nuisance and a sign of contempt on the part of Shimei. No mention is made of the place where they stopped, but it is conjectured by many that they stopped in the edge of the Jordan valley. One of the Greek manuscripts has the phrase, "along the Jordan."

*Absalom Ruling in Jerusalem. 16:15-23*

15 And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

16 And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.

17 And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?*

18 And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

19 And again, whom should I serve? *should I not serve in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.*

20 Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.

21 And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the

house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong.

22 So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

23 And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counseled in those days *was* as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so *was* all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

9. *How was Hushai able to dissuade Absalom? 16:15*

Hushai spoke in an ambiguous, flattering manner. He flattered Absalom even when he told the truth. It was a wise thing to do under the circumstances. Such counsel aimed at making an impossible breach between Ahithophel and Absalom and between Absalom and David. Hushai showed that he was in earnest. His speech indicates that he must have been very convincing.

10. *What was Ahithophel's advice? 16:20*

Ahithophel advised Absalom to make a complete break with his father. A sign of this was Absalom's spreading a tent on the roof of the palace, and going into his father's concubines in the open view of the men of Israel. Such action would signify Absalom was taking over everything that belonged to his father the king. His action would be abhorred by David, his father, and it would encourage those who were backing him, because they would believe that he would stop at nothing to make the rebellion complete.

11. *Why was Ahithophel's counsel like an oracle of God? 16:23*

As Absalom followed the advice of Ahithophel his cause prospered; Joshua had gone to the high priest, Eleazar, for advice. David had inquired concerning the will of God from Abiathar when he came to him in the wilder-

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ness (I Samuel 23:6). These men were God's appointed counselors for the kings, and leaders of Israel. Ahithophel stood in this position with Absalom. Since Ahithophel was very deeply involved in the rebellion, he did his best to give right advice and counsel.

### CHAPTER 16 IN REVIEW

1. Who brought asses to David? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Whose servant was he? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did he say his master stayed behind? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who cursed David as he left Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who proposed beheading the man? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did David accept the proposal? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who cried "God save the king" to Absalom? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who proposed that Absalom take David's concubines? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What kind of shelter was erected for the concubines? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where was the shelter erected? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 17

- Vv. 1-14 *Hushai's counsel.* Hushai had been left in Jerusalem by David to counteract the advice of Ahithophel. Although his advice was not sound, Absalom took it.
- Vv. 15-24 *David urged to cross over Jordan.* As soon as Absalom had determined not to pursue David immediately, Hushai sent word to David that he should hurry across the Jordan river into Gilead. The little bit of time which David had gained through Hushai's counseling Absalom to wait for awhile in Jerusalem gave David an opportunity to gather his forces and organize his strategy.
- Vv. 25-29 *David helped by the Gileadites.* The people on the east side of the Jordan rallied to David's support. They brought him supplies for his troops and gave him the necessary assistance.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The Lord appoints man's ways.* The writer of the scriptures says that "the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel" (v. 14). The ways of men are in the hand of God. He does not overrule their freedom of the will, but he does bring about his will and purpose. Consequently, man should entrust his affairs to the guidance of almighty God.
2. *"God will provide"* (Genesis 22:8; Matthew 6:33). Abraham trusted God to provide a sacrifice when he took Isaac into Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22:8). Jesus taught his disciples that they should seek first the kingdom of Heaven and that all the necessary things of life would be added to them (Matthew 6:33). David must have wondered how he would ever be able to gather

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enough material and supplies to wage a war. He had been driven out of his capital city and was again a fugitive. God raised up many friends for David in the land of Gilead, and he was able to supply and maintain his army. Help will come for faithful Christian workers from many unexpected sources, for God will provide.

### 3. The Rebellion Defeated, 17:1—18:33.

#### *Hushai's Counsel.* 17:1-14

Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night:

2 And I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weakhanded, and will make him afraid: and all the people that *are* with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only:

3 And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest *is* as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace.

4 And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

5 Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.

6 And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do *after* his saying? if not; speak thou.

7 And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given *is* not good at this time.

8 For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they *be* mighty men, and they *be* chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father *is* a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

9 Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some *other* place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will

say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.

10 And he also *that is* valiant, whose heart *is* as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father *is* a mighty man, and *they* which *be* with him *are* valiant men.

11 Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that *is* by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person.

12 So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that *are* with him there shall not be left so much as one.

13 Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be no one small stone found there.

14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.

1. *What actions did Ahithophel suggest? 17:1*

Ahithophel asked Absalom to allow him to choose 12,000 soldiers and go out to catch David that first night. He thought that the situation called for immediate action and that an immediate attack on David would frighten the people who were with him so badly that they would forsake him and flee for their lives. Had this happened David would have been open to attack personally, and Ahithophel believed that he could defeat David with one bold stroke. He knew that this would leave most of Israel without a leader, and they would naturally turn to Absalom, who had seized the throne.

2. *How did Absalom receive this advice? 17:4*

Absalom believed that Ahithophel's counsel was right. It was viewed the same way by the elders of Israel, and David was in immediate danger. Hushai had made such a good impression on Absalom, however, that he decided to call him and ask his advice before implementing Ahithophel's strategy.

3. *How was Ahithophel's second counsel defeated? 17:7*

Ahithophel's counsel was good, because David's men were worn out and frustrated. Moreover, David was joined by an innumerable company a few days after the beginning of his flight. Hushai's advice was plausible, because surely David would not be able to stand against all Israel; but no more strength would come to Absalom, and it would have been far better for Absalom to strike at once. Hushai's counsel appealed to Absalom's vanity. A campaign involving all Israel and administering an overwhelming defeat to David would be very impressive.

4. *What was the fallacy in Hushai's counsel? 17:8*

Hushai built up David's prowess too much, and made Absalom afraid to strike him immediately. Although David was a valiant man and was attended by some of his mighty men they were at a distinct disadvantage and distressed. Hushai may have been correct in pointing out how difficult it would be to catch David personally, but David would hardly hide alone as Hushai suggested. The major error in Hushai's counsel was in his suggestion that all Israel could be generally gathered together under Absalom's leadership. His scheme was very grandiose as he depicted Israel going to whatever city might be David's hideout and pulling down the stones one at a time. It was this exaggerated view of the outcome of the battle which appealed to Absalom's vanity and led to his accepting Hushai's counsel.

5. *In what way had the Lord appointed the defeat of Ahithophel? 17:14*

The unexpected turn of events brought on by Absalom's accepting the counsel of Hushai and rejecting the counsel of Ahithophel after he and the elders of Israel had formerly accepted it was providential. Such a turn of events could hardly be explained, except the hand of the Lord be seen. Therefore the defeat of the good counsel of Ahithophel was attributed to God. All of this ultimately led to the downfall of Absalom.

*David Urged to Cross Over Jordan. 17:15-24*

15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counseled.

16 Now therefore send quickly and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that *are* with him.

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went and told them; and they went and told king David.

18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down.

19 And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known.

20 And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where *is* Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find *them*, they returned to Jerusalem.

21 And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king

David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counseled against you.

22 Then David arose, and all the people that *were* with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulcher of his father.

24 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

6. *What action did Hushai take? 17:15*

Hushai had been sent back to Jerusalem in order that he might have access to the court of Absalom and observe his activity. As soon as he learned that his counsel had been accepted by Absalom, he counseled with Zadok and Abiathar, the priests who had also been sent back to aid David's cause. Since time had been gained by Hushai's counseling of Absalom to wait until he could gather a large army, David would have opportunity to prepare for a major campaign. Hushai thought that David dare not stay in the plains of the Jordan river but should cross over into Gilead.

7. *Where was En-rogel? 17:17*

J. W. McGarvey found En-rogel to be the only un-failing well around Jerusalem when he visited there a century ago. This ancient well had seen the coming and going of a number of civilizations and peoples. It was known in the Old Testament and in the days of earliest Christian travelers as En-rogel, but after the Mohammedan invasion it was called the Well of Job by the Arabs. The Greek and Latin priests in Jerusalem called it the "Well of Nehemiah" from a tradition mentioned in II Maccabees

1:19-22. Dr. Barclay measured the well and found it to be 125 feet deep. Though the mouth of it was narrow, it was a very large well and had large collecting chambers near the bottom. In the winter time it frequently overflowed and sent a lively stream down the valley. Since it stood at the junction of the valley of Jehoshaphat and the valley of Hinnom, it had a very strategic location and made a good place for Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the sons of the high priests, to hide themselves and wait for word which they could carry to David.

8. *How was the message almost intercepted? 17:18*

A young man saw the young woman who carried the message from Zadok and Abiathar to their sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz. The young maiden is called a *wench*, but there is no need to attach to her the disreputable character generally suggested by the word in our use today. The Septuagint translators used the same word to translate this word as they used to describe Ruth (Ruth 4:12). The young sons of the priests knew that they were observed; and they fled quickly to Bahurim, a little further away from the city and hid again in a well of a court in a man's house. The mouth of the well was covered with stalks of grain making it appear to be threshing floor, and the young men were not found.

9. *Was the woman justified in her lie? 17:20*

Absalom's servants came to the woman of the house where Jonathan and Ahimaaz were hiding and asked her where they were. She replied that they had gone over the brook of water. Her answer was not true for she was implying that they had gone over the little water brook which was nearby, but she was not making reference to the well where the men were hiding. Even though the standard of morality was not high in pre-Christian days, this woman should not be justified in her lie. She could have refused to answer and depended upon the hiding place to be secure.

10. *How did David escape? 17:22*

Jonathan and Ahimaaz were able to escape from the well where they were hiding, and they arrived safely at David's hideout. They informed him of the counsel of Ahithophel and the instructions given by Hushai. David arose and took the people with him, leading them across the Jordan river. By the next morning, every one of them had escaped into Gilead.

11. *Why did Ahithophel commit suicide? 17:23*

Ahithophel had shown himself to be a very wise counselor. He had directed David correctly and was attempting to do the same for Absalom. He knew that Absalom was taking the wrong step, and there was nothing but ruin ahead. Ahithophel probably foresaw that there was nothing but a traitor's end ahead for himself. When Hushai was taken completely into Absalom's confidence, he would be in a position to ask for Ahithophel's head. Suicide seemed the best escape for the discredited old counselor.

12. *Why did David go to Mahanaim? 17:24*

David's treatment of the men who had murdered Ish-bosheth would incline the people towards David in a favorable way. His friendship towards Mephibosheth would also strengthen his relationships with these people. More than this, David had shown himself a true friend of Abner. The people of the city were more than likely following Abner, not Ish-bosheth. All of this kindness toward them and their true leaders had completely won the hearts of the people of Mahanaim. Besides all this, Mahanaim was a well fortified city.

*David Helped by the Gileadites. 17:25-29*

25 And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa *was* a man's son, whose name *was* Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruah Joab's mother.

26 So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

27 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

28 Brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched *corn*, and beans, and lentils, and parched *pulse*,

29 And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that *were* with him, to eat: for they said, The people *is* hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

13. *What was the relationship between Absalom and Amasa? 17:25*

These two men were cousins. A question may be raised with regard to the mother of Joab and Abishai. Zeruah was David's sister. By taking into consideration I Chronicles 2:15, 16, some ask how her sister could be the daughter of Nahash. Genealogies of the period are difficult to trace for us today, and some commentators take Nahash to be Jesse's other name.

Another question is raised with regard to the two titles of Ithra. I Chronicles 2:14-18 must be compared with the passage in II Samuel. There is a confusion between Ithra the Israelite, and Jethro the Ishmaelite, but the reference is probably to an Israelite who dwelt with the Ishmaelites and was known among them by another form of his Israelite name.

14. *Why was Shobi friendly? 17:27*

When one country conquered another, the conqueror often left a native king on the throne. David had made Shobi friendly to him by putting him on the throne of the conquered kingdom (II Samuel 10:1-6). When David fled to his territory, Shobi was quite willing to aid him. He joined with others of his area to back David in his war against Absalom.

15. *Who were David's other helpers? 17:27 b*

Machir was the man who had befriended Mephibosheth and from whose home David had called the lame prince when he wanted to reinstate him in his family home. David's kind treatment of Mephibosheth would have inclined Machir to align himself with David (II Samuel 9:4). Barzillai was an octogenarian of apparent wealth who lived in a place that is otherwise unmentioned in the Scriptures and unknown to modern archaeologists. The town must have been a spot in Gilead, not too far from where the battle was pitched between Absalom and David. These men brought the necessary provisions for an army in the field—beds, cups, vessels of various kinds, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans, lentils, parched garden vegetables, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese. The long listing of the materials was impressive and indicated the abundant way in which the supplies were made available to the men in the field. Such assistance must have been invaluable to David and his weary men.

16. *How were the leading men of Israel divided?*

Although the conspiracy led by Absalom was described as being strong (II Samuel 15:12) and the people with him increased continually, most of the leading men stayed with David. Joab, his captain, remained faithful, as did his brother Abishai. Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, were with David. Ittai, the Gittite, a valiant soldier, remained faithful. Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the young sons of the priests were on David's side as were the leading men in Gilead—Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai. Ahithophel was the outstanding man who backed Absalom. With him was Amasa, a descendant of the family of Jesse who became Absalom's captain. Shimei, the man of Benjamin, was opposed to David and may be considered as a supporter of Absalom. Ziba and Mephibosheth both avowed their loyalty to David at one time or another; but as David left the city, Ziba said that Mephibosheth had stayed be-

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hind, hoping that he could receive the throne since he was a descendant of Saul. The realization of such aspirations would be highly improbable, and Ziba must have been attempting to ingratiate himself with David by the report which he brought to him. On the surface Israel was badly divided, but the larger number of important men supported David.

### CHAPTER 17 IN REVIEW

1. Which councilor advised Absalom to attack David at once? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many men did he want to muster? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which councilor advised waiting? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which man's advice was taken? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What did the loser do? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What were the names of the priests' sons? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who carried the message from the priests to their sons? \_\_\_\_\_
8. To what city in Gilead did David flee? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who became Absalom's captain? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What three Gileadite men brought supplies to David? \_\_\_\_\_

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### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 18

- Vv. 1- 8 *David's battle plan.* David divided his army into three parts, putting one under the leadership of Joab, one under Abishai, and one under Ittai. He strictly warned his commanders against harming his son, Absalom.
- Vv. 9-18 *The death of Absalom.* The terrain where the battle was fought was very rough. The difficulties faced by soldiers caused more deaths than the actual fighting. One casualty of the terrain was Absalom himself. His head was caught in the branches of a tree, and his mule rode out from under him. While he was hanging suspended in this way, Joab drove three darts through his heart.
- Vv. 19-33 *David's lament for Absalom.* David's lamentation over his son is a classical expression of a father's grief over the death of his son. It is hard to imagine any more expressive wording for a man's grief than those recorded in the last verse of the chapter.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *It is folly to make a name for one's self.* Absalom had reared a pillar in his own honor. This is about the only remembrance he had in Israel. His action is reminiscent of the wicked men of Babel (Genesis 11:1 ff). These men sought to rear a tower to heaven in order that they might make a name for themselves. A man is much wiser to let others rear a memorial in his honor.
2. *Many run without tidings* (v. 22). Ahimaaz wanted to run to tell David the news of the battle. Cushie had already been sent with the news. It was useless for Ahimaaz to run since he had no more news to carry.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

Many preachers and churches have continued to make a lot of noise, but they have forgotten to tell the good news. They run without tidings.

3. *God mourns for His children.* God's children have gone astray and are dying in sin. God did not only say, "I would die for you," but He has said, "I have died for you."

### *David's Battle Plan.* 18:1-8

And David numbered the people that *were* with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

2 And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.

3 But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now *thou art* worth ten thousand of us: therefore now *it is* better that thou succor us out of the city.

4 And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.

5 And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, *Deal* gently for my sake with the young man, *even* with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

6 So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;

7 Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand *men*.

8 For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

*1. Where did David get his men? 18:1*

The army had increased from 600 to great numbers. These were numerous enough to demand the appointment of captains of thousands and captains of hundreds. Most of the men were from different parts of the country. Some were from Judah; some, from the other tribes. Because of Hushai's counsel, David had time to collect a large army; and the pendulum of affairs was swinging favor towards David and not towards Absalom. Hushai had counseled Absalom to take time to collect a large force, but the time also allowed David to collect an army. David seemed to have the better advantage.

*2. How did David divide his army? 18:2*

David appointed Joab captain over a third of his army. Another third was under the direction of Abishai, Joab's brother, and the third was led by Ittai, the Gittite. The fact that there were three captains in this campaign, whereas only two had led in the war against the Syrio-Ammonite coalition, would point to the fact that David had a larger army in the field against Absalom. The exact number was not stated, but if he had one-half the total of all men available to him, he must have had at his disposal some 600,000 men.

*3. Why did David want to go into the battle? 18:3*

David wanted to go out to the battle with the troops, for he was still a soldier. He may have been prompted to go out in order that he might guard against harm coming to Absalom, but the people would not allow him to lead the army in person. They had great respect for him, and they valued him highly. They felt that the battlefield was too dangerous a spot for their leader. The enemy would naturally be looking for David, since a part of

Ahithophel's original counsel was designed to drive off David's men and attack David personally (II Samuel 17:2). David could direct the battle from a safe distance and send up reinforcements when and if they were needed.

4. *What instructions did David give concerning Absalom?*

18:5

David's command with regard to Absalom shows his deep affection for his son. At the same time, it reflects his parental indulgence. The fact that all people heard and that David gave the instructions carefully and explicitly to Joab, Abashai, and Ittai, revealed how deeply he was concerned over his safety. David did not want to spare Absalom's life so that he could punish him, but he wanted to make sure that nothing happened to the young man. As Absalom had stolen the hearts of many of the people of Israel, he had also reserved for himself a very warm spot in David's own heart. David's deep grief over his death arose out of this fondness he had for Absalom (verse 33).

5. *Where was the forest of Ephraim?* 18:6

The exact location of the forest is unknown. We cannot tell certainly where it was or what prompted the giving of its name. From the narrative we can determine that it was rough country. The men very evidently fell into pits, over cliffs, and into patches of entangling underbrush. The battle was fought east of the Jordan river, so the forest must have been there. The fact that it is called the forest of Ephraim would incline us to believe that it was parallel with the territory of Ephraim which lay west of the Jordan. Such a location would fit the description since Mahanaim was just north of the Jabbok river, and the men who helped David lived in this territory. The rugged land which lay east of the Jordan and half-way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, must have been the scene of the battle.

*The Death of Absalom.* 18:9-18

9 And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away.

10 And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

11 And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *shekels* of silver, and a girdle.

12 And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none *touch* the young man Absalom.

13 Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against *me*.

14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak.

15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.

17 And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.

*6. How was Absalom's head caught? 18:9*

Absalom was following a trail through the forest that led through dense underbrush. He caught his hair in the branches of a tree. His mule went out from under him, and he was left suspended. When the enemy found him, they slew him and covered his body with a heap of stones. This was a Jewish way of showing contempt.

The mention of the pillar in verse 18 seemed to be over against the heap of stones in verse 17. Absalom had raised a pillar in the valley of Jehoshaphat to perpetuate his name. The sons of Absalom that had been mentioned all died young, and there was no one to bear his name. A daughter would not perpetuate his name. For all these reasons, the pillar was erected. The men of David heaped stones over his body to show their contempt for Absalom and his pillar in the king's dale.

*7. Why had the young man failed to kill Absalom? 18:10*

One of the young soldiers in Israel had seen Absalom hanging by his head from the oak tree, but he did not kill Absalom; rather he ran and told Joab, his captain. Joab rebuked the young man for sparing Absalom's life and told him that he would have given him ten shekels of silver and a military man's girdle if he had killed him. The young man replied that if he had received a thousand shekels of silver, he would not have put forth his hand against Absalom, since David had charged his captains not to harm him. He said that he would have endangered his own life if he had smitten Absalom. He could have expected no better treatment than David gave the Amalekite (II Samuel 1:15) and the assassins of Ish-bosheth (II Samuel 4:12).

*8. What action did Joab take? 18:14*

Joab turned impatiently away from the soldier who had discovered Absalom hanging from a tree. He took three darts in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was hanging yet alive from the branches

of the oak tree. Ten of Joab's armour bearers ringed the tree around and smote Absalom. This sadistic treatment of the king's son was completely unnecessary, and the action revealed the spirit of Joab and his men.

9. *Where was Absalom buried?* 18:17

Absalom's body was cast into a huge pit in the forest of Ephraim. The men of Israel cast a very large heap of stones on him to show their contempt and then withdrew from the battlefield. Joab blew the trumpet and called the people from their pursuit of Absalom's men and the text states that "Joab held back the people." They were enraged by Absalom's rebellion, and fought valiantly to restore David to his former position.

10. *Where was the king's dale?* 18:18

Absalom's body was covered by a heap of stones as a mark of the contempt of his enemies, but he had reared for himself a pillar of honor in the king's dale. Absalom had three sons, according to the record in II Samuel 14:27, but they must have died untimely deaths; for when he reared the pillar, he said that he had no son to perpetuate his name in Israel. Although Absalom was beaten in his campaign to overthrow his father's throne, the pillar was left standing; and it was still there when the book was written at the end of David's reign. The location of the king's dale is unknown, but Josephus located it one mile and a half from Jerusalem (*Antiquities* VIII; x; 3).

*David's Lament for Absalom.* 18:19-33

19 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies.

20 And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.

21 Then said Joab to Cush, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cush bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

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22 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cush. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?

23 But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and over-ran Cush.

24 And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28 And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed *be* the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

29 And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*.

30 And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside, *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

31 And, behold, Cush came; and Cush said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said unto Cushi, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

11. *Why did Joab choose to send the news by the Cushite?* 18:19

Ahimaaz wished to soften the news of the death of Absalom in the presence of the king. The Cushite was a Negro—a foreign-born member of Joab's army and was considered not a very honorable messenger. The poor messenger carried the bad news. The good messenger carried the good news. Joab may have been afraid that David would kill the men who brought him the bad news since he had killed the Amalekite, who brought him news of Saul's death (II Samuel 1:15).

12. *How did Ahimaaz outrun the Cushite?* 18:23

The battle was fought to the South of Mahanaim. The Cushite probably went over the hills, while Ahimaaz went by the way of the plain of the Jordan River. Since he had the easier course, he made better progress and reached David first with the news. The watchman recognized Ahimaaz's stride; and since he was a good man, he expected him to bring good news.

13. *Where was David when he heard the news?* 18:24

David was sitting on the roof of the gate. This refers to the tower over the gates of the city. More than likely, David was sitting in a room in the top of the tower. David knew that the man running alone bore tidings. Had their eyes beheld a number of men they would have surmised that the army had been defeated and routed. This one man running alone would bear tidings of the battle.

Ahimaaz was recognizable because of his peculiar stride. He did not tell the whole truth because he had not been commissioned to tell the whole story. He also wished to avoid the odium that would fall upon the bearer of the bad news.

*14. Why did the Cushite veil his message? 18:31, 32*

When the Cushite arrived in David's presence, he announced that he had news for him, but he couched his news in words that would soften the blow. He did not abruptly and brusquely say that Absalom was dead. He told David that the Lord had avenged him of all those who had risen up against him. David would perceive by this statement that the battle was going well and perhaps had been finalized in his favor. David's first question was with regard to the safety of Absalom. Once again, the Cushite did not curtly reply that Absalom was dead. He expressed a wish that all David's enemies might be in the same condition as that of Absalom. David knew by this statement that Absalom had been killed.

*15. Did David have reasons for such distress? 18:33*

Time and time again David had demonstrated his love for Absalom. David must have felt responsible for Absalom's bad career. In the first place, David himself had not been able to punish Amnon for his sin because he had himself committed such a sin. In the second place, he would not punish Absalom for avenging his sister's honor. In the third place, David's sending Hushai to Absalom had defeated Ahithophel's counsel and brought ultimate defeat to Absalom. David must have felt that he had failed miserably as a father.

*16. What had caused Absalom's bad career?*

David had set a bad example for his son by his sin against Uriah with Bathsheba. Such a great crime could hardly be kept from members of the family, and this may have led to a lack of respect for David on the part of all his children. Absalom particularly had been blessed with a

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good physique which led to vanity. He had selfishly misused the popularity he won by his position and appearance. David had been lenient with him when he had killed Amnon by failing to take the vengeance which the law demanded—that of the death of a murderer. Wicked counselors had aided Absalom in his rebellion, and he finally met his death in the rugged forest of Ephraim.

### CHAPTER 18 IN REVIEW

1. Under what three men did David place his soldiers? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did David go into the battle himself? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In what forest was the battle fought? \_\_\_\_\_
4. In what kind of tree was Absalom's head caught? \_\_\_\_\_
5. With what weapon did Joab kill Absalom? \_\_\_\_\_
6. With what did the men cover Absalom's body? \_\_\_\_\_
7. With whom did Joab send the news to David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who else wanted to carry the news? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where was David when he received the news? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Quote David's lamentation of Absalom. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 19

- Vv. 1- 8 *The king's grief assuaged.* Many of the people received the impression that David was sorry that Absalom's revolt had been stopped. They even felt that if all of them had been killed and Absalom had been spared, David would have been happy. Joab rebuked David for this attitude and the king arose and sat in the gate and greeted his people.
- Vv. 9-15 *The return to the Jordan.* Since the campaign was successfully concluded, David and his men returned to the Jordan river in preparation for crossing back over into the main part of Israel. He had sent messages ahead to find out if the people wanted him to be king. He was a monarch, but he also wanted the people to approve his kingship.
- Vv. 16-43 *The people greeted the king.* Different ones came out to meet David as he returned. Some had favors to ask of him. Others had apologies to make. Most of the people were happy to see David returning as king.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *We must forgive others their trespasses against us.* Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). David had sinned grievously. He wanted very much to receive God's forgiveness of his sins, and he was willing to forgive others their trespasses against him. Although some of his men wanted him to wreak vengeance on his enemies, David forgave those who had spoken evilly against him and opposed him as he fled out of Jerusalem. His example is a good model.

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2. "*The king is an angel of God*" (v. 27). The people had great respect for their rulers. They considered the king as a messenger of God. The apostle Paul wrote "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (Romans 13:1). Christians should honor their rulers.

4. David Restored to Power, 19:1-43.

### *The King's Grief Assuaged.* 19:1-8

And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

2 And the victory that day was *turned* into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son.

3 And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!

5 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

6 In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

7 Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.

8 Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they old unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

1. *How long did David continue mourning? 19:1*

The fondness which David had showed to Absalom in his early indulgences finally broke out into uncontrolled grief when he learned of Absalom's death on the battlefield. David appeared to be in a state of shock, hoping against hope to the last that the news which he had received would prove to be false. The original word translated to express David's weeping and mourning gave the idea of one trembling under strong emotion. David continued in such a state long enough for the word to get back to Joab and for it to become general knowledge among the people. The soldiers might have expected a triumphal entry back into the city where David was staying, but instead they were obliged to creep into the city like thieves and fugitives. Joab came immediately and told him that if he did not cease this kind of conduct the whole army would abandon him by nightfall (verse 7).

2. *What is the meaning of David's repeated reference to his son? 19:4*

To understand this repeated cry of grief, the reader must remember not only the excessive indulgence and weakness of David's fatherly affection for his son but also his anger at Joab and his captains. They had paid little regard to his command to protect the life of Absalom. David had a quick temper, and these mixed emotions prevented him from correctly judging the crime of his rebellious son who merited death. David was also forgetting the justice of God which had been made known in the death of Absalom. David declared that he would rather have died for Absalom than for Absalom to die while fighting against him. The Christian reader can almost hear

the cry of God as He calls out for His wayward sons. God has said that He is not only willing to die for His children but in Jesus Christ God in the flesh has died for wayward mankind.

3. *Why did Joab rebuke David? 19:5*

The people were greatly discouraged. As a captain over all the host, Joab knew the feelings of the people. The time demanded action. The soldiers had fought valiantly and won, and they had every right to expect a warm welcome. David's demeanor greatly abashed the men. The king was in sadness over an aspect of the outcome of a victory; and their ardor was dampened. If the men were permitted to continue without a welcome, they would return to their homes with an ill feeling of disappointment and wrong at the hands of David; and in the end, they would turn against David. Joab was the intimate counselor and advisor of the king; and he had the courage by nature to speak boldly to the king. The time was right for such speaking.

4. *What confusion had David caused? 19:4*

Joab said that David appeared to love his enemies and hate his friends. He was weeping over Absalom who had proved to be a very dangerous enemy. He acted as if he were angry with his men who had put down the revolt. David did have these mixed emotions, and they were apparent to those who saw his actions. Joab also said that David had no regard for his leaders and soldiers. He gave his men the impression that if everybody else had been killed and Absalom had lived he would have been happy.

5. *What action did Joab suggest? 19:7*

Joab advised David to leave the chamber where he was weeping and mourning and go out to his men and put their minds at rest about the outcome of the battle. The word used here to describe the speaking to his men is the same as was used with regard to Shechem's speaking to

Dinah (Genesis 34:3). David had caused a very grievous misunderstanding among his men, and he needed to assure them that he did not feel the way he appeared to feel. Joab did not specify what evil had befallen David through his career, but David had seen hard times. He was forced to flee for a long time as Saul sought to kill him. David was brought very low when his sin with Bathsheba was exposed. He was greatly distressed when Amnon forced Tamar, and his sin led to Absalom's killing Amnon. Perhaps one of the greatest evils which have befallen him was the revolt of Absalom, although he had been extremely grieved when Absalom was killed. Joab said that the evil which he was about to bring on himself by his continued mourning over Absalom would be greater than all these others.

5. *What men had fled to their tents? 19:8*

This passage should be compared with 17:24 and 18:16. The people of Israel were at a loss. Israel here mentioned should be construed to mean the followers of Absalom. They would be the ones placed in such a predicament by the death of the leader, but the fact that they had gone back to their homes left David's men free to come out of the battlefield and stand before the king.

*The Return to the Jordan. 19:9-15*

9 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

11 And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, *even* to his house.

12 Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

13 And say ye to Amasa, *Art* thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.

14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as *the heart of one man*; so that they sent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants.

15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

7. *What was the popular opinion among the people?*

19:9, 10

The people of Israel were confused and their loyalties were divided. They knew that David had saved them out of the hands of their enemies—the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, Syrians, and Philistines. They knew that he was in exile, having been driven out of his kingdom by his own son, but Absalom, whom they had anointed to be their king, was dead. Their line of reasoning led them to the place where the majority of them were agitating for bringing David back to rule in Jerusalem.

8. *Why did David summon Judah? 19:11*

David represented the people of Judah as being the last to come back under his banner. They would have been last if they had not hastened to come in before Israel found their way back. Amasa was mentioned as a diplomatic gesture. This would flatter Amasa and secure his allegiance to David. David wanted Amasa, since he was a member of the tribe of Judah and had been Absalom's commander. Judah responded to David's invitation and met him at Gilgal, a convenient, sacred place located west of the Jordan.

9. *Why the pledge to Amasa? 19:13*

David did another unaccountable and unjustifiable thing in appointing Amasa commander-in-chief of the army in the place of Joab (19:13). One can understand his exasperation with the latter for his deliberate disobedience in the death of Absalom, and for the insulting language he used to the king. But, for all that, to make the former rebel chief to be the head of the army, superseding the loyal and victorious commander who had saved the king's throne for him was really too much; and one wonders where David's common sense had gone. We can imagine the fierce and sullen resentment of Joab's veterans when they heard the news. It is a wonder that there was not an outbreak of rebellion.

*The People Greet the King. 19:16-43*

16 And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which *was* of Bahurim, hastened and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

17 And *there were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king.

18 And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;

19 And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.

20 For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruah answered and said,

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Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?

22 And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I *am* this day king over Israel?

23 Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king swore unto him.

24 And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came *again* in peace.

25 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant *is* lame.

27 And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes.

28 For all *of* my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

29 And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

30 And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man.

33 And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

34 And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

35 I *am* this day fourscore years old: *and* can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

36 Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

37 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, *and be buried* by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

38 And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee.

39 And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.

40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

41 And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?

42 And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king *is* near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's *cost*? or hath he given us any gift?

43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

10. *Why did Shimei do obeisance? 19:16*

Shimei had cursed David as the king fled from Jerusalem (II Samuel 16:5). When David returned, the Jordan river was in a flood-swollen condition. A ferry was sent to carry the king's household over the water. Shimei showed his hypocritical zeal and humility in the presence of the king by swimming across the river. He was a coward and wished to escape the punishment that he rightly should have suffered. David forgave him and let him live.

11. *Why were men of Benjamin with Shimei? 19:17*

Shimei himself was a man of Benjamin. He had cursed David because he felt that David was on Saul's throne without any right to it (II Samuel 16:8). After David had been victorious over Absalom, Shimei might well expect to be the brunt of David's retaliation. In some manner he had influenced a thousand other men of the tribe of Benjamin to stand with him, and they came out to welcome David back to Jerusalem. Ziba was among them, and he also was connected with the tribe of Benjamin. He was the servant of the house of Saul and especially accountable to Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson. All these men must have come to the conclusion that it was useless for them to oppose David's claim to the throne. They should have known that it was God's will and that David

had been anointed by Samuel to replace Saul, but their extreme sense of family loyalty and devotion had led them to foolish actions, epitomized in Shimei's cursing David when the king was driven out of Jerusalem. They were anxious to make restitution and to be included among the people welcoming David back to his throne.

*12. How could Shimei be of the house of Joseph? 19:20*

Two of Joseph's sons were adopted by Jacob as his own sons and made heads of tribes in Israel (Genesis 48:5). These two sons were Ephraim and Manasseh, and their descendants settled in the land immediately north of the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin itself lay on the northern border of Judah. Benjamin was also the son of Rachel by Jacob, the same as Joseph. They were very close to each other, and the last two sons to be born to Jacob. In the wilderness wanderings, their people had been given campsites immediately to the west of the tabernacle (Numbers 2:18-24). This close affinity gendered by a common birthright and strengthened through years of close proximity led Shimei to make reference to himself as a member of the house of Joseph.

*13. What was Abishai's proposal? 19:21*

Abishai's position was constant. When Shimei came out to curse David as they were leaving the environs of Jerusalem, Abishai had asked permission to go over to Shimei and behead him. This was typical of Abishai's militant spirit, and his first reaction upon hearing Shimei's appeal to the king was that the appeal should be denied. It was his opinion that Shimei should be put to death for the shame that he brought on David when he cursed him. In Abishai's eyes, David was the Lord's anointed, and anybody who treated him shamefully was worthy of death.

*14. What was David's reaction to Abishai's proposal? 19:22*

Once again, David affirmed that he did not have anything to do with the wicked proposals of his nephews. He disclaimed any responsibility for the death of Abner

at the hands of the two brothers. He had barely been able to restrain Abishai when he wanted to behead Saul as he and David crept into Saul's camp. He had held back Abishai when he first proposed beheading Shimei; and once again, he was restraining Abishai's unbridled desire for revenge. He had been unable to restrain Joab in the battle against Absalom, although he had strictly charged him not to harm Absalom. David had no taste for bloodshed, and he felt the day was one of rejoicing and not a time for an execution of any kind. He would not mar the happiness of being restored to his throne by putting any of his enemies to death.

15. *Why was Mephibosheth negligent of his person? 19:24*

Mephibosheth showed his sorrow over the plight of David by letting his person go unattended. The phrase "dressed his feet" may tell us something of the nature of his lameness. At the conclusion of the interview, David divided Mephibosheth's inheritance between him and Ziba. Such an action shows that David doubted Mephibosheth. David did not want to punish Ziba, to say the least. If Mephibosheth was sincere, his urging David to give all to Ziba means that he was very glad to see David return; if he was not sincere, this saying meant that he realized his jeopardous position and wanted to flatter David.

16. *How were Jonathan's descendant's dead men? 19:28*

Had David been like other oriental potentates, he would have slain all of Saul's descendants since Saul had been his predecessor on the throne. As it was, David had made a covenant with Jonathan that he would not act in this way. The two men had promised each other that they would deal kindly with each other's descendants, regardless of which of them survived the other. Mephibosheth had suffered the loss of his father in the battle when his grandfather and uncles were killed by the Philistines. He may have thought that his life was in danger also, because he had not made himself known for a number of years after

the others of his house were killed. Anything Mephibosheth possessed was his largely on account of the kindness of David. Mephibosheth acknowledged this and made reference to David's kindness in setting him among the people who were privileged to be considered members of the king's household. He could ask for nothing more from David. Mephibosheth's happiness over the king's safety seemed sincere, which would lead one to believe that Ziba had betrayed him when he reported the reason for Mephibosheth's not coming out to see David when the king was driven out from his capital city.

*17. Who was Barzillai? 19:31*

Barzillai was one of the men of Gilead who had brought supplies to David at Mahanaim (II Samuel 17:27). Barzillai was very wealthy, but his greatness could hardly be measured by any present-day yardstick. He was an old man, and the pleasures of court were undesirable to him. All he wanted was to live out his last days in his home in peace. Chimham was more than likely his son, although he referred to him as David's servant (verse 37)

*18. How did David reward Barzillai for his kindness?  
19:40*

When the king went on from the edge of the Jordan to Gilgal on his way back to Jerusalem, he took Chimham with him. He had told Barzillai that he would do whatever seemed good to him and that he would show any favor which Barzillai would require of him. David was deeply indebted to the men of Gilead for supplying the provision necessary for his campaign, and he would not be likely to forget their many favors. As David laid down the reins of his government and turned them over to Solomon, he reminded Solomon of the kindness which had been showed to him by Barzillai. He commanded Solomon to "show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai, the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table, for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother"

(I Kings 2:7). In other words, David made Chimham to be equal to David's own sons and Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, to whom he had already shown great kindness.

19. *What was the quarrel between Judah and Israel? 19:41*

Half of Israel had probably been waiting for their leaders to bring them back to David. Perhaps the other half of the people had been with David all along helping him. The people of Israel felt that they had a larger share in David's work and victory than Judah, but Judah seemed to be preferred. At least they had hurried out to meet David, although this had been at David's invitation.

20. *What was Judah's reply? 19:42*

The men of Judah replied to the men of Israel by saying that the king was near of kin to them. He was from the tribe of Judah; his father, Jesse, was a man from Bethlehem, a town in the midst of the land of Judah. David had also asked for Amasa, one of his kinsmen and a man of Judah, to be captain of his army. The men of Judah felt that it was only natural for them to be the first to welcome back the king and to be closer to him than anybody else. They denied that they were given any undue favors because of their kinship to him. They said that they had not eaten anything at the king's cost which was another way of saying that he was not giving them any provisions. David had not given them any kind of gifts to bribe their loyalty to him, but it was the natural outpouring of their love for one of their own.

21. *What was the outcome? 19:43*

The arguments of the men of Judah prevailed. Their words were described as being "fiercer" than the men of Israel. The men of Israel felt that they were more numerous and thus they had a greater claim on the affections of the king. They were slighted somewhat, inasmuch as they had instigated the movements to bring David back; but David had skirted their overtures by making a direct

appeal to the people of Judah through his priests who were back in Jerusalem. For this reason, the men of Israel felt that they were despised, or that their proposition was taken too lightly. They would very much have liked to have the honor of being the first to bring the king back to his throne. All of this popular opinion with regard to the monarchy gives us a refreshing view of the nature of the kingship of Israel. David was not a despotic ruler who laid claims to the throne regardless of the affections of his people. He might well have remained in exile in Gilead if nobody had shown an inclination to bring him back. Although the king was not selected by popular vote, David was very much aware of the attitude of the people towards him. This made a very happy situation. God's chosen ruler was popular with people of goodwill, and he made every effort to treat them with fairness and kindness.

## CHAPTER 19 IN REVIEW

1. Who rebuked David for his continued mourning over Absalom? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who first mentioned calling David back to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To which tribe did David send word? \_\_\_\_\_
4. By what two men did David make his contact? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where did the men of Judah go to meet David? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Whom did David invite to be his captain? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Of what tribe was the man a member? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who swam the Jordan to meet David? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Which son of Saul came to meet David? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which son of Barzillai went with David? \_\_\_\_\_

PART FIVE

DAVID'S  
LAST DAYS  
AND SONG

20:1—24:25

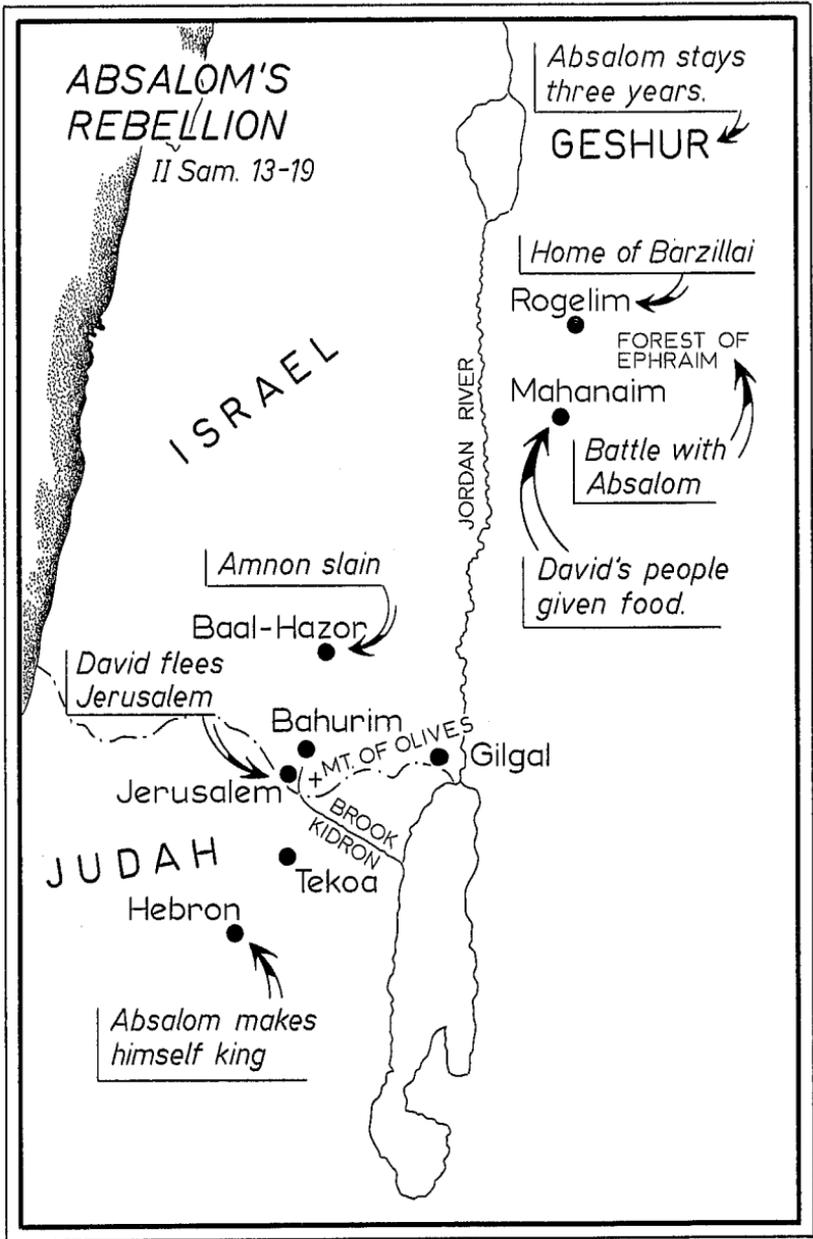
## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

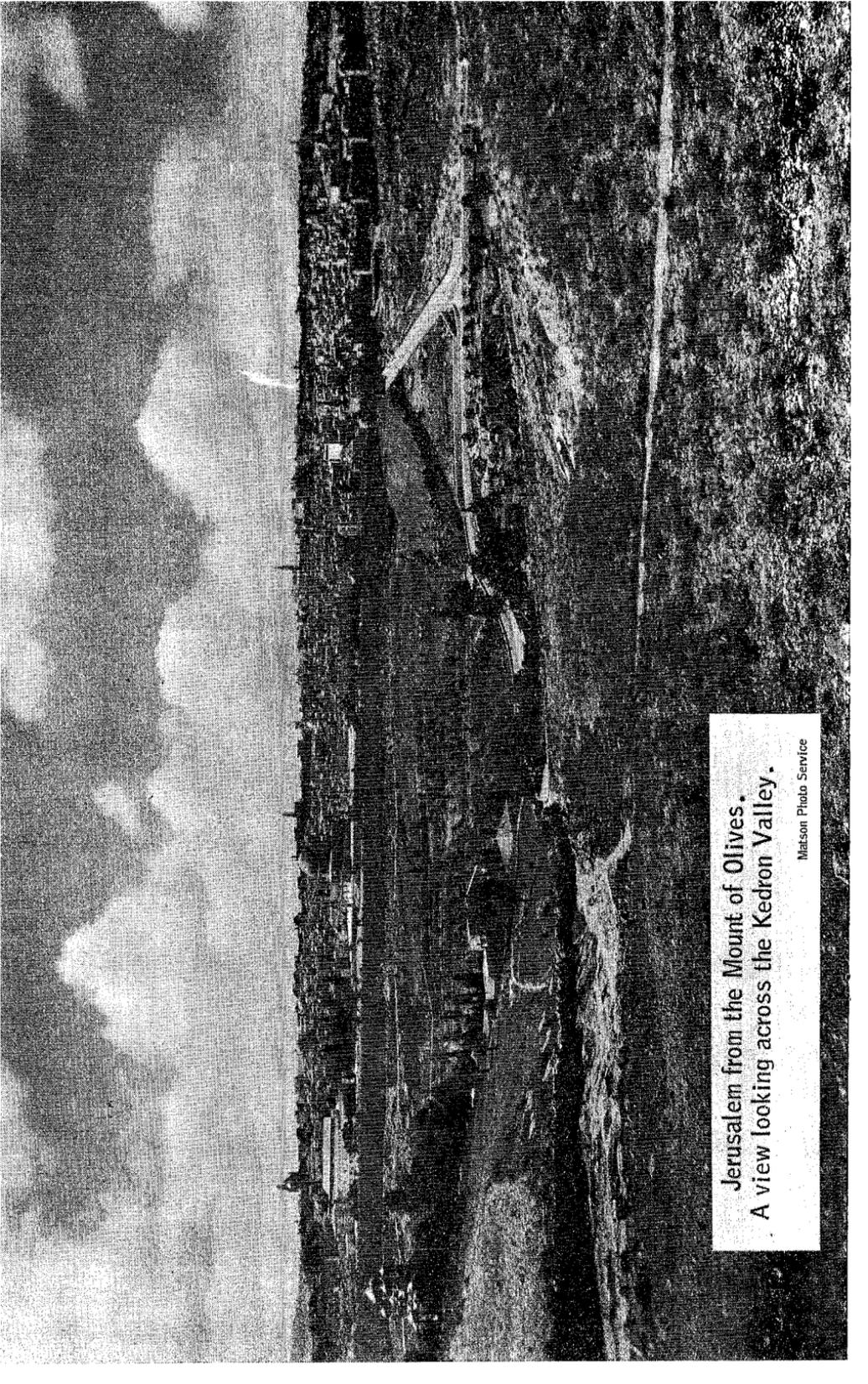
### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 20

- Vv. 1-3 *Sheba's revolt.* Some of the Israelites still felt that David had usurped Saul's throne. This was especially true of the men of Benjamin. They found a leader in Sheba.
- Vv. 4-9 *Amasa's indolence.* David had made Amasa his captain in Joab's stead and sent him to put down Sheba's revolt. Amasa proved inept and was very tardy in performing the king's bidding.
- Vv. 10-13 *Joab assassinates Amasa.* Joab went out to assist Amasa, but he killed Amasa instead. This cold-blooded murder of David's captain by his former captain is inexcusable.
- Vv. 14-23 *Sheba's death.* David's men under Joab were forced to pursue Sheba to the extreme northern boundary of Israel. He had entrenched himself in the city of Abel, but some of the wise citizens of the city slew him.
- Vv. 24-26 *Israel's leaders.* It was necessary for the kingdom to be reorganized after Absalom's and Sheba's revolt. Some of the officers who were first appointed by David were still in office. Other new offices had been formed and some of the older leaders had been replaced. It was still a very efficient organization.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Peaceable men are men of wisdom.* When Sheba fled to Abel, some of the people said that they were "peaceable and faithful" (v. 19). These men did what they knew was right. A land is blessed when it has this type of men.





Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.  
A view looking across the Kedron Valley.

Matson Photo Service

2. *The powers that be are ordained of God* (Romans 13:1 b). God intends for men to have good government. David saw to it that his people had good, efficient rule. More governments of this kind are needed in the present critical stage of world affairs.

## V. DAVID'S LAST DAYS AND SONG, 20:1—24:25.

1. The Reorganization of the Kingdom, 20:1-26.

### *Sheba's Revolt.* 20:1-3

And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

2 So every man of Israel went up from after David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3 And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women *his* concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

### 1. *Who was Sheba?* 20:1

Sheba is described as being a man of Belial, another way of saying that he was a shameful and worthless man. His genealogy is given, and he is described as being the son of Bichri, a word meaning "first-born" in the original language. This is the only reference found to the man's name in the Bible. Being a Benjamite, Sheba was the catalytic agent for solidifying the opposition to David as expressed by Shimei when Shimei said that David was ruling in the place of the house of Saul. Although Shimei rescinded his action and asked for David's forgiveness,

Sheba was more base and resolute. He championed the cause of all who supported the house of Saul by saying, "We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse." He asked every man of Israel to return to his home and refuse to participate further in the affairs of David's kingdom.

2. *Why were the men of Judah left alone? 20:2*

Judah had occasioned the dispute between her people and the Israelites living in the northern tribes; and when Sheba led a revolt, many of the men from the other bordering tribes joined him, thus leaving Judah as the main support for David. Although every man of Israel went up from after David and followed Sheba and only the men of Judah were loyal to their king, the revolt was not open enough to prevent David's going on up from the Jordan valley to Jerusalem. Once again David was able to rule from the great city.

3. *Why did David isolate the concubines? 20:3*

Absalom had gone into his father's concubines when he spread a tent on the roof of the palace and took them as members of his own household, in the sight of all the people who followed him (II Samuel 16:21, 22). This rebellious act on the part of Absalom was designed to indicate that Absalom was taking over everything which had belonged to his father; and although David had left them behind to pursue their normal activities of keeping the house, he felt that they had been shamed and it would not be proper for him to reinstate them to their former positions. He did not turn them out to fend for themselves but put them in separate quarters and ordained that they should be provided for but left to live as widows.

*Amasa's Indolence. 20:4-9*

4 Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present.

5 So Amasa went to assemble *the men of Judah*: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

6 And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us.

7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

8 When they *were* at the great stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle *with* a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out.

9 And Joab said to Amasa, *Art* thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.

#### 4. *Why was Amasa sent against Sheba? 20:4*

Amasa had been made captain of the host under David, when Joab was deposed. Amasa proved to be not as prompt as Joab; and while he tarried, Abishai was sent to do his work. The men under Abishai met Amasa at Gibeon, a city north of Mizpah and six miles north of Jerusalem, where Amasa was up among the people of Benjamin gathering forces. This means that some of the men of Benjamin were helping David.

Joab was not a man to be deposed by anybody. He slew Amasa by trickery and immediately assumed control, leaving a man to tell the people to follow on after Joab and David.

#### 5. *Why did David think Sheba would do great harm? 20:6*

David's future was hanging in the balance as Sheba led all the other tribes, except Judah, to revolt against David.

It was imperative that immediate action be taken to remedy the situation; and when Amasa took longer than the three days appointed for mustering the troops, David knew that allowing Sheba additional time would give him opportunity to gain more strength. He would be able to establish himself in the cities that were fenced and were provided with gates to keep out any invading armies. He could thoroughly permeate the Israelite society with his political opposition and David would not be able to ferret out all his followers. He would thus be able to escape detection and punishment.

6. *How did Joab trick Amasa? 20:8*

Joab had no responsibilities whatever with regard to the mustering of the troops, but he was probably in the company which was commanded by Amasa or else he had gone with Abishai to assist in the matter. When he met Amasa, he was clothed with a garment that had a girdle around the middle. This large belt had a sheath attached to it, and in the sheath was Joab's sword. He allowed this sword to fall out, leading Amasa to believe that he was unarmed. Joab threw Amasa off his guard by greeting him in a friendly way making inquiry about his health and calling him his brother. Being naturally right handed, he took Amasa by the beard to draw him to himself to kiss him. Joab had a sword in his other hand, probably behind his back; and when Amasa was close enough to him to permit him to stab him, Joab plunged the blade into the abdomen of Amasa. The one blow was sufficient to wound him mortally. Once again, Joab had struck without sufficient reason, except for a matter of personal honor and vengeance.

*Joab Assassinates Amasa. 20:10-13*

But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him

not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

11 And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoreth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab.

12 And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

7. *What was the soldier's reaction to Amasa's murder?*  
20:12

The men were stunned by Joab's slaying Amasa; and when they came to the spot where his body was lying, they stood still. Although Joab had left one of his men there to encourage them to follow him and Abishai as they pursued Sheba, the evidence of the murder of Amasa caused many of them to hesitate. Only when the man removed the corpse out of the highway into the field and covered it with a cloth did the men decide to go ahead and follow Joab.

*Sheba's Death.* 20:14-23

14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him.

15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.

16 Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.

17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, *Art* thou Joab? And he answered, I *am* he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.

18 Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they ended *the matter*.

19 I *am* one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?

20 And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.

21 The matter *is* not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, *even* against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

23 Now Joab *was* over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites:

#### 8. Where was Abel-beth-maachah? 20:14

Abel-beth-maachah was near the waters of Merom at the northern end of the land of Israel. The name of the town was a compound of Hebrew words signifying "the meadow of the house of the oppressor," and has been

identified with Abiel-el-Kumh. The circumstances surrounding its mention in the Scriptures indicate that it was a place of some importance. Joab laid siege to it in order to drive out Sheba; and in later history, Ben-hadad and Tiglathpileser led their armies against it (I Kings 15:20; II Kings 15:20). The Berites were a people mentioned only at this point, but their mention here indicates that they must have lived in the north part of Israel. The town of Beroth, a city in the northern part of Galilee, not far from Kadash, is a likely spot for their center of activity. These people were far removed from the center of activity in Israel and were easily influenced to follow Sheba in his revolt.

9. *How did Joab attack the city? 20:15*

Abel was so strongly fortified that Joab found it necessary to throw up a rampart against the city. The earthwork which he made was up against the outside wall of the city; making it possible for his men to attack the wall with some success. The blows with which they hammered the city were beginning to take effect and the wall was starting to crumble when their siege was broken by the wise woman.

10. *Why did a woman speak for the citizens? 20:16*

A woman took the lead in stopping Joab's attack against Abel. She is described as a wise woman. This same kind of terminology was used with regard to the woman of Tekoah whom Joab fetched to intercede on Absalom's behalf (II Samuel 14:2). These women must have stood in the same kind of company as that of Deborah, who was Israel's female leader in the days of the judges (Judges 4:4). These women were not banded together in any kind of order, but they were women who showed unusual wisdom and took action when action was needed.

11. *What was the reputation of Abel? 20:18*

Abel was known in ancient times as the home of citizens who were very clever. They had the reputation of

being able to make judgments which were right and good, and many matters were brought to them to be resolved. The woman demonstrated this wisdom and she described herself as being a peaceable and faithful citizen of Israel. She felt that Joab and Abishai were out to destroy the city and herself, a mother of Israel. She felt that this destruction was needless, and asked them why they would devour the inheritance of the Lord in such a holocaust. Joab denied that he was intending to destroy Abel. He was only after Sheba, a worthless fellow who had led a revolt against King David. Joab showed that he was sincere in this by promising the citizens that if Sheba was delivered to them, they would withdraw their siege.

12. *How did the matter end? 20:22*

The woman was able to make good on her promise to throw Sheba's head over the wall to Joab. Her words were wise, and she persuaded the leaders of the community to follow her advice. They captured Sheba, cut off his head, and threw it out to Joab. When Joab received the assurance that Sheba was dead, he lifted the siege from the city and dismissed his troop. Joab then went back to Jerusalem to report to the king.

*Israel's Leaders. 20:24-26*

24 And Adoram *was* over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder:

25 And Sheva *was* scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests:

26 And Ira also the Jairite *was* a chief ruler about David.

13. *What changes were made among David's officers? 20:23-26*

The office of scribe had been changed from Seraiah to Sheva. Adoram was overseer of the workmen who were forced to work for David. Ira, the Jairite, was chief officer instead of David's sons. David's sons had proved

to be ineffective, and at least two of them had been killed. Joab's office was again mentioned to show that he was back in his old place. The giving of this arrangement may be considered the beginning of the account of the real close of David's reign.

The story of the close of David's reign is not as thrilling as the narrative of the beginning of his powerful rule. He still retained an undiminished faith in God, but many things were unsavory and maladjusted. Many sins had been committed, many blunders had been made, much suffering had been endured. One can only wish that the king might have had a peaceful old age, and determine to keep such folly out of his own life so that he may lay claim to God's promise of eternal life.

## CHAPTER 20 IN REVIEW

1. Who led the revolt against David? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Of what tribe was he? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Whom did David order to muster his army? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many days did he give him to gather his forces? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Whom did David send to help him? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who slew Amasa? \_\_\_\_\_
7. To what city did Sheba flee? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who beheaded Sheba? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who was David's captain in his last days? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who was over the tribute? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 21

- Vv. 1- 9 *The Gibeonites avenged.* Saul had slain many of the Gibeonites although Joshua had made a covenant to live in peace with them. As a result of this injustice God had sent a famine on Israel. The Gibeonites did not ask for any restitution from David, but they felt that the family of Saul should be punished. They asked that seven of his sons be slain to avenge the treatment they had received at Saul's hand. David executed the penalty on their behalf, and the famine was stayed.
- Vv. 10-14 *Rizpah's sad vigil.* Rizpah was Saul's concubine. Two of her sons whom she had borne to Saul were among those slain. She sat by their bodies and drove off the birds of the air and the beasts of the field until David came and took up the bones of the slain men and buried them in Saul's old home.
- Vv. 15-22 *Battles with the Philistines.* The Philistines were perennial enemies of Israel. Even in the later days of David's reign they were engaged in war against him.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Mother love is deep.* Kipling has said in his poem, "Mother O' Mine," that if he were hanged on the highest hill, his mother's love would reach him still. He mused that if he were drowned in the deepest sea, his mother's love would come down to him. Men and women who have memory of tender mother love should give God thanks for this invaluable gift.
2. *Vengeance belongs to the Lord* (Deuteronomy 32:35). It was not for David to say what penalty should be exacted against the house of Saul for their infamous

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treatment of the Gibeonites, neither was it for the Gibeonites to make an unfair request of David. That vengeance should be taken on the house of Saul was evident from the fact that God had brought a famine on Israel. Those involved were wise to inquire of the Lord in this manner. Men and women today should be willing for God's justice to be worked in their lives.

### 2. The Three Years of Famine, 21:1-22.

#### *The Gibeonites Avenged.* 21:1-9

Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David inquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, *It is* for Saul, and for *his* bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.

2 And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)

3 Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?

4 And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, *that* will I do for you.

5 And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel,

6 Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, *whom* the Lord did choose. And the king said, I will give *them*.

7 But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath that *was*

between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

8 But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite:

9 And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord: and they fell *all* seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first *days*, in the beginning of barley harvest.

1. *Who were the Gibeonites? 21:1*

The Gibeonites were inhabitants of a republic which included not only Gibeon, the capital, but the towns of Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-Jearim. Gibeon was larger than Ai, the city which Israel attacked when she first came up out of the Jordan valley in the days of Joshua (Joshua 10:2). Gibeon was one of the royal cities and was inhabited by Hivites, who were a brave people (Joshua 10:7; 11:19). When the land was settled by the Israelites, the city was allotted to the tribe of Benjamin and set aside as a Levitical city (Joshua 18:25; 21:17). After the destruction of the priestly family at Nob by Saul, the tabernacle was moved to Gibeon; and it remained there until the building of Solomon's temple (I Chronicles 16:39; 21:29; I Kings 3:4, 5; II Chronicles 1:3). A team of archaeologists from the University of Pennsylvania excavated the site of El-Jib in 1956. The walls and part of the city's water supply system were uncovered. More recent diggings reveal that the city had an elaborate system of civil defense which was designed to enable Gibeon to withstand indefinite siege. They also found a cemetery dating to 2000 years before Christ and containing thirty-six rock-cut tombs which illustrated burial customs and

documented the details of the Gibeonite daily life several hundred years before the Israelites came to Palestine. These people had lived at peace with the Israelites from the days of Joshua when they deceived the Israelites by their camouflage and Joshua made a treaty of peace with them.

2. *Why had Saul sought to slay them? 21:1 b*

The Gibeonites were not members of any of the tribes of Israel, but were known as Amorites, a name given to the Canaanites in general on occasion and probably signifying those who dwelt in the hills (Joshua 24:8). They were descended from Canaan (Genesis 10:16). Joshua's covenant with them was an unending one and should have been honored by all leaders of Israel who followed Joshua (Joshua 9:15). No historical reference is made to Saul's effort to exterminate them, but he probably did this in a burst of senseless zeal after he had failed to exterminate the Amalekites, as if wiping out a Canaanite tribe would atone for his failure to get rid of the Amalekites.

3. *Why was the nation punished for Saul's sin? 21:2*

Israel had sworn to the men of Gibeon that they would be at peace throughout their days. This was promised at the time Israel conquered the land, and an account of this promise is found in Joshua 9:1-27. Saul had slain a number of the men of Gibeon. No number is given, but the number was probably larger than the seven lives sought in revenge. Saul had sinned, it is true; and all Israel paid the penalty by a famine because of Saul's zeal for Israel and the fact that the nation would be held responsible for the acts of her leaders. Why the Gibeonites should desire the penalty to be paid in "Gibeah of Saul" is not known; but it was, of course, Saul's home.

4. *Why did the Gibeonites want seven men to be killed? 21:6*

The Gibeonites told David that they did not want retribution in the form of the payment of money, neither did they want to punish all Israel for the sins of her king.

They asked for specific revenge in the form of the killing of seven descendants of Saul. By hanging them up in Gibeah they would keep the shame upon Saul's home and any other of his descendants who might live there. Seven sons were chosen to signify a complete number. The number seven is generally taken to be a full number, God having ordained seven days in a week and often providing that a payment be made seven times for injuries sustained (Genesis 4:15; Proverbs 6:31).

5. *Why did David spare Mephibosheth? 21:7*

Mephibosheth was the grandson of Saul, and his death would certainly have satisfied the demands of the Gibeonites. David spared him because he had sworn with an oath to Jonathan, the son of Saul, that he would not harm his heirs. This oath was made immediately after David had killed Goliath and was repeated a number of times as David was in exile from Saul's court (I Samuel 18:3; 20:8; 8:15, 42; 23:18). It is called the Lord's oath because the men swore to each other as unto the Lord. It was a sacred covenant, and David would not do anything to break it. It is significant that he spared Mephibosheth even though Ziba had said that Mephibosheth entertained notions of succeeding David to the throne (II Samuel 16:3).

6. *Which of Saul's descendants were slain? 21:8*

David took two sons of Rizpah—Armoni and Mephibosheth. Rizpah was Saul's concubine, and she had borne these children to Saul. David took five sons of Merab, Saul's oldest daughter. She was the daughter who should have been given to David as his wife as a reward for his killing Goliath (I Samuel 18:19), but when it came time for the marriage, Saul gave her to Adriel, the Meholathite, to be his wife and to embarrass David. Michal had no children of her own (II Samuel 6:23), and these sons were evidently taken into Michal's care for rearing after Merab had died. Barzillai is noted as the father of Adriel, but this is quite evidently a different Barzillai from the

one who aided David while he was in Gilead (II Samuel 17:27). These seven descendants of Saul were hung by the Gibeonites in Gibeah, the home of Saul.

7. *How were the sons hanged? 21:9*

The Gibeonites asked that the persons executed might be impaled as a public exhibition of the punishment. The bodies were gibbeted and exposed after death. These sons were slain at the beginning of the harvest (near the first of June) and Rizpah kept watch over them until the time of the autumnal rains (sometime in November). This was a long period of five months. Rizpah, Saul's concubine, posed a tragic, dramatic figure in the heart of the scripture account. Although the place of woman in those days was not what we know it to be now, women still were capable of that faithful deep devotion which is well expressed in mother love. The attachment of Rizpah to her sons caused David to again show his respect for Saul.

*Rizpah's Sad Vigil. 21:10-14*

10 And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the street of Bethshan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa:

13 And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.

14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the sepulcher

of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was entreated for the land.

8. *Why did Rizpah guard the bodies? 21:10*

Rizpah took the coarse, hairy cloth which was worn as a sign of mourning and spread it out as a pallet for herself on the rock at the summit of the high place where Saul's heirs were crucified. She was, indeed, mourning over this tragic end of Saul's house, two of whom were her own children. The sackcloth was not used as a tent to keep the sun off herself nor as a covering for the corpses of those who had been executed; it was to soften the surface on which she sat by day, and lay by night, and to express her deep grief. Leaving bodies to be consumed by birds of prey and wild beasts was regarded to be the greatest ignominy that could be heaped on the dead (I Samuel 17:44). The Law had stipulated that when people were executed, they were not to remain hanging overnight but to be buried before nightfall (Deuteronomy 21:22, 23). The law was not applicable in this case because the slaying of Saul's sons was to expiate a sin which Saul had committed, and the bodies were to be left spread out before the Lord until the rains fell as a sign of the end of the famine. Mention is made of the fact that Rizpah sat there from the beginning of the harvest which would come in late spring, until the rains came in the fall at the beginning of Palestine's wet season. Josephus assumes that the rain fell at once and before the ordinary early rain (*Antiquities* VII; xii; 1). News of this lonely vigil of this tragic figure was brought to David by those who had seen what she was doing.

9. *How was David able to move the bones of Saul? 21:12*

Although the corpses of Jonathan and Saul had been stolen from the walls of Beth-shan by the men of Jabesh-gilead, the bodies may have been only partially burned (I

Samuel 31:12). Some charred remains of the body must have been left. The bones of these men were then buried with the bones of those seven sons who had been hanged. Such concern for the human body was typical of the Jewish people and is another indication of the fact that Godfearing people through the years have practiced only the burial of the corpse. The earthly remains of Saul's heirs were buried in the homeland of Israel's first king.

*Battles With the Philistines.* 21:15-22

15 Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.

16 And Ishbi-benob, which *was* of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear *weighed* three hundred *shekels* of brass in weight, he being girded with a new *sword*, thought to have slain David.

17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

18 And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which *was* of the sons of the giant.

19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines where Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, slew *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam.

20 And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of *great* stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant.

21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David slew him.

22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

10. *Why did the Philistines attack again? 21:15*

Israel had been weakened by the famine which had followed year after year for three years. The Philistines seized the opportunity to rise and revolt against their neighbors to the east. Although some students of Scripture believe that this account is not in its correct location, chronologically speaking, the statement is made that the Philistines had *yet war* again with Israel. Such an emphasis on the time of the war, and its repetition point to an effort of the Philistines to defeat Israel after the famine which had come on them because of Saul's sin against the Gibeonites.

11. *Who were the sons of the giant? 21:16*

One of the sons of Goliath is named Ishbi-benob. He is described in language similar to that used to describe his father. He made an effort to avenge the death of his father by slaying David, but Abishai helped David, and Ishbi-benob was killed. A second son was Saph (verse 18). Saph was slain by Sibbechai the Hushathite. The location of Hushath is unknown, and Josephus calls Sibbechai a Hittite (*Antiquities* VII; xii; 2). A third son was also named Goliath, after the name of his father (verse 19). Elhanan, the son of Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, slew this Goliath. The King James version adds unnecessarily the words found in italics in verse 19, making the man slain to be the brother of Goliath the Gittite. The text in Chronicles reads, "Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite" (I Chronicles 20:5). If this giant slain by Elhanan is not a son of Goliath, we cannot determine who were the four sons of the giant mentioned later (verse 22). A fourth son is mentioned as one who had a physical imperfection. He had six fingers on every hand and six toes on every foot. The total is given as twenty-four, verifying the facts of his deformity. He was also born to the giant (verse 20); and when he fought against Israel, Jonathan, the son of

Shimei, David's brother, killed him. These four—Ishbi-benob, Saph, the son slain by Elhanan, and the one with twelve fingers and twelve toes—were born to the Goliath in Gath (verse 22). All of these were killed by David or his men in their various campaigns against the Philistines.  
 12. *Who was this Goliath? 21:19*

This Goliath was probably a descendant of the Goliath slain by David. They were both from the same country. All of this must have transpired at the time of the war with Gath. Chronicles (see I Chronicles 20:1-8) calls Gob "Geyer." This place is located on the border of the Philistine plain and is probably the correct location. Radical critics attempt to discredit the Scriptures by saying that Elhanan slew Goliath and tradition attributed the feat to David. They emend the text by dropping the phrase "the brother of" from verse 19 and defend their action by showing that there was no Hebrew word for brother at that point. A better emendation of the text would be to put the "son of" in the text for the italicized words found there in the usual printing. It is essential that it be understood the giant had four sons, and the one slain by Elhanan must have been a son of Goliath, who was killed by David (I Samuel 17:50).

## CHAPTER 21 IN REVIEW

1. How long did the famine last? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What people had Saul slain? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many sons of Saul were slain in revenge? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did David spare Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many of Rizpah's sons were slain? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did David go to get Saul's bones? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Where were they finally interred? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many sons did Goliath have? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who saved David from Goliath's son? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many toes did the deformed son have? \_\_\_\_\_

STUDIES IN SAMUEL  
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 22

- Vv. 1-20 *The Lord's deliverance.* As David came to the close of his reign, he composed a grand song of deliverance. The text is the same as Psalm 18 almost in entirety. The first part of this great song is a description of how God had delivered David from his many adversaries.
- Vv. 21-32 *The Lord's rewards.* God had not only delivered David out of the hands of his enemies, but He had given to him many blessings. God had done more than he could ask or think.
- Vv. 33-51 *The Lord's victory.* Ultimate victory is promised to those that serve God. David had pursued his enemies and destroyed them. God had helped him literally to consume them. He had been given to be head over heathen people. Peoples that he knew not had come to serve him. Strangers had submitted themselves to his rule. The victory that God had given to David was complete.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*He delivered me*" (vv. 1, 18, 20). Those faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ who take time to look back over their lives can find many instances where God has delivered them. His followers are taught to pray "deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). God will deliver those who trust in Him.
2. "*The Lord rewarded me*" (v. 21). Many rewards are given to Christians in this life. They are taught that if they forsake houses, brethren, sisters, fathers, mothers, wives, children or lands for Christ's sake that they will receive a hundred fold (Matthew 19:29). Beyond all these things there is a crown of righteousness (II Timothy 4:8).

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3. "He is the tower of salvation" (v. 51). No gift is as precious as the gift of God's son. If a man gains the whole world and loses his soul, it has profited him nothing" (Matthew 16:26). God is the tower of our salvation. The free gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23 b).

### 3. David's Song, 22:1-51.

#### *The Lord's Deliverance.* 22:1-20

And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song, in the day *that* the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:

2 And he said,

The Lord *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;

3 the God of my rock; in him will I trust:

*he is* my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge,

my saviour; thou savest me from violence.

4 I will call on the Lord, *who is* worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

5 When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid;

6 the sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me.

7 In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God:

and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry *did enter* into his ears.

8 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth.

9 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

- 10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down;  
and darkness *was* under his feet.
- 11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly:  
and he was seen upon the wings of the wind.
- 12 And he made darkness pavilions round about him,  
dark waters, *and* thick clouds of the skies.
- 13 Through the brightness before him were coals of fire  
kindled.
- 14 The Lord thundered from heaven,  
and the Most High uttered his voice.
- 15 And he sent out arrows, and scattered them;  
lightning, and discomfited them.
- 16 And the channels of the sea appeared,  
the foundations of the world were discovered,  
at the rebuking of the Lord,  
at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.
- 17 He sent from above, he took me;  
he drew me out of many waters:
- 18 He delivered me from my strong enemy,  
*and* from them that hated me:  
for they were too strong for me.
- 19 They prevented me in the day of my calamity:  
but the Lord was my stay.
- 20 He brought me forth also into a large place:  
he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

1. *When was this song composed? 22:1*

The song was written, "in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all of his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul." This title indicated that it was written when David's triumphs over his enemies at home and abroad were still fresh in his mind. Reference is made to the great covenant made with David in chapter seven (verse 51), and it is usually attributed to sometime after Nathan's visit to David when David proposed building the temple. A. F. Kirkpatrick writing in the *Cambridge Bible*

*for Schools and Colleges* attributed the psalm to the earlier years of David's reign, rather than the latter years on the account of the free and joyous tone and the bold expressions of conscious integrity which pointed to a time prior to the period when David's life was clouded by the fatal consequences of his sin. On the other hand, the psalm is a review of God's many mercies to David; therefore Matthew Henry in his commentary took the position in the introduction to chapter twenty-two that David penned the psalm when he was old, giving a general review of the mercies of his life and the many wonderful preservations God had blessed him with from first to last. He admitted in his comments that it could have been penned when David was young upon the occasion of some of his first deliverances and kept by his side for use afterwards upon every new deliverance, making it his practice to sing the song. The appeal of the song has been so great that it was a part of the "Haphtarah," or lessons from the prophets, appointed to be read in the synagogue of the Jews on the sabbath in conjunction with Deuteronomy 32, a passage from the Law. The Spanish Jews also read this song on the sabbath day of the Passover celebration. Since mention is made of David's deliverance out of the hand of Saul, the song must have been written early in David's life; and since his sin was forgiven, he did not mention it in the psalm.

2. *Which psalm resembles this song?* 22:2

This psalm is the same as Psalm 18 with only slight differences. The first line is omitted from Psalm 18, as it is recorded in this chapter of Samuel. Psalm 18 opens with a statement, "I will love thee, O Lord my strength" (Psalm 18:1). It is admitted by most students of the Scripture that this magnificent hymn is substantially identical with Psalm 18 and that both the eighteenth Psalm and this magnificent hymn came from the same author. The form found here is supposed to be the original form

and that is the Psalter must be a revision prepared by David himself, probably towards the close of his life, for public recitation. This fact throws some light on the authorship of the Psalter, inasmuch as this one Psalm is attributed to David very definitely. If Psalm 18 is by the hand of David, many of the other songs which breathe the same spirit could also be attributed to him by comparison of the vocabulary, style, and diction.

3. *What are the main sections of the psalm?*

David began with a full statement of his trust in the Lord (verses 2-4). He called God his rock, fortress, and deliverer (verse 2). He also called him his shield, horn, high tower, refuge, and saviour (verse 3). Since God was all these things, to David, he said that he would trust in Him (verse 3), and call on Him (verse 4). He said that God is worthy to be praised (verse 4) because God saved him from violence (verse 3). The reader wonders if David were referring to the time when he was kept back from violently destroying Nabal (I Samuel 25).

David moved on to recount the experiences of calamity and deliverances (verses 5-20). David had seen dark days. He said that the pangs of death had surrounded him and the sons of Belial had caused him to be afraid. The very horrors of hell had surrounded him and the traps of death had stood before him. Many instances in David's career fit such descriptions. He was trapped in a cave with Saul's men blocking the mouth. Worthless fellows such as the assassins of Ish-bosheth and the rebel Sheba disputed his rule. David had to fight for his life and fled for refuge to Philistia. On a number of occasions he must have been tempted to yield to unlawful means in order to advance his cause, but God had kept him back. At one of the lowest ebbs in David's life, his own men had talked of stoning him to death; and when he had no one else to help him, he "encouraged himself in the Lord his God" (I Samuel 30:6 b). David knew that God had

heard his prayer, and he pictured him as hearing his voice as he dwelt in His holy temple. Since the temple in Jerusalem had not been built, his reference must have been to the vaulted arches of heaven, God's true dwelling place.

David presented a very complete picture of God's activities as he said that the earth shook and trembled. This is poetic language, and it is not necessary to find a historical reference to the time when an earthquake aided David in his activities. David was simply saying that God had moved heaven and earth in order to bring about His good providences. David viewed God as becoming angry with the sins of men and breathing out smoke and fire, so that fires of vengeance were kindled. His vision of God was one of an omnipotent ruler who could bend the heavens and dwell even in the dark places of earth. He viewed Him as moving on the wings of angels and flying through the skies with the wings of the wind to bear him along (verse 11). David must have had in mind the clouds of the sky as he described darkness as being the tent which enshrouds his majesty. Lightning flashes which burst through the dense clouds were to David the rays of the unapproachable light in which God dwells. Thunder was the voice of God, and David called Him, "the most High" (verse 14). Lightning was like the arrows of God, and David attributed much of the scattering of his enemies to God's interference (verse 15). Even the depths of the sea were not beyond the reach of the power of God; the very foundations of the world were uncovered by Him as if they were blown bare by the breath of His nostrils (verse 16). David knew that God had answered his prayers and delivered him from the depths of many troublesome times. Without God's strength, he could not have done what he had done because he viewed his enemies as being too strong for him. He certainly must have felt this way as he faced the giant from Gath. His enemies outran him in the times of his calamity, but God had

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strengthened him. David finally arrived at what he called, "a larger place," (verse 20); his prosperous kingdom was the result of God's blessing on his effects. David did not think he had done this all by himself, but he thought it had come to pass because God had delighted in him (verse 20).

### *The Lord's Rewards. 22:21-31*

- 21 The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness;  
According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.
- 22 For I have kept the ways of the Lord,  
and have not wickedly departed from my God.
- 23 For all his judgments *were* before me:  
and *as for* his statutes, I did not depart from them.
- 24 I was also upright before him,  
and have kept myself from mine iniquity.
- 25 Therefore the Lord hath recompensed me according to  
my righteousness;  
according to my cleanness in his eyesight.
- 26 With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful,  
*and* with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright.
- 27 With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure;  
and with the forward thou wilt show thyself unsavory.
- 28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save:  
but thine eyes *are* upon the haughty, *that* thou mayest  
bring *them* down.
- 29 For thou *art* my lamp, O Lord:  
and the Lord will lighten my darkness.
- 30 For by thee I have run through a troop:  
by my God have I leaped over a wall.
- 31 *As for* God, his way *is* perfect;  
the word of the Lord *is* tried:  
he *is* a buckler to all them that trust in him.

The third part of David's psalm was a lengthy affirmation of his righteousness. It is this particular section of the psalm which makes some of the critics believe it was written before he had sinned with Bathsheba. David knew his sin had been forgiven, however, and as far as he was concerned, it was forgotten. He did not need to make mention of the adverse circumstances of his life at a time when he was speaking of the blessings he had received. The song could have been written late in his life, even after his sin with Bathsheba. Over all, David had kept the ways of the Lord (verse 22). He had not wickedly departed from God in the same way in which Saul had openly disobeyed God to such an extent that finally God had abandoned him. David had followed God's judgments and statutes. He gave evidence of being acquainted with the Law, and such evidence pointed to the fact that the Pentateuch had been written before the days of David. When David was giving his final instructions to Solomon, he told him to walk in the commandments, statutes, and ordinances of God, as they were written in the "Law of Moses" (I Kings 2:3).

David was called a man after God's own heart (I Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22), and David knew that it was because he had done his best to follow God that God had recompensed him according to his righteousness (verse 25). This was according to the very nature of God, a full description of which David gave as he considered his own life. God would be merciful to the merciful; He would be upright to the upright; He would be pure to the pure (verses 26, 27a). God would be against the unsavory and plead the cause of the afflicted people so that they might be saved from their enemies, watching the proud and haughty in order that He might trip them up and break them down to destruction (verses 27b, 28). David called God his candle or lamp; and in times of darkness or distress, God had been the light along his way (verse 29).

David never grew tired of singing the praises of God, and in the next section of his psalm he praised God as the source of his strength. It was by God's help that he had broken down many troops of armed resistance, even escaping, as it were, by leaping over walls. David knew that as long as he walked in God's way, he was going the right way; and it was the "word of the Lord" which he had proved in the very fires of adversity. David would rather have the Lord with him than to have the armor of men. He proved this when he gave Saul's armor back to him and went forth to meet Goliath, "in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (I Samuel 17:45). David's feet had been made swift by the Lord (verse 34), and his hands had been nimble and strong because of the knowledge that God was with him. God had been his very armor (verse 36), and his girdle (verse 41). His faith was like that of the apostle Paul, who described the Christian's armor in great detail (Ephesians 6:13-18). Equipped with the spirit of the Lord, David had been able to enlarge his steps (verse 37), pursue his enemies (verse 38), consume his foes (verse 39), and "beat them as small as the dust of the earth" (verse 43). Even enemies from within his own kingdom had not brought David's downfall, and he had spread his dominion east and west and north and south.

*The Lord's Victory. 22:32-51*

- 32 For who *is* God, save the Lord?  
and who *is* a rock, save our God?
- 33 God *is* my strength *and* power;  
and he maketh my way perfect.
- 34 He maketh my feet like hinds' *feet*:  
and setteth me upon my high places.
- 35 He teacheth my hands to war;  
so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

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- 36 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation:  
and thy gentleness hath made me great.
- 37 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me;  
so that my feet did not slip.
- 38 I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them;  
and turned not again until I had consumed them.
- 39 And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that  
they could not arise:  
yea, they are fallen under my feet.
- 40 For thou hast girded me with strength to battle:  
them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under  
me.
- 41 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies,  
that I might destroy them that hate me.
- 42 They looked, but *there was* none to save;  
*even* unto the Lord, but he answered them not.
- 43 Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth:  
I did stamp them as the mire of the street, *and* did  
spread them abroad.
- 44 Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my  
people,  
thou hast kept me *to be* head of the heathen:  
a people *which* I knew not shall serve me.
- 45 Strangers shall submit themselves unto me:  
as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.
- 46 Strangers shall fade away,  
and they shall be afraid out of their close places.
- 47 The Lord liveth; and blessed *be* my rock;  
and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.
- 48 *It is* God that avengeth me,  
and that bringeth down the people under me,
- 49 and that bringeth me forth from mine enemies:  
thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that  
rose up against me:  
thou hast delivered me from the violent man.

- 50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among  
the heathen,  
and I will sing praises unto thy name.
- 51 *He is* the tower of salvation for his king:  
and showeth mercy to his anointed,  
unto David, and to his seed for evermore.

David finally broke into a doxology of praise and thanksgiving. He returned to the theme with which he began the psalm, as he called God, "the rock of his salvation" (verses 2, 49). God had avenged David of his enemies and subdued people under his command. None of his enemies had been able to overcome him, and he had been exalted to a high place among the kings of the day. Violent men had not been able to destroy him, not even his own son, Absalom. David therefore, gave thanks to God that even the heathen might know of his mercies. David would sing praises to God who was his "tower of salvation" (verses 3, 51). David closed his song by referring to himself as God's anointed who had received God's mercy. God's mercy was not only given to David, but was promised to his seed after him, this latter reference being an allusion to a covenant made with him in II Samuel 7.

#### 4. *What five songs are recorded in Samuel?*

The following songs are all found in the books of Samuel and furnish typical samples of Israel's poetry:

- |                                  |           |          |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 1. Hannah's song of Thanksgiving | I Samuel  | 2: 1-10  |
| 2. David's Lament                | II Samuel | 1:19-27  |
| 3. David's Dirge                 | II Samuel | 3:33, 34 |
| 4. David's Song of Thanksgiving  | II Samuel | 22: 1- 5 |
| 5. David's Last Words            | II Samuel | 23: 1- 7 |

SECOND SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 22 IN REVIEW

1. With what Psalm did this song compare? \_\_\_\_\_
2. By what figures did David describe God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. With what weapon of war did David compare lightning? \_\_\_\_\_
4. With what adjective did David describe God's way? \_\_\_\_\_
5. With what did he say God had girded him? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Whom did David say had avenged him? \_\_\_\_\_
7. To whom did David give thanks? \_\_\_\_\_
8. To whom did David sing praises? \_\_\_\_\_
9. With what structure did David compare God? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who was God's anointed? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 23

- Vv. 1-7 *David's last song.* David described himself as a "sweet psalmist of Israel" (v. 1). He was just that. He gave Israel many of her outstanding spiritual songs and found expression for many thoughts of his mind in poetic structure which could be set to music.
- Vv. 8-39 *David's mighty men.* What David accomplished was not done by his own power alone. Men of great ability had joined themselves to him. They had fought many campaigns together. It is fitting that their names should be mentioned as the final days of David are described.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God spake by men.* David said, "The spirit of the Lord spake by me" (v. 2). This is one of the clearest claims for inspiration made anywhere in these books. David did not speak by his own will alone. God's spirit guided him. He was inspired.
2. *Many hands make light tasks.* A careful reading of the epistles of Paul will reveal that he had a galaxy of helpers to assist him in his preaching of the gospel. Some of them are well known—Timothy, Titus, Silas, Barnabas, and John Mark. Others are mentioned only briefly—Epaphras, Epaphroditus, Tertius, Tychicus, and Urbane. These helpers of Paul's number into scores. David had his helpers, too. A long list of them impresses us with the fact that God's work is accomplished largely by cooperative efforts. Men of like precious faith should bind themselves together to go forward for Christ.

## 4. David's Last Words and His Mighty Men, 23:1-39.

*David's Last Song. 23:1-7*

Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

2 The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,  
and his word *was* in my tongue.

3 The God of Israel said,  
the Rock of Israel spake to me,  
He that ruleth over men *must* be just,  
ruling in the fear of God.

4 And *he shall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the  
sun riseth,  
*even* a morning without clouds;  
as the tender grass *springing* out of the earth  
by clear shining after rain.

5 Although my house *be* not so with God;  
yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,  
ordered in all *things*, and sure:  
for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire,  
although he make *it* not to grow.

6 But *the sons* of Belial *shall be* all of them as thorns  
thrust away,  
because they cannot be taken with hands:

7 but the man *that* shall touch them  
must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear;  
and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the *same*  
place.

1. *What titles did David ascribe to himself? 23:1*

David stood in a long line of great men such as Jacob, Moses, Joshua, and Samuel. When Jacob came to the end of his life, he called his sons before him and blessed each of them. This was his last testament (Genesis 49:1-33).

As Moses laid down the reins of leadership of Israel, he gave a blessing to each of the tribes (Deuteronomy 33:1-29). He had already composed a song (Deuteronomy 32:1-52). Joshua called the tribes of Israel to him as he was nearing his death and made a covenant with them (Joshua 24:1-28). Samuel had also uttered a valedictory when he was about to die (I Samuel 12:1-15). David not only composed a song, but he uttered a few last words in summary of his career. He called himself by titles which must have meant the most to him—"the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel."

2. *Was David inspired of God? 23:2*

The great hymn of triumph in chapter twenty-two composed when David was at the zenith of his prosperity was followed by his "last words." They were delivered as a parting testimony to the world of his confidence in the fulfillment of the promise concerning the everlasting dominion of his posterity, and it was all given as an oracle of God. He claims for his words the special divine inspiration which was granted to the spokesmen of God. Christ, Himself bore witness of the fact that David was inspired (Matthew 22:43).

3. *What was David's view of a ruler? 23:3*

David knew that a king should be just. He had learned this through his experiences, but most of all through the revelation God had given him. A ruler was one who should lead his people in the fear of God. He was to be "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth; even a morning without clouds" (verse 4 a). God's people depended on the king for life-giving provisions as the earth depends upon the life-giving sunshine of a cloudless morning. David went on to say that the king was to be like the tender grass, springing out of the earth after a rain shower (verse 4 b). To appreciate this latter figure, the reader must remember that Palestine is not per-

petually clothed in verdure. At times, the land was only a brown, hard-baked, gaping plain. At intervals there would be only withered stems of thistles and other hardy plants to tell that life had ever existed there. When the rains came, there was the deep, solid growth of clover, and grasses. David had been familiar with such yearly transformations of the dry and dusty landscape around Bethlehem into a lovely garden of brilliant flowers. These annual transformations were an emblem of the gracious influences of the righteous government guided by the ideal king. David here arose to a height of inspired utterance which should be compared with the lofty utterances of Isaiah, who spoke of the wilderness and the desert rejoicing and blossoming "as the rose" (Isaiah 35:1). David's utterance finds its fullest fruition in the Lord Jesus Christ and His righteous rule over all nations. The prophecy in David's last words is the companion and the complement of the prophecy in II Samuel 7. There the promise of an eternal dominion was given to the house of David and found a partial fulfillment in his immediate descendants, but the complete fulfillment could only be in Christ. In David's last words he drew by inspiration a portrait of an ideal ruler, some features of which were realized partially in Solomon and the better kings of Judah, but the complete picture finds its perfect realization only in Jesus Christ. David could hope for little more; and he closed his oracle concerning the king with a statement that this was all his salvation and his desire, even though he had not seen the full enlargement of the picture (verse 5).

4. *With what psalm may this oracle be compared?*

23:6, 7

David shifts his attention from the righteous ruler to the base and shameless sons of Satan, who are described throughout the books of Samuel as the "sons of Belial." He makes this same kind of a shift in Psalm 1 where he

began by describing the man who did not stand in the council of the ungodly, or walk in the way of the sinner, or sit in the seat of the scoffer. After David described the righteous man who meditated day and night in the Law of the Lord and predicted he would bring forth his fruit in his season, he turned his attention to the unrighteous. They were not so, but were like chaff which the wind drove away (Psalm 1:4). Although the wording is not the same, the spirit of this last oracle is much like the thrust of the first Psalm.

*David's Mighty Men. 23:8-39*

8 These *be* the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same *was* Adino the Eznite: *he lifted up his spear* against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.

9 And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away:

10 He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the Lord wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil.

11 And after him *was* Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentils: and the people fled from the Philistines.

12 But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the Lord wrought a great victory.

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.

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14 And David *was* then in a hold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then *in* Beth-lehem.

15 And David longed, and said, Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which *is* by the gate!

16 And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord.

17 And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: *is not this* the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men.

18 And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, *and slew them*, and had the name among three.

19 Was he not most honorable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three.

20 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow:

21 And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

22 These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men.

23 He was more honorable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him over his guard.

24 Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem,

- 25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite,
- 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,
- 27 Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite,
- 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,
- 29 Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin,
- 30 Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash,
- 31 Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,
- 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan.
- 33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite,
- 34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,
- 35 Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Abrite,
- 36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,
- 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Nahari the Beerothite, armor-bearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah,
- 38 Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite,
- 39 Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.

5. *Who were David's "mighty men?"* 23:8-39

David had a fine list of officers who were responsible for many of the affairs of state, and they were listed on two occasions (II Samuel 8:14-18; 20:23-26). In addition to these leaders, David had three chief officers, and thirty-four other mighty men. The officers are listed here and also in I Chronicles 11 and I Chronicles 27. A comparison of the listings of the names is as follows:

A listing is as follows:

<i>II Samuel xxiii</i>	<i>*I Chronicles xi</i>	<i>I Chronicles xxvii</i>
Adino	Jashobeam	Jashobeam
Eleazar	Eleazar	Dodai
Shammah		
Abishai	Abishai	

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Benaiah	Benaiah	Benaiah
Asahel	Asahel	Asahel
Elhanan	Elhanan	
Shammah	Shammoth	Shamhuth
Elika		
Helez	Helez	Helez
Ira	Ira	Ira
Abiezer	Abiezer	Abiezer
Mebunnai	Sibbecai	Sibbecai
Zalmon	Ilai	
Maharai	Maharai	Maharai
Heleb	Heled	Heldai
Ittai	Ithai	
Benaiah	Benaiah	Benaiah
Hiddai	Hurai	
Abi-albon	Abiel	
Azmaveth	Azmaveth	
Eliahba	Eliahba	
(The sons of)	(The sons of)	
Jashen	Hashem	
Jonathan	Jonathan	
Ahiam	Ahiam	
Eliphelet	Eliphai	
Shammah of	Hepher	
Harar		
Eliam	Abijah	
Hezro	Hezro	
Paarai	Naarai	
Igal	Joel	
Bani	Mibhar	
Zelek	Zelek	
Naharai	Naharai	
Ira	Ira	
Gareb	Gareb	
Uriah	Uriah	

\*In I Chronicles xi sixteen additional names are given.

*6. How had these men attained to their rank? 23:8*

Adoni had won his rank as chief among the captains when he had slain 800 men on one occasion (verse 8). Eleazar, another of the three mighty men of David, had fought so valiantly that his hand had tensed; and when the battle was done, he could not unclasp his sword (verse 10). Shammah had stood his ground in the midst of a field and achieved a mighty victory against the Philistines (verses 11, 12). Others had performed similar feats of courage and valor which had earned them places of leadership in David's army.

*7. When had the three mighty men befriended David?  
23:13-17*

Three of David's thirty chief men had gone down to the well at Bethlehem to get some of the water from the well in order to quench David's thirst. David must have longed for a taste of this water when he was fleeing from Saul and staying in Adullam (I Samuel 22:1). It was while David was there that his parents had come to him. He must have reminisced on the occasion and thought how good would be the taste of some water from the well from which he had drunk as a lad at home in Bethlehem. Three of his mighty men broke through the lines of the Philistines and got the water out of the well which was by the gate of Bethlehem and brought some of it to David. David refused to drink of it and poured it out before the Lord. David did not do this because he did not appreciate the sacrifice the men had made in getting it for him, but he felt unworthy to drink the water after they had risked their lives to get it. He poured it out as an offering to the Lord. These three mighty men had endeared themselves to David by putting their lives in jeopardy to do a service for him.

8. *What other feats had his mighty men performed?* 23:18

Abishai, Jacob's brother, who had led a third of David's army when they put down the revolt of Absalom's army, had slain 300 men at one time. This had built quite a reputation for him (verse 18). Benaiah had slain two lion-like men of Moab and had also gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit in the time of snow (verse 20). He had also killed an Egyptian who had a reputation as a fierce fighter (verse 21). The reference to his killing a lion in the midst of the snow is a unique reference to some of the circumstances of the land. Lions were not common and it must have been a mountain lion. It must have been killed in the heights where snow would be most likely to fall. Reference was made to Asahel in David's list of mighty men (verse 24), although he had died quite early at the hands of Abner (II Samuel 2:18). Uriah, the Hittite, the husband of Bathsheba, was also mentioned. He had indeed proved himself to be a valiant soldier, and his death arose out of the tragic circumstances of David's sin with Bathsheba (verse 39).

## CHAPTER 23 IN REVIEW

1. What titles did David ascribe to himself? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was David inspired of God? \_\_\_\_\_
3. By what figure did he refer to God? \_\_\_\_\_
4. To what did David compare a just ruler? \_\_\_\_\_
5. To what Psalm may these words be compared? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many mighty men did David have? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Where was the well from which three of his men brought him water? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which soldier killed a lion in a pit? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who fought so long that his hand clung to his sword? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Was Uriah one of these "mighty men"? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 24

- Vv. 1-9 *The numbering.* David conceived the plan of going throughout the length and breadth of Israel and numbering his people. Joab opposed this, but David went ahead with the project.
- Vv. 10-15 *The plague.* David was given a choice of three penalties for his rash actions. He chose the one which he thought would make him most dependent upon the mercy of God. The plague swept over Israel, but was stayed when it spread to Jerusalem.
- Vv. 16-25 *The plague stayed...* When the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem, the Lord said, "It is enough" (v. 16). David then went out to offer sacrifice to the Lord. He built an altar on the mountain immediately east of his capital.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Pride goeth before destruction*" (Proverbs 16:18). There is nothing wrong in numbering a people. God commanded his people to be numbered twice while they were wandering in the wilderness (Numbers 1 and 26). David evidently numbered his people in order to revel in his strength. It is wrong to take pride in one's own physical accomplishments and power. For this reason he was punished.
2. "*If any is to glory, let him glory in the Lord*" (I Corinthians 1:31). Sacrifices to God are not to be free (v. 24). Araunah offered to give David the threshing floor and the oxen for his sacrifice. David refused saying that he would not offer something to God which had cost him nothing. What we give to God ought

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to represent a sacrifice. It should come from the labors of our hands and represent the best that we have to offer to God. God was entreated for the land in the days of David by his sacrificial offering, and God will be pleased by the sacrificial efforts of Christians in every age.

### 5. The Sin of Census, 24:1-25.

#### *The Numbering.* 24:1-9

And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

2 For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

3 And Joab said unto the king, Now the Lord thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundred-fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see *it*: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?

4 Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.

5 And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer:

6 Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tah-tim-hodshi; and they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon,

7 And came to the stronghold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even* to Beer-sheba.

8 So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

9 And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men.

1. *When did the numbering occur? 24:1*

There is no indication of the exact time of the numbering of Israel which provoked the anger of the Lord, but certain indications in the text point to a date late in the reign of David. First of all, we read that "*again* the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." This sounds very definitely like a reference to the famine which came in the days of David three years in a row when the Gibeonites called for vengeance (II Samuel 21:1). Since the anger of the Lord was kindled again, this numbering occurred after the famine. In the second place, the numbering took nearly ten months of time, and it would be very difficult for the commander-in-chief of the army to spend this length of time in what would be a peacetime task until after the conquests which marked the beginning of David's reign had been completed. In the third place, the description of David's preparation for building the temple which occupied the latter part of his reign is given in the book of Chronicles immediately after the account of this numbering. The numbering itself must have been one of David's last acts.

2. *Did God move David to make the census? 24:1 b*

The subject of the verb "moved" in this verse is the Lord whose anger was kindled against Israel. The nation had sinned against God and incurred His anger, and He moved David to perform an act which brought down a severe punishment on the nation. God did not compel David to sin; but in order to test and prove his character, he allowed the temptation to come to him. Although we read in James 1:13 that no man is tempted of God, we are also instructed to pray that God should not bring us

into temptation (Matthews 6:13). In I Chronicles 22:1 the statement is made that Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number his people. Such a condition would be similar to that of the days of Job when God allowed Satan to afflict a righteous man (Job 1:12; 2:10).

3. *Why did David want to number his people? 24:2*

David said that he wanted to know the number of his people, but he was hardly so childish that he wanted to know the number simply for the sake of the knowledge. He had an end in mind which made the numbering wrong. The mere taking of a census was not wrong in itself, for God had commanded the numbering of His people on two separate occasions as they wandered in the wilderness (Numbers 1:26). On other occasions, the number of people who went out to war was given indicating there must have been a consciousness of numbers and a means for ascertaining the exact numbers (I Samuel 11:8; 13:2).

4. *Why did Joab oppose the numbering? 24:3*

Joab was not a man moved by religious scruples, and his opposition must have been based on some other reason. He would have to leave the work that he was best fitted for, and this may have been the basis of his objection. Later events proved that it was wrong, and Joab may have been able to ascertain this better than the king himself. Since he was not moved by religious scruples and his selfishness did not always cause him to do his work, his strong objection to the numbering of the people arose from his perception of David's motives.

5. *What was wrong with David's actions?*

David overruled Joab's objections and sent him out to number the people of Israel. Something was dreadfully wrong with David's actions. The numbering was presented in verse one as the manifestation of the wrath of God against Israel, and in verse three Joab tried to stop the king from continuing. In verse ten, David himself admitted that it was a grievous sin against God. His "heart

smote him." Moreover, as a sin, the numbering of the people was punished by the Lord (verse 12). Josephus indicated that the census was a sin because he neglected to demand the atonement money which was specified in the law (Exodus 30:12 ff.). Such could hardly be the case because the collecting of the atonement money mentioned in the book of Exodus was the original enrolling of the people as members of the commonwealth of Israel. Many students of the Scripture have suggested that David entered into the whole affair with pride and vain boasting and that he commanded the census out of his vanity. But David was hardly so vain as to desire simply to have the number which he could quote or which could be recorded in the annals and provide him with an opportunity for reviewing how mighty he was. This may have entered into the sin, since Joab prayed that God multiply the number by 100 and allow the eyes of the king to see it. A higher purpose for the census was suggested in I Chronicles 27:23, 24, where the numbering was connected with the military organization of the kingdom. David must not have taken the census in order to boast nor in order to levy taxes. He must have desired to be fully acquainted with his defensive power and thus came to a place where he was trusting his own might and not leaning heavily on the strength of God, although we cannot be justified in concluding that he was intending to enter into a campaign of world-wide conquests in an effort to make him more of a world power. God reduced the number to show that any effort of feeble man alone can be brought to nought by an almighty God.

6. *What was the route of the enumerators? 24:5-7*

Those who took the census went out from Jerusalem and crossed over Jordan. They set up their headquarters in Aroer, a spot on the north bank of the Arnon river ten miles east of the Dead Sea. It was the southernmost town of Israel east of the Jordan and has been referred to as

“the Beersheba of the East.” From this point, the workers moved north into the territory of Gad, the tribe which settled in the center section of the land east of the Jordan (Numbers 32:33-42). Jazer was a town taken by Israel from the Amorites (Numbers 21:32) and assigned to the tribe of Gad (Numbers 32:1-3, 35). The city was named a Levitical city (Joshua 21:39). The importance of the town is seen in the fact that it gave its name to the district including some dependent towns (Numbers 31:32), and both Isaiah and Jeremiah mentioned the place in their prophecies (Isaiah 16:8, 9 and Jeremiah 48:32). It has been identified with Khirbet-jazzier. The men then turned north through Gilead and went throughout the land to a point mentioned only here in the Scriptures; the name of Tahtimhodshi means the “lowland recently occupied” and is probably a reference to the edge of the Israelite territory. Everybody was counted including those in Dan-Jaan, Israel’s northernmost town. David’s servants then moved west to the Phoenician territory on the Mediterranean sea-coast counting people all the way to Tyre, the capital city of Phoenicia. They moved down through western Palestine taking the census in the cities which had once belonged to the Canaanites until they reached Israel’s southernmost town, Beersheba. When the entire count had been made, they brought their report up to the king at Jerusalem. The total time spent in taking the census was nine months and twenty days (verse 8).

7. *What was the total of the number of the people? 24:9*

Joab and his men had counted 800,000 men in the ten tribes of Israel. There were 500,000 men in the tribe of Judah. Inasmuch as men were counted only after they had reached their twentieth birthday, this would be 1,300,000 men twenty years of age and over, thus men able to go to war (Numbers 1:3). There must have been an equal number of men under twenty years of age, making the total of 2,600,000 males. An equal number of females

should be added to bring the grand total to 5,200,000 or 6,000,000 people. The number is larger in Chronicles (I Chronicles 21:5), and an additional note is made that the men of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin were not counted (I Chronicles 21:6). The smaller number in the book of Samuel must be without the two tribes mentioned, and the number in Chronicles probably included them. The number in Chronicles is given in connection with David organizing his kingdom, and the tribe of Benjamin is mentioned in the list of tribes and their chieftains (I Chronicles 27:21). An additional note is made in the book of Chronicles stating that the count was not the official count (I Chronicles 27:24). Critics take particular exception to the numbers found in Chronicles as compared to those found in the books of Samuel and Kings. Certainly the writer of Chronicles did not deliberately seek to make his work appear ridiculous by increasing the numbers in the Chronicles, although the radical critics generally charge that the numbers are exaggerated in Chronicles. Neither did the writer give numbers out of ignorance, for the work is too superb for such a thing to be possible. It must be noted that the numbers given are round numbers, representing only approximate figures. Only thousands are taken into account, and the intention apparently is merely to indicate the greatness of the armies. While the numbers in Chronicles are usually larger than those in Samuel or Kings, sometimes they are smaller. For example, 40,000 stalls for Solomon's horses are mentioned in I Kings 4:26, but II Chronicles 9:25 gives 4,000. In I Chronicles 11:11, three hundred mighty men are mentioned, but eight hundred are given in II Samuel 23:8. In I Chronicles 21:12 David was given a choice of three years of famine, whereas the number is seven years in II Samuel 24:13. In all of these cases the numbers are smaller in Chronicles than in the parallel passages in Kings or Samuel. Lastly, we must

remember that even though today we are not in a position to explain precisely and to our satisfaction how the differences in the numerals may have arisen, these numerals being so isolated must not shake the conviction we have in the general historical credibility of Chronicles. Many more passages are in accordance with the facts as found elsewhere, and these are sufficient to give the earmarks of historicity and trustworthiness to the scriptures of Chronicles.

*The Plague. 24:10-15*

10 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

11 For when David was up in the morning, the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

12 Go and say unto David, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three *things*; choose thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee.

13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

14 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

15 So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.

*8. How did David know he had sinned? 24:10*

David's heart smote him after he had completed the numbering of the people. He calmly reflected upon the matter and came to see the folly of his intentions. If he had acted because the people themselves had sinned and thus brought down upon themselves the wrath of God, he knew that it was wrong to react against their evil by performing an evil himself. Two wrongs never make a right. If the people had done something wrong, David should have done something good to counteract it. David also knew that Joab had opposed this numbering, and he came to see that Joab was right. His conviction was confirmed in the morning when Gad, the prophet, brought the judgment of God to him.

*9. Who was the prophet Gad? 24:11*

Gad had first come to David when David fled from Saul (I Samuel 22:5). His ministry at that time was to encourage David while he was a fugitive. He particularly brought God's message to the effect that David was to stay in the borders of Israel while fleeing from Saul. He was not to seek refuge in Moab or any other place outside the land of his forefathers. Although it was Nathan who brought him the message of the great covenant (II Samuel 7), Gad must have been a constant companion to David. He was one of the three men who wrote the entire history of David (I Chronicles 29:29). His message following the numbering was one giving David a choice of three penalties—famine, flight, or pestilence.

*10. Why did David choose the pestilence? 24:14*

David felt that he would be more dependent upon the mercy of God if a pestilence was sent upon Israel. It was to be a pestilence lasting for three days, but its toll was heavy. Had the Israelites suffered seven years of famine, the land would have been brought to its knees in hunger. Her enemies would have been able to attack her and overcome her. In that way, Israel would have been

at the mercy of hostile men. The same would have been true if they were forced to flee for three months. The toll would have been extremely heavy in such circumstances, and they would have been subjected to all the acts of reprisal which enemy nations could devise.

*11. What was the effect of the pestilence? 24:15*

God sent a pestilence on Israel which afflicted them all day long. Seventy thousand of Israel's men who had recently been counted in the myriads of Israel were smitten before God. The great number in which David had taken pride was thus reduced with one fell swoop from the hand of God. David learned a lesson that could be learned in no other way. He saw that man at his best is helpless before God.

*The Plague Stayed. 24:16-25*

16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing place of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

19 And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded.

20 And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing floor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

22 And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood.

23 All these *things* did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept thee.

24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings. So the Lord was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

### 12. *Where was the threshing floor of Araunah? 24:16*

The plague began on the morning of its announcement by the prophet Gad and continued through that day. Some commentators have presented the thought that the plague continued till the expiration of the three days, and the Vulgate translation supports this interpretation. But the plague was stopped earlier than originally intended because God's mercy was poured out upon the people. The pestilence must have lasted to the appointed time for evening prayers, which would be the ninth hour of the day or the third hour of the afternoon. Although the pestilence did not last for the three days announced, the toll exceeded considerably the number destroyed by the most violent pestilences on record. Jerusalem itself was spared when God stayed the hand of the angel of the Lord, who must have been distinctly visible to the people.

His visible appearance is described more minutely in the book of Chronicles, and David saw him standing by the threshing floor of Araunah between heaven and earth with a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem (I Chronicles 21:15, 16). The threshing floor of Araunah was situated outside the city of Jerusalem on Mt. Moriah, a hill to the northeast of mount Zion. It was here that the temple was built later in the days of Solomon.

*13. What was David's offer to God? 24:17*

David stands in the company of the great intercessors of the Bible. He took the same attitude as that taken by Moses when he offered to have his name blotted out of the book of life in order that the people of Israel might be spared (Exodus 32:32). This was the same compassion as that demonstrated by the apostle Paul, who said he could wish himself to be anathema in order that his people Israel could be saved (Romans 9:3). David said that he was the one who had sinned against God and brought pestilence upon Israel. He prayed that the people of Israel might be spared because they were like sheep without a shepherd and were not responsible for what had happened. He asked that he himself and his father's people might be punished for what he had done, but he asked for God to be merciful to the thousands of Israel.

*14. What did Gad tell David to do? 24:18*

Gad instructed David to go up to the mountain where he had seen the angel of the Lord and build an altar to God in the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. Araunah is called a Jebusite because he was not a member of the commonwealth of Israel, but a Canaanite man. His name is not a typical Hebrew name and substantiates the statement that he was a Jebusite.

*15. Why did Araunah offer to give David the threshing floor? 24:20*

Araunah saw David coming and went out to meet his king. He asked what brought him to his threshing floor,

and David told him that he had come to buy the floor in order to build an altar to the Lord and remove the plague from the people. In typical Canaanite fashion, Araunah offered to give him the threshing floor, the machinery for wood for a fire, and the oxen for an offering. Ephron, the Hittite, had made this same kind of offer to Abraham when Abraham wanted to buy the cave of Machpelah as a burial place for Sarah. On that occasion, the Hittite named his price as he and Abraham continued to discuss the matter (Genesis 23:15). Araunah wanted to have part in the sacrifice which David intended to make, and he offered the needed provisions to the king.

*16. Why did David refuse the offer? 24:24*

David did not want to offer something to God which had cost him nothing. Had David taken the material from Araunah, the sacrifice would not have been David's but Araunah's. His spirit is an ideal for the spirit of a Christian. Christians should not give something to God which has meant nothing to them. If they enter into this kind of practice, the offering will mean nothing to God. God expects man to give of the best to Him.

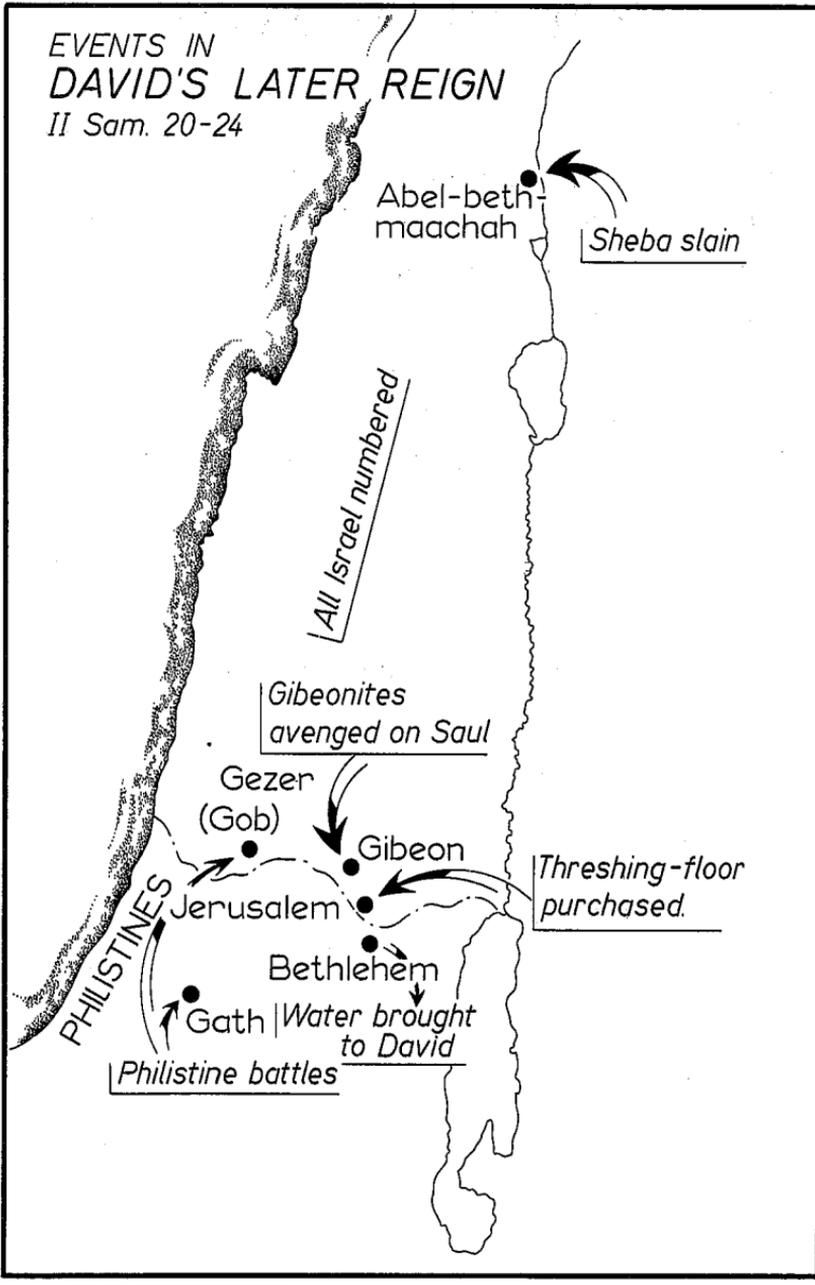
*17. What later use was made of the area? 24:25*

Additional notes were given in the book of Chronicles, where it was noted that when David built the altar and offered the burnt offerings and peace offerings as he called upon the name of the Lord, God answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering (I Chronicles 21:26). There it was stated that the Lord also commanded the angel to put up his sword again into the sheath, and the pestilence ceased. David continued to offer sacrifice upon the altar built on the threshing floor of Araunah and designated the spot at the site of the temple which was afterwards to be built (II Chronicles 22:1). The Chronicler also appended an account of the preparations which David made for building the temple (I Chronicles 22:2 ff.).

SECOND SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 24 IN REVIEW

1. What action did David take which angered God? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Whom did David appoint to do the work? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was the numbering begun? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How long did the census take? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many men were in Judah? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many men were in the rest of Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What prophet told David he had sinned? \_\_\_\_\_
8. From what three penalties could David choose? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Which one did he choose? \_\_\_\_\_
10. From whom did David buy a threshing floor? \_\_\_\_\_

EVENTS IN  
DAVID'S LATER REIGN  
II Sam. 20-24



An aerial, black and white photograph of Jerusalem, Israel, taken from a high altitude. The city's dense urban landscape is visible, with numerous buildings and streets. The sky is dark and filled with dramatic, swirling clouds, suggesting a storm or a dramatic lighting effect. Several bright, jagged lightning bolts are visible, striking down from the clouds. The overall mood is somber and powerful.

Air view of Jerusalem seen under floating  
clouds taken from the south

Matsdon Photo Service

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

# EPILOGUE

The division of the Old Testament books at the end of Samuel is quite artificial. The history of David is continued in I Kings with the account of Abishag and the revolt of Adonijah. The division we have now in the English Bible is not very early, as is indicated by the Septuagint in some of its copies in which the third book of Kings begins with I Kings, chapter three. The two chapters which intervene are thus numbered twenty-five and twenty-six of Samuel.

Comments from the book of Samuel would not be complete without some reference to the fact that David did become old and stricken in years. He ruled for forty years and did not begin his career until he was thirty (II Samuel 5:4). As he neared the prescribed three score and ten years (Psalm 90:10), he suffered an infirmity which caused him to chill. In a manner which seems crude to a civilization provided with mechanical and chemical corrective measures for such a condition, the people of Israel sought a young virgin to be David's constant companion, in order that the heat from her body might warm David. The maiden they found was Abishag, a fair damsel from Shunem. Shunem was a spot belonging to the tribe of Isaachar. It was here that the Philistines had camped before Saul's last battle (I Samuel 28:4). This locality was also the residence of the woman whose son Elisha raised from the dead (II Kings 4:35), and has been identified with *Shulam* at the southwest base of little Hermon and three miles north of Jezreel in the midst of a very fertile valley.

Abishag was a very fair maiden, and she ministered to the needs of the king in his infirmities; but the king did not consider her to be his wife or one of his concubines.

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His relationship to her was not that of a man with his wife, and Abishag was not above one of the household servants. Her relationship to him, however, was peculiar and unusual, a fact that indirectly brought about the death of Adonijah.

After David's death, Adonijah, who had been spared by Solomon, decided that he would like to have Abishag as his wife. He sent Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, to have an audience with Solomon in order to ask him to give Abishag to Adonijah. Adonijah felt that Bathsheba as the king's mother would have more influence with Solomon than he would have personally.

Solomon interpreted this request of Adonijah's to be highly improper, inasmuch as Abishag once was very close to King David. The situation was very much similar to that of Abner and Rizpah in the days of Ish-bosheth. Kings were very jealous of their concubines and wives. When a king died, the successor to the throne not only acceded to the throne but also inherited the king's household, being responsible for the continued support of the widows and children. If he were of a different house, he often would slay these heirs in order to prevent their making future claims to the throne. Abishag was Solomon's responsibility, and he felt that Adonijah's desire was quite out of place. Although Abishag was not a wife or concubine of David's, she had been in a very intimate association with David; and Solomon viewed Adonijah's request for her hand in marriage as a veiled pretension to the throne.

Adonijah had attempted to usurp the throne while David was still alive in order to prevent Solomon's accession. Adonijah had some reason for such action, inasmuch as he was the elder brother of Solomon and directly in line for the throne. He was the son of Haggith, the fourth-born of David's sons (II Samuel 3:4). Since Amnon had been killed by Absalom and Absalom had been slain in battle,

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

the two older brothers of Adonijah could not succeed David to the throne. Nothing is known of Chileab, David's second-born son (II Samuel 3:3); and it is generally concluded that he also was dead.

Adonijah was born to David while David lived and ruled in Hebron, during the first seven years of his reign. Solomon was not born until after David had moved his capital to Jerusalem and had stolen Bathsheba from Uriah. Adonijah knew that David intended to have Solomon as his successor, but his own selfish interests led him to attempt to steal the throne. His revolt should not be considered an attempt to rebel against David, as was Absalom's effort; but he did try to supersede Solomon.

The Scripture says, "Then Adonijah, the son of Haggith, exalted himself" (II Kings 1:5). He prepared chariots and horsemen, with fifty men to run before him through the streets of Jerusalem. His father had not spoken a word in rebuke of him, giving him an exalted estimation of himself; and in addition, he was a very handsome person. Specific reference is made to the fact that he was born after Absalom (I Kings 1:6), making him the next in line to the throne.

Adonijah secured the support of some of the leading people in David's government. Joab, who had been faithful to David when Absalom rebelled, joined in Adonijah's conspiracy. The priesthood, which had been united behind David in the days of Absalom, was divided by Adonijah's attempted *coup*. Abiathar, the priest whose father had been slain in the days of Saul and who had fled to David for protection, was led away from David and persuaded to join Adonijah. Zadok, the other priest, remained loyal to David and Solomon.

Certain key men in David's government were not convinced by Adonijah's claims. Zadok, the priest, Nathan, the prophet, and Benaiah, one of David's mighty men, were all solidly back of Solomon's claims and David's in-

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tentions for him to be his successor. None of these men were invited to Adonijah's rally where he proclaimed himself to be king over Israel. Shimei and Rei, mighty men which belonged to David, also were not with Adonijah.

The area around En-rogel, at the southeast corner of the city, was chosen for the meeting-place by those who supported the claims of Adonijah. Adonijah announced a sacrifice, slaying sheep, oxen, and fat cattle, and inviting all his brethren of the king's sons and all the men of Judah who were the king's servants, except those who were not in sympathy with his cause.

Nathan, the prophet, learned of the meeting and informed Bathsheba, David's wife and Solomon's mother. He instructed Bathsheba to ask for an audience with the king and make inquiry about his intentions concerning his successor. It was Nathan's understanding that Solomon should succeed David to the throne. No doubt he had gathered this from the prediction which he had made to David about the son who should build the temple (II Samuel 7:12). More was involved than the mere succession to the throne. The fulfillment of prophecy was hanging in the balance. The will of God was to be done in the lives of the men who were involved.

Bathsheba asked for and received the audience with David. She asked David if he had not sworn to her by the Lord God that Solomon would be the one to sit on the throne. She then announced to David that Adonijah was ruling in Jerusalem. She specifically mentioned the feast which he had announced and the oxen, fat cattle, and sheep which were sacrificed. She enumerated those who were supporting Adonijah—Abiathar and Joab, particularly. Bathsheba informed David that the citizens of his kingdom were waiting for some word from him which would indicate his pleasure concerning his successor. With pitiable concern, Bathsheba predicted that if Adonijah were

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

successful in acceding to the throne then she and Solomon would be considered offenders and probably be put to death (I Kings 1:21).

While Bathsheba was speaking, Nathan came in and substantiated her remarks and appraisal of the situation. Nathan specifically asked David if it were his intention that the fourth-born son would succeed him to the throne. He verified the report that Adonijah had chosen a spot rather remote from the palace and proclaimed himself to be king. It had even been reported that the people were crying, "God save king Adonijah" (I Kings 1:25). Nathan assured David that Solomon, Benaiah, and he were not invited to the feast and were devoutly loyal to David. Nathan concluded his interview with the king by asking if all this were David's intentions and done by his order.

David was aroused by all these reports. He acted immediately. King David recalled Bathsheba and swore again to her that it was not his desire for Adonijah to succeed him to the throne. He assured her that Solomon, their son, was his choice as a successor. With alacrity which had typified his earlier activity but had been lacking in the latter days of his reign, David took steps to thwart Adonijah's efforts.

David summoned Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiakim, one of David's mighty men. These men represented the religious, civil, and military leaders of Israel; and he gave them specific instructions which were to be carried out at once.

Certain routine procedures of state were to be followed in proclaiming Solomon to be the king. He was to ride upon the king's own mule and be brought down to the eastern edge of the city. He was there to be anointed king by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet as Saul and David had been anointed by Samuel the prophet. A trumpet was to be blown and the proclamation was to be made. The people were to cry out, "God save King

## EPILOGUE

Solomon" (I Kings 1:34). Solomon was then to lead a procession to the palace and there he was to be installed as king over Israel and Judah. This immediate and direct action of David's pleased Benaiah especially; and he said, "Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too" (I Kings 1:36).

David's directions were followed precisely; and the king's bodyguard, the Cherethites and Pelethites, went down to put Solomon on the king's mule to make the trip to the Gihon on the western side of Jerusalem. Zedok the priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle with which to anoint Solomon. The trumpet was blown to signal the assembly of the people; and the people cried out, "God save King Solomon" (I Kings 1:39). The procession wound its way back into the city as the people followed Solomon to the palace playing on the pipes, and the earth was literally shaken by the sound.

Adonijah and those who were called to his abortive assembly heard the shout. Joab was especially attracted by the blowing of the trumpet and made inquiry about the uproar in the city. Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest, came at that moment with news that David had announced that Solomon was to be his successor to the throne. He also knew that Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah were backing Solomon's claims to the throne. His information included the detail that the king's bodyguard was attending Solomon and Solomon was riding on the king's own mule. Jonathan properly assessed the situation by announcing that the city was following Solomon and yielding to David's wishes in the matter. This news threw Adonijah's guests into an uproar, and they fled in terror from the scene. Adonijah himself arose and went to the altar and caught hold of the horns on the altar, a gesture of entreaty signifying that he was pleading with God and all who saw him that his life might be spared.

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News came to Solomon of Adonijah's pitiful plea, and Solomon assured him that he might live if he conducted himself in a worthy manner. He warned him that if wickedness were found in him, he would be put to death. Adonijah accepted the offer of pardon, and went to Solomon to do obeisance to his new king. Solomon dismissed him, and allowed him to return to his own dwelling in peace.

David lived for some time after announcing that Solomon should succeed him to the throne, but the day of his death approached nonetheless. Before he died, he called Solomon to him and encouraged him to conduct himself as a man. He especially exhorted him to keep the charge of the Lord, "to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies" (I Kings 2:3). David's charge was specifically based on a written law of Moses, a passing reference to the fact that the Pentateuch was in existence in David's day and formed the basis for the king's conduct as well as the conduct for the subjects of the land. Uppermost in David's mind was the knowledge that God had made a covenant with him (II Samuel 7), a portion of which carried the stipulation that if his children walked in the ways of God there should not fail him a man on the throne of Israel. This was God's promise to the royal family.

David gave specific instructions to Solomon with regard to certain matters of unfinished business in his kingdom. He specified that some kind of punishment should be meted out to Joab, his captain through the years who had demonstrated on occasion a wicked spirit. Joab had killed Abner, the son of Ner, and also Amasa, the son of Gezer—two valiant soldiers. David was also anxious that Barzillai, the Gileadite, be remembered for the kindness which he had shown David when David had fled from Absalom. He had promised Barzillai that his son, Chimham, would be taken into the king's family and given daily sustenance from the king's table. Others to whom David owed a

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debt of gratitude or a measure of punishment were Shimei, the Benjamite, who had cursed him as he fled from Jerusalem at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Although David had spared his life, he knew that some punishment should be given to him.

These touching final moments spent with Solomon were like the time that Isaac spent with Esau and Jacob as he sought to give a blessing to Esau even though the birth-right had been sold to Jacob (Genesis 27:1), and like the time when Jacob spent with his twelve sons in Egypt as he pronounced prophecies and blessings about each of them (Genesis 49:1-33). When David had attended to these last affairs of state and given a word of personal exhortation to Solomon, his duties as king were ended and soon thereafter he died. He was buried in Jerusalem, the city of David (I Kings 2:10).

Solomon succeeded David to the throne and ruled with wisdom. Adonijah gave occasion to Solomon for executing him when he asked to have Abishag the Shunamite, to be his wife, after she had attended David until the time of his death. Oriental potentates considered the wives and concubines to be their own personal property in a very special way, and any interest shown in them by anyone else was considered to be an effort to steal the throne as well. This was Solomon's view of Adonijah's request; and for that reason, he killed Adonijah.

Abiathar was called before Solomon who told him to go to Anathoth; a town in the tribe of Benjamin belonging to the priests (Joshua 21:18; Jeremiah 1:1). The town was a city of refuge and the birthplace of Jeremiah and also his residence for a great part of his life (Jeremiah 1:1; 11:21-23; 29:27). It lay three miles northeast of Jerusalem. It has been identified with the modern Anata, but is of little modern importance. Solomon spared Abiathar's life because he had attended the Ark in the days of David and had suffered affliction with him, especially at

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the time of Saul's killing all the priests (I Samuel 22:20-23). Abiathar was deposed from his office, and this was a fulfillment of the prophecy made in the days of Eli (I Samuel 2:31, 35).

Solomon also took direct action against Joab. Joab heard what had happened to the other conspirators who had followed Adonijah, and he fled to the tabernacle and caught hold of the horns on the altar in much the same fashion as Adonijah (I Kings 2:28; cf. I Kings 1:51). Solomon sent Benaiah to execute Joab, but Joab refused to be dragged away from the altar. Benaiah reported this to the king, and Solomon told him to slay him in the sanctuary. Joab had shed much innocent blood, and Solomon feared that he would bring blood-guiltiness upon his kingdom if he permitted Joab to live. Benaiah was faithful to Solomon's orders and killed Joab in the tabernacle area but allowed his body to be taken for burial to the wilderness of Judah which had been Joab's home.

Benaiah, one of David's mighty men and a faithful soldier under Solomon, was made captain of Solomon's army. Zadok the priest, officiated at the tabernacle; and Solomon did his best to put his kingdom in order.

One other duty was his to perform as he completed the unfinished business of his father's rule. Shimei, the man of Benjamin, who had cursed David when he fled from Jerusalem, was told to establish his residence in Jerusalem. He was instructed not to go out of the city, the border line being established at the brook Kidron, east of Jerusalem. Shimei agreed to the terms of Solomon's amnesty and kept his part of the bargain for quite a while. When two of Shimei's servants fled from him and went into a foreign territory, Shimei left Jerusalem without gaining permission from Solomon. Solomon heard that Shimei had broken his covenant, and he ordered that Shimei be executed. When these matters had been attended to, Solomon established the kingdom firmly under his hand.

## EPILOGUE

The people of Israel knew that it was David's intention for him to reign, and he had set his kingdom in order. No regent ever began his rule under more auspicious omens, for David had ruled well in spite of the failures which were noted in the Scripture. God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding; he was also endowed with a largeness of heart. His wisdom exceeded the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and the wisdom of the men of Egypt. Hiram, the king of Tyre, spoke a fitting benediction to the reign of David, and offered an appropriate invocation for the reign of Solomon as he said:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who had given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the Lord, and an house for his kingdom” (II Chronicles 2:12).

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