

This book contains the account of what happened in Israel from the birth of Samuel to the death of King Saul. We call this book
1 Samuel

Samuel was born

¹ There was a man named Elkanah who lived in Ramah *town* in the hilly area where *the tribe of Ephraim* lived. His father was Jeroham, his grandfather was Elihu, and his great-grandfather was Tohu. He belonged to the Zuph clan.

² He had two wives: Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had several children, but Hannah had no children.

³ Once every year Elkanah went up *with his family* from Ramah to Shiloh *city*. He went there to worship Yahweh, *the commander* of the armies of *angels*, and to offer sacrifices to him. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *helped their father to do the work as priests* of Yahweh there.

⁴ Each time Elkanah offered sacrifices there, he gave some of the meat to Peninnah and some to each of her sons and daughters.

⁵ But even though he loved Hannah very much, he gave her only one special amount of meat because Yahweh had not permitted her to give birth to any children. ⁶ And his other wife, Peninnah, would ridicule Hannah to make her feel miserable, because Yahweh had not allowed her to bear children. ⁷ This happened every year.

When they went up to the temple of Yahweh *at Shiloh*, Peninnah ridiculed Hannah so much that Hannah cried and would not eat. ⁸ Then Elkanah would say to her, “Hannah, ◀why are you crying?/please quit crying!▶ [RHQ] ◀Why are you not eating?/Please eat something!▶ [RHQ] Why are you so upset/sad? You have me; is that not more important to you than if you had ten sons? (OR, I *love you* more than your sons *would love you*, even if you had ten sons.)”

⁹ One year, after they had finished eating and drinking at Shiloh, Hannah stood up *to pray*. Eli the priest was nearby, sitting on a chair by the doorway of the sacred tent of Yahweh. ¹⁰ Hannah was very distressed, and she cried very sorrowfully as she prayed to Yahweh. ¹¹ She made a vow saying, “O Almighty Commander of the armies of angels, if you will look at me and see how miserable I am, and think about me and allow me to give birth to a son, then I will dedicate him to you *to serve you* for the rest of his life. And *to show that he is dedicated to you*, ◀no one will ever *be allowed to cut his hair/his hair will never be cut*▶.”

¹² As she was praying like that to Yahweh, Eli the priest saw Hannah’s lips *moving as she was praying*. ¹³ But Hannah was only praying silently; she was not making any sound. So Eli thought that she was drunk. ¹⁴ He said to her, “How long will you continue to get drunk [RHQ]? ◀Throw away your wine/Quit drinking wine▶!”

¹⁵ Hannah replied, “Sir, I am not drunk! I have not been drinking wine or any other alcoholic

drink. I feel very distressed and I have been telling Yahweh about how I feel. ¹⁶ Do not think that I am a worthless/wicked woman! I have been praying like this because I am very distressed [DOU].”

¹⁷ Eli replied, “I wish/desire that things will go well for you. I desire that God, the one we Israeli people *worship*, will give you what you requested from him.”

¹⁸ She replied, “I want you to think highly/well about me.” Then she returned *to her family* and after she ate something, her face no longer looked sad.

¹⁹ Early the next morning, Elkanah and his family got up and worshiped Yahweh *again*, and then they returned to their home at Ramah. Elkanah ◀slept with/had sex with▶ Hannah. Then Yahweh answered her prayer, ²⁰ and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, *which sounds like the words in the Hebrew language that mean ‘heard by God’*, because she said “Yahweh *heard me when I requested from him a son.*”

Hannah dedicated Samuel to Yahweh

²¹ The following year, Elkanah again went up *to Shiloh* with his family to make the kind of sacrifice he made each year, and also to give a special offering to God that he had promised *to give him previously*. ²² But Hannah did not go *with them*. She said to her husband, “After I have weaned the baby, I will take him *to Shiloh and present him* to Yahweh, and he will stay there for the rest of his life.”

²³ Elkanah said, “Do what seems the best to you. Stay here until you have weaned him. What I desire is that Yahweh will *enable you to* do what you have promised.” So Hannah stayed at home and nursed her son until she weaned him.

²⁴ After she weaned him, even though Samuel was very young, she took him to the temple/house of Yahweh at Shiloh. *To offer as a sacrifice*, she took along a three-year-old bull, *a sack containing* ◀20 pounds/9 kg.▶ of flour, and a container of wine. ²⁵ After the priest had slaughtered the bull *and offered it to Yahweh on the altar*, Hannah and Elkanah brought the boy to Eli. ²⁶ Then Hannah said to him, “Sir, ◀Do you remember me?/I solemnly affirm▶, I am the woman who prayed as I stood here beside you *several years ago*. ²⁷ I prayed that Yahweh would enable me to give birth to a child, and this is the child whom I requested Yahweh to give me. ²⁸ So now I am presenting him to Yahweh. He will belong to Yahweh as long as he lives.” Then Elkanah *and his family* worshiped Yahweh there.

2

¹ Then Hannah prayed, saying,
“I rejoice in *what you, Yahweh, have done*.

I am strong [MET] because I belong to you.
I ◀laugh at/ridicule▶ my enemies,
because you, Yahweh have rescued me *from
being taunted by them*.

² There is no one who is holy like you, Yahweh.
There is no other god like you.

There is no one like you, our God, who can protect us *as though you were putting us beneath a huge rock where we can hide from danger.*

³ You people who oppose God, stop boasting! Yahweh is a God who knows *everything*, and he will evaluate/judge everyone's actions. So don't speak so arrogantly!

⁴ Yahweh, you break the bows/weapons of mighty soldiers, and you give strength to those who stumble *because of being weak.*

⁵ Many people who previously had plenty to eat, now have to work for other people *to earn money* to buy food, but many who were always hungry are not hungry any more.

The woman who did not have any children before, now has given birth to many/seven children, and the woman who had many children before, now is very lonely *because they have all died.*

⁶ Yahweh, you cause some people to die, and you restore some people who are almost dead.

For some people, *it seems that they will soon* go to where the dead people are, but you cause them to become healthy again.

⁷ Yahweh, you cause some people to be poor and you cause some people to be rich,

you humble some people and you honor
some people.

⁸ *Sometimes* you lift poor people up so that they
are no longer *despondent, sitting in the
dust,*

or sitting on heaps of ashes;

you cause them to sit next to princes;

you cause them to sit on chairs/thrones
where people who are highly honored sit.

Yahweh, you are the one who laid the founda-
tions of the earth,

and you have set the whole world on those
foundations.

⁹ You will protect your loyal/faithful people
[SYN],

but you will cause the wicked to die [EUP]
and descend to the dark *place where dead
people are.*

We do not defeat *our enemies* by our own
strength;

¹⁰ Yahweh, you will break into pieces those who
oppose you.

You will cause thunder in the sky to show
that you ◀oppose/are angry with▶ them.

Yahweh, you will judge *people everywhere, even
those who live in* the most remote places
on the earth.

You will give strength to the king whom you
will appoint, and give him great power
over his enemies."

¹¹ Then Elkanah *and his family* returned to
Ramah, but Samuel, the little boy, stayed to help
Eli the priest serve Yahweh.

Eli's sons were wicked

¹² Eli's two sons, *who were also priests*, were very wicked. They did not revere (OR, respect/obey) Yahweh. ¹³ While the people were boiling the meat from their sacrifices *in the huge pot at the temple*, one of Eli's sons, *would send his servant to come with a large three-pronged fork in his hand*. ¹⁴ *He* would stick the fork into *the meat* in the pot, and whatever meat fastened onto the fork, he would take *and give it* to the priest who sent him. Eli's sons did this to all the Israeli people who came to Shiloh *to offer sacrifices*. ¹⁵ Furthermore, before the fat *on the meat* was *cut off and* burned *as a sacrifice to Yahweh*, the servant of the priest would *sometimes* come to the man who was making the sacrifice and say to him, "Give me some meat *now to take* to the priest for him to roast! He wants raw meat; he does not want boiled meat."

¹⁶ If the man said to the servant, "Let the priests *cut off and* burn the fat first; then you can take what you want," the servant would reply, "No, give it to me now; if you do not give it to me, I will take it forcefully!"

¹⁷ Yahweh considered that the young *sons of Eli* were committing a very great sin, because they were treating very disrespectfully the offerings that were being given to Yahweh.

¹⁸ As for Samuel, who was still a very young boy, he continued to do work for Yahweh, wearing a little sacred linen vest *like the Supreme Priest wore*. ¹⁹ Each year his mother made a *new* little robe for him and took it to him

when she went up *to Shiloh* with her husband to offer a sacrifice. ²⁰ Then Eli would *ask God* to bless Elkanah and his wife, and he would say to Elkanah, “I hope/desire that Yahweh will enable your wife to give birth to other children, to take the place of the one whom she dedicated to Yahweh.” Then Elkanah and his family would return home. ²¹ And Yahweh was very kind to Hannah, and enabled her to give birth to three *other* sons and two daughters. Their son Samuel grew up while he was doing work for Yahweh *in the Sacred Tent*.

Eli warned his sons

²² Eli became very old. He often heard about all the *evil* things that his sons were doing to the Israeli people. He heard that they *sometimes* ◀slept with/had sex with▶ the women who worked at the entrance to the tent where *God* spoke to *his people*. ²³ He said to them, “◀It is terrible that you do such things!/Why do you do such things?▶ [RHQ] Many people keep telling me about the evil things that you do. ²⁴ My sons, stop it! The reports *about you* that the people who belong to Yahweh tell others are terrible [EUP]! ²⁵ If one person sins against another person, God can ◀intercede/act as a referee▶ between them. But if someone sins against Yahweh, no one can [RHQ] ◀intercede/act as a referee▶ between them!” But Eli’s sons would not listen to what their father said. This was because Yahweh had decided *that someone should* kill them.

A prophet warned what would happen to Eli and his family

²⁶ The boy Samuel continued to grow up, and the things that he did pleased Yahweh and the people. ²⁷ One day, a prophet came to Eli and told him, “This is what Yahweh has told me: ‘When your ancestors were slaves of the king of Egypt, I appeared to Aaron. ²⁸ From all the tribes of the Israeli people, I chose him *and his male descendants* to be priests for me. I appointed them to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear a sacred apron *as they worked* for me. And I declared that they could take *and eat some of the meat* that the Israeli people burned *on the altar*. ²⁹ So why do you show disrespect for the sacrifices and offerings that I commanded *the people to bring* to me [RHQ]? You are honoring your sons more than you are honoring me, by allowing them to get fat from eating the best parts of all the sacrifices that the Israeli people bring to me!’

³⁰ “Therefore, this is what Yahweh, the God whom we Israelis *worship*, declares: ‘I definitely promised that Aaron and his descendants would continue to serve [IDM] me forever.’ But now I declare this: ‘It will not continue like that! I will honor those who honor me, but I will despise those who despise me. ³¹ Listen carefully! There will soon be a time when I will cause all the strong *young men* in your family to die. The result will be that no men in your family will *live long enough* to become old men. ³² You will be distressed and envious as you see the blessings

that I will give to *the other people in* Israel. And *I repeat that* no men in your family will ever live long enough to become old men. ³³ There is one of your descendants whom I will spare, and not prevent him from serving me as a priest. But he will become blind, and then he will always be sad and grieving. But all your other descendants will die violently. ³⁴ And your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will both die on the same day. And that will prove to you *that all that I have said will come true/happen*.

³⁵ ' have chosen another man to be my priest. He is one who will serve me faithfully: He will do everything I want [DOU] him to do. And I will enable him to have many descendants [IDM] who will be priests and will always serve me by helping the king whom I will choose. ³⁶ All of your descendants who remain alive will have to go to that priest and ask him to give them money and food, and they will each have to say, "Please allow me to help the other priests, in order that I may *earn some money to buy some food.*" ' "

3

Yahweh Called Samuel

¹ *While he was still a boy*, Samuel was working for Yahweh while Eli supervised him. At that time there were very few messages *that anyone received* from Yahweh, and very few people saw visions *that Yahweh gave them*.

² By that time Eli's eyes were very weak; he was almost blind. *One night* he was sleeping

in his room, ³ and Samuel was sleeping in the sacred tent, where the chest that contained the Ten Commandments was kept. While the sacred lamp was still burning, ⁴ Yahweh called, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel replied, "I'm here!"

⁵ Then he *got up and* ran to Eli. He said to him, "I am here, because you called me!" But Eli replied, "No, I did not call you. Go back to your bed." So Samuel went and lay down again.

⁶ Then Yahweh called again, "Samuel!" So Samuel got up again and went to Eli and said, "I am here, because you called me!" But Eli said, "No, my son, I did not call you. Go back and lie down."

⁷ At that time Samuel did not yet know *that* Yahweh *could speak to him*, because Yahweh had not previously revealed anything to him.

⁸ *After Samuel lay down again*, Yahweh called him a third time. So again Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "I am here, because you called me!"

Then Eli realized that it was Yahweh who was calling the boy. ⁹ So he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again. If someone calls you again, say 'Speak to me, Yahweh, because I am listening!'" So Samuel went and lay down again. ¹⁰ Then Yahweh came and stood there and called as he had done the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak to me, because I am listening!"

¹¹ Then Yahweh said to Samuel, "Listen carefully. I am about to do something here in Israel that will shock/horrify [IDM] everyone

who hears about it. ¹² When that happens, I will punish Eli and his family. I will do to them everything that I said that I would do. ¹³ His sons have shown great disrespect for me by the disgraceful things they have done, and Eli did not restrain them. So I told him that I would punish his family forever. ¹⁴ I solemnly promised to Eli's family, 'You will never be able to avoid the consequences for your sin, even if you give me sacrifices or offerings.' "

¹⁵ Samuel lay down again until morning. Then he got up and opened the doors of the Sacred Tent *as usual*. He was afraid to tell Eli about the vision *that Yahweh had given him*. ¹⁶ But Eli called him and said, "Samuel, my son!" Samuel answered, "I am here!"

¹⁷ Eli asked him, "What was it that Yahweh told you? Do not conceal it! I want God to punish you severely if you do not tell me everything that he said to you."

¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything. He did not refuse to tell him anything. Then Eli said, "He is Yahweh. I am willing for him to do what he thinks is best."

¹⁹ As Samuel grew up, Yahweh helped him, and caused everything to ◀come true/happen▶ that Samuel predicted. ²⁰ So all the people of Israel, from the northern end of the country to the southern end, realized that Samuel was truly a prophet of Yahweh. ²¹ Yahweh continued to appear to Samuel in Shiloh and give messages to him.

4

¹ And Samuel told to all the people of Israel the messages that God gave him.

The Philistines captured the sacred chest

At that time the Israeli army went to fight against the army of the Philistine people. The Israeli army set up their tents at Ebenezer, and the Philistine army set up their tents at Aphek.

² The Philistine army attacked the Israeli army, and as the battle continued, the Philistines defeated the Israelis and killed about 4,000 of their soldiers. ³ When the remaining Israeli soldiers returned to their camp, the Israeli elders/leaders said, “Why did Yahweh allow the Philistine army to defeat us today? We should bring the chest that contains the Ten Commandments here from Shiloh, in order that Yahweh will go with us *when we go to the battle again*, and in order that our enemies will not defeat us again!”

⁴ So the soldiers did that. They sent some men to Shiloh, and those men brought back the chest that contained the Ten Commandments. *They thought that if they did that, Yahweh would help them. They believed that Yahweh sat on a throne between the statues of winged creatures that were on top of the chest that Yahweh Almighty had given them.* The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, went with them.

⁵ When the Israeli people saw *the men bringing* the box into their camp, they were so happy that they shouted loudly. They shouted so loudly that they made the ground shake! ⁶ The Philistines asked, “What are the people in the Hebrew camp

shouting about?” Someone told them that they were shouting because the chest that contained the Ten Commandments of Yahweh had been brought to them. ⁷ Then the Philistines became very afraid. They said, “One of the Israelis’ gods has come into their camp *to help them* We are in big trouble now! Nothing like this has happened to us before! ⁸ ◀Who can/Can anyone▶ save us from their powerful gods [RHQ]? They are the gods who struck the people of Egypt with many plagues *before the Israelis left Egypt and traveled* through the desert. ⁹ You Philistine men, be courageous! Fight very hard! If you do not do that, *they will defeat us, and then* you will become their slaves, just like they have been our slaves previously!”

¹⁰ So the Philistine men fought very hard, and they defeated the Israelis. They killed 30,000 Israeli soldiers, and the other Israeli soldiers fled and ran away to their tents. ¹¹ The Philistines captured the sacred chest, and they killed Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

Eli died

¹² On that same day, one man of the tribe *descended from* Benjamin tore his clothes and threw dirt on his head *to show that he was very sad*. He ran from the place where the armies were fighting, and he arrived at Shiloh late *that afternoon*. ¹³ Eli was waiting beside the road. *He wanted to hear news about the battle, and* he was also very anxious to know if anything bad had happened to God’s sacred chest. When

the messenger arrived and told people what had happened, everyone in the town started to cry loudly.

¹⁴ Eli asked, “Why are they making all that noise?” The messenger ran over to Eli and told him the news.

¹⁵ At that time, Eli was 98 years old, and he was blind. ¹⁶ The messenger said to Eli, “I have just come from where the armies were fighting. I left there earlier today.” Eli asked, “What happened?”

¹⁷ The man replied, “The Philistines defeated our Israeli army. They killed thousands of our soldiers, and the others ran away. The Philistines killed your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. They also captured God’s sacred chest.”

¹⁸ Eli was very old, and he was very fat; and when he heard what had happened to the sacred chest, he fell backward from his chair beside the town gate. His neck was broken and he died. He had led the Israeli people for 40 years before he died.

¹⁹ The wife/widow of Eli’s son Phinehas was pregnant, and it was almost time for her to give birth to her baby. When she heard that God’s sacred chest had been captured and that her husband and her father-in-law were dead, her labor pains suddenly began. She quickly gave birth to a boy. ²⁰ The women who were helping her tried to encourage her by saying to her, “You have given birth to a son!” But she did not pay any attention [DOU] to what they said.

²¹ She named the boy Ichabod, which means ‘no glory’, because she said, “*God’s* glory has departed from Israel.” She said that because God’s sacred chest had been captured and because her husband and her father-in-law had died. ²² She said, “*God’s* glory has left Israel, because God’s sacred chest has been captured!” And then she died.

5

What happened when the sacred chest stayed among the Philistines

¹ After the army of the Philistia people-group captured God’s sacred chest in Ebenezer town, they took it to Ashdod *which is one of their biggest cities*. ² They carried it into the temple of *their god* Dagon, and placed it alongside a statue of Dagon. ³ But early the next morning, when the people of Ashdod *went to see it, they saw that* the statue had fallen on its face in front of Yahweh’s sacred chest! So they set the statue up in its place again. ⁴ But the following morning, *they saw that* it had fallen down in front of the sacred chest again. But this time, the statue’s head and hands had broken off, and were lying in the doorway. Only its body remained intact/unbroken. ⁵ That is the reason that since that time, the priests of Dagon and everyone else who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod do not step on the doorsill *where the hands and head of Dagon fell*.

⁶ Then Yahweh [SYN] powerfully caused the people of Ashdod and the people who lived in nearby villages to have ◀a very great plague/

serious illness▶ of tumors. ⁷ The men of Ashdod realized why this was happening, and they cried out, “The god of the Israeli people is punishing us and is also punishing our god Dagon. So we cannot allow the sacred chest of the god of the Israelis to remain here!” ⁸ They summoned the five kings of the Philistia people-group, and asked them, “What should we do with the sacred chest of the god of the Israelis?”

The kings replied, “Take the sacred chest to Gath city.” So they moved it to Gath. ⁹ But after they took it to Gath, Yahweh powerfully struck the people of that city also, with the result that many men, including young men and old men, got tumors on their skin. Then the people became very afraid. ¹⁰ So they took the sacred chest to Ekron city.

But when the men carried the sacred chest into Ekron, the people there cried out, “Why are you bringing the sacred chest of the God of the Israelis into our city [RHQ]? *By doing that* you will cause us and the rest of our people to die!” ¹¹ The people were terrified/in panic because *they knew that* God was starting to punish them severely. So they summoned the *five kings* of the Philistia people-group again, and *pleaded with them*, saying, “Take this sacred chest of the god of the Israelis back to its own place! If you do not do that quickly, we will all die!” ¹² Some of the people in Ekron had already died, and the rest of the people were suffering because of tumors on their skin. So they all cried out to their gods [MTY] *to help them*.

6

They returned the sacred chest to the Israelis

¹ The people of Philistia kept God's sacred chest in their area for seven months. ² Then they summoned their priests and their ◀diviners/men who practice rituals to find out what would happen in the future▶. They asked them, "What should we do with the sacred chest of Yahweh? Tell us how we should send it back to its own land."

³ Those men replied, "Send with it an offering *to show Yahweh that you know that you are guilty for having captured the chest*, in order that the plague will stop. If you do that, and then if you are healed, you will know that Yahweh is the one who caused you to experience the plague."

⁴ The people of Philistia asked, "What kind of offering should we send?"

The men replied, "Make five gold models of the tumors on your skin, and five gold models of rats. Make five of each because that is the same number as the number of your kings, and because the plague has struck both you people and your five kings. ⁵ Make models that represent the rats and the tumors that are ruining your land. Make them in order to honor the god of the Israeli people. If you do that, perhaps he will stop punishing [IDM] you, and your gods, and your land. ⁶ Do not be [RHQ] stubborn [IDM] like the Egyptians and their king were. *They did not do what the Israelis' god told them to do, so he punished them.* After the Israelis' god finished punishing them very

severely, they were glad to allow the Israelis to leave their country [RHQ].

⁷ “So you must build a new cart. Then get two cows that have very recently given birth to calves. They must be cows that have never been hitched to a cart [MTY]. Hitch those cows to the new cart, and take the calves away from their mothers. ⁸ Put the Israelis’ god’s sacred chest on the cart. Also put in the cart the five gold models of the tumors on your skin and the five gold models of rats. Put them in a small box alongside the sacred chest. They will be an offering to show that you know that you deserved to be punished *for capturing the sacred chest*. Then send *the cows down the road, pulling the cart*. ⁹ *Watch the cart as the cows pull it*. If they pull it to Beth-Shemesh town in Israel, we will know that it was the Israelis’ god who caused us to experience this plague. But if they do not take it there, we will know that it was not the god [MTY] of the Israelis who has punished us. We will know that it just happened.”

¹⁰ So the people did what the priests and men who predicted what would happen in the future told them to do. They *made* a cart *and* hitched two cows to it. They took the calves from their mothers. ¹¹ They put in the cart Yahweh’s sacred chest and the box with the models of the gold rats and the tumors. ¹² Then the cows started walking, and they went straight toward Beth-Shemesh. They stayed on the road, and were mooing all the time. They did not turn to the left or to the right. The five kings of the Philistia area

followed the cows until they reached the edge of Beth-Shemesh.

¹³ At that time, the people of Beth-Shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley *outside the city*. *When the cows came along the road*, they looked up and saw the sacred chest. They were extremely happy to see it. ¹⁴⁻¹⁵ The cows pulled the cart into the field of a man named Joshua, and they stopped alongside a large rock. Several men from the tribe of Levi lifted from the cart the sacred chest and the box containing the gold models of the rats and the tumors, and they put them all on the large rock. Then the people smashed the cart and kindled a fire with the wood *from which the cart had been made*. They slaughtered the cows and burned their bodies/carcasses on the fire to be an offering for Yahweh that would be completely burned. That day the people of Beth-Shemesh offered to Yahweh *many* sacrifices that were completely burned, and *other* sacrifices. ¹⁶ The five kings from the Philistia area watched all this, and then they returned to Ekron, that same day.

¹⁷ The five gold models of tumors that they sent to be an offering to Yahweh to show that they knew that they deserved to be punished were gifts from *those five kings who were rulers of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron cities*. ¹⁸ The models of the five gold rats were gifts from the people of those five cities and the surrounding towns. The large rock at Beth-Shemesh, on which the *men of the tribe of Levi* set the sacred chest, is still there in the field that

belonged to Joshua. When people see it, they remember *what happened there*.

¹⁹ But seventy men from Beth-Shemesh looked into Yahweh's sacred chest, and because of that, Yahweh caused them to die. Then the people mourned very much because Yahweh punished [IDM] those men like that. ²⁰ They said, "No one [RHQ] can ◀resist the power of/stand in the presence of▶ Yahweh, our holy God, *and remain alive!* Where can we send the sacred chest?"

²¹ They sent messengers to the people of Kiriath-Jearim city to tell them, "The people of Philistia have returned Yahweh's sacred chest to us! Come here and take it away!"

7

¹ *When the men of Kiriath-Jearim received that message, they came to Beth-Shemesh and took the sacred chest of Yahweh. They took it to the house of Abinadab, which was on a hillside. They appointed Abinadab's son Eleazar to take care of the chest.*

² *The sacred chest stayed in Kiriath-Jearim for a long time—a total of 20 years. During that time all the people of Israel mourned because it seemed that Yahweh had abandoned them (OR, and then they asked Yahweh to help them).*

Yahweh rescued the Israelis

³ Then Samuel said to all the Israeli people, "If you truly [IDM] want to act like Yahweh's people should, you must get rid of your statues of *the goddess Astarte* and the idols/statues of all the other foreign gods. You must decide to serve/

worship only Yahweh. If you do that, he will rescue you from *the power of* [MTY] the Philistia people.”⁴ So the Israelis got rid of all their statues of the gods Baal and Astarte, and they worshiped only Yahweh.

⁵ Then Samuel told them, “All you Israeli people must gather with me at Mizpah. Then I will pray to Yahweh for you.”⁶ So they gathered at Mizpah, which was the town where Samuel previously was the leader of the Israeli people. They had a big ceremony there. They drew water *from a well*, and poured the water on the ground while Yahweh watched. *To show that they were sorry for having worshiped idols*, they did not eat any food on that day, and they confessed that they had sinned against Yahweh.

⁷ When the kings of the Philistia area heard that the Israeli people had gathered at Mizpah, they led their armies there to attack the Israelis. When the Israelis found out that the Philistia army was approaching them, they became very afraid.⁸ They told Samuel, “Pray to Yahweh to rescue us from the Philistia army [MTY], and do not stop pleading!”⁹ So Samuel took a very young lamb *and killed it* and offered it to Yahweh to be a sacrifice that was completely burned *on the altar*. Then he prayed and pleaded that Yahweh *would help* the Israelis, and Yahweh did help them.

¹⁰ While Samuel was burning the offering, the Philistia army came near to attack the Israelis. But Yahweh caused it to thunder very loudly. The soldiers of the Philistia army became very

frightened, and then they ◀became confused/ did not know what to do▶. So the Israelis were able to defeat them. ¹¹ The Israeli men ran out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistia soldiers almost to Beth-Car *town*, and killed many Philistia soldiers while they were trying to run away.

¹² After that happened, Samuel took a large stone and set it up between Mizpah and Jeshanah *towns*. He named the stone 'Ebenezer', *which means 'stone of help'*, because he said "Yahweh has helped us until the present time." ¹³ So the Philistia people were defeated, and for a long time they did not enter the Israeli land *to attack them* again. During the time that Samuel was alive, Yahweh powerfully protected [MTY] *the Israeli people from being attacked by the Philistia army*.

¹⁴ The Israeli army was able to capture again the Israeli villages between Ekron and Gath that the Philistia army had captured before. The Israelis were also able to take again the other areas around those cities that the Philistia army had taken *from the Israelis* previously. And there was peace between the Israelis and the Amor people-group.

¹⁵ Samuel continued to be the leader of the Israeli people until he died. ¹⁶ As long as he was alive, every year he traveled back and forth between Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah *cities*. In those cities he listened to disputes between people and made decisions about them. ¹⁷ After he listened to disputes and made decisions in each of those towns, he returned to his home at

Ramah, and he would listen to people's disputes there, also, *and make decisions about them*. And he built an altar at Ramah *to offer sacrifices* to Yahweh.

8

The Israelis asked for a king

¹ When Samuel became old, he appointed his two sons, Joel and Abijah, to lead/rule the people of Israel. ² They judged people's disputes/cases in Beersheba *town*. ³ But they were not like their father. They wanted only to get a lot of money. They accepted bribes, and they did not make honest decisions about people's disputes/cases.

⁴ Finally, the Israeli leaders met at Ramah *town to discuss the matter* with Samuel. ⁵ They said to him, "Listen! You are now old, and your sons are not like you. Appoint a king to rule over us, like the kings that other countries have!"

⁶ Samuel was very unhappy with them for requesting that, so he prayed to Yahweh about it. ⁷ Yahweh replied, "Do what they have requested you to do. But *◀do not think/the truth is not▶* that you are the one whom they are really rejecting. I have been their king, and I am the one they are really rejecting. ⁸ Ever since I brought them out of Egypt, they have rejected me, and they have worshiped other gods. And now they are also rejecting you in the same way. ⁹ Do what they are asking you to do. But warn/tell them about how their kings will act toward them!"

¹⁰ So Samuel told those people what Yahweh had said. ¹¹ He said, "If a king rules over you, this is what he will do to you: He will force many of your sons to join the army. He will make *some of* them run in front of his chariots *to clear people out of his way*. ¹² *Some of* them will be commanders of his soldiers, but others will work for him like slaves. He will force some of them to plow his fields and *then later* harvest his crops. He will force others to make his weapons and equipment for his chariots. ¹³ The king will take *some of* your daughters *from you and force them* to make perfumes for him and cook food for him and bake *bread for him*. ¹⁴ He will take your best fields and vineyards and olive tree groves/orchards, and give them to his own officials. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your harvests and distribute it among the officers and servants *who work in his palace*. ¹⁶ He will take from you your male and female servants, your best cattle and donkeys, and force them to work for him. ¹⁷ He will take one tenth of your sheep and goats. And you will become his slaves! ¹⁸ When that time comes, you will complain loudly to the king, the king that you yourselves have chosen, but Yahweh will not ◀pay attention to/help▶ you."

¹⁹ But the people refused to pay attention to what Samuel said. They said, "We do not *care what you say!* We want a king! ²⁰ We want to be like the other nations. We want a king to rule us and to lead our soldiers when they go to fight."

²¹ When Samuel told Yahweh what the people had said, ²² Yahweh replied, "Do what they are

telling you to do. Give them a king!" So Samuel agreed, and then he sent the people home.

9

Saul met Samuel

¹ There was a rich and influential man whose name was Kish. He belonged to the tribe descended from Benjamin. Kish was the son of Abiel and the grandson of Zeror. He was from the family of Becorath and from the clan of Aphiah. ² Kish had a son whose name was Saul. He was more handsome than any of the other Israeli men, and he was a head/foot taller than any of the other Israeli men.

³ One day, some of Kish's female donkeys wandered off. So Kish told Saul, "Take one of my servants with you, and go and search for the donkeys!" ⁴ So Saul did that. He took a servant, and they walked through the hilly area where the descendants of Ephraim lived, and then they went through the areas named Shalishah and Shaalim, and then they went through all the area where the descendants of Benjamin lived, but they could not find the donkeys.

⁵ Finally, they came to the area of Zuph. Then Saul said to the servant, "Let's go back home. If we do not do that, my father will stop worrying about the donkeys and start worrying about us."

⁶ But the servant said, "I have another idea [IDM]. There is one of God's prophets who lives in this town. People respect him very much, because everything he predicts comes true. Let's

go *talk* to him. Perhaps he can tell us where we can go *to find the donkeys*.”

⁷ Saul replied to the servant, “If we go talk with him, *we should give a gift to him, but* what can we give to him? We have no more food in our sacks. Do we have anything else to give to him?”

⁸ The servant replied, “Look *at this!* I have a small silver coin. I can give this to him, and then he will tell us where to go *to find the donkeys*.”

⁹⁻¹¹ Saul said, “Okay, let’s go *talk to him*.” So they went to the town where the prophet lived. As they were going up the hill into the town, they met some young women who were coming out of the town to get some water *from a well*. One of them asked the women, “Is the seer in the town *today?*” *They said that because* previously, if people *in Israel* wanted a message from God, they would say, “Let’s go to the seer,” and people who now are called prophets were at that time called ‘those who see *visions from God/all that God sees*.’ ¹² The women replied, “Yes, he is in the town. In fact, he is *walking on the road* ahead of you. He has just arrived in the town, because the people are going to offer a sacrifice on the altar where the people gather *to worship God*. ¹³ If you go quickly, you will *have time to talk to him* before he goes there. The people who have been invited will not start eating until he arrives there and *blesses/asks God to bless* the sacrifice.”

¹⁴ So Saul and the servant entered the town. As they went through the gates, they saw Samuel

as he was coming toward them, on the way to where people were going to offer sacrifices.

¹⁵ On the previous day, Yahweh had told Samuel, ¹⁶ “At this time tomorrow, I will send to you a man from the land where the descendants of Benjamin live. Pour olive oil on his *head* to *indicate that he will* be the leader of my Israeli people. I have seen that my people are suffering *because the Philistine people are oppressing them*, and I have heard my people as they have called out to me *for help*. The man on whose *head* you pour olive oil will rescue my people from the [MTY] Philistine people.”

¹⁷ When Samuel saw Saul, Yahweh said to him, “This is the man I told you about yesterday! He is the one who will rule my people!”

¹⁸ Saul saw Samuel as he was sitting at the town gateway *but he did not know that it was Samuel*. He went over to him and asked him, “Can you tell me, where is the house of the man who sees *visions from God/all that God sees*?”

¹⁹ Samuel replied, “I am that man. Go ahead of me with your servant to the place where the people make sacrifices. Both of you will eat with me today. Tomorrow morning I will tell you what you are wanting to know, and then I will send you home. ²⁰ Also, do not worry any more about those donkeys that wandered away three days ago. *Someone has found them/They have been found*. *But what you need to know is that* it is you and your family that all the Israeli people are wanting!” [RHQ]

²¹ Saul replied, "I am from the tribe of Benjamin [RHQ]. That is the smallest tribe in Israel [RHQ]! And my family is the least important family in our tribe! So why are you talking to me like this, *about the Israeli people wanting me and my family?*"

²² Then Samuel brought Saul and the servant into the big dining room, and told them to sit at the head *of the table, indicating that he was honoring them more than he was honoring the 30 people who had been invited.* ²³ Then Samuel told the cook, "Bring to me the special piece *of meat that I told you to set aside.*"

²⁴ So the cook brought the leg and the meat that was on it, and set it in front of Saul, *even though those portions were for only the priest to eat.* Samuel said to Saul, "Start eating it. I told the cook to save this for you, so that you could eat it at this time, when all these people whom I invited are here." So Saul and Samuel ate together.

²⁵ After they finished eating, they returned to the town. Then Samuel took Saul up to the *flat roof of his house*, and fixed a bed for him.

²⁶ As the sun was rising the next morning, Samuel called up to Saul, "Get up! It is time for me to send you on the road back home." So Saul got up, and *later* Samuel and Saul left the house together.

²⁷ When they got to the edge of the town, Samuel told Saul to send his servant ahead. After the servant left, Samuel said to Saul, "Stay here

for a few minutes, in order that I can give you a message I received from God.”

10

Samuel appointed Saul to be king

¹ Then Samuel took a small jar of olive oil and poured *some of* it on Saul’s head. Then he kissed Saul *on the cheek*, and told him, “I am doing this because Yahweh has chosen you to be the leader of his Israeli people. ² *And this will prove it to you:* When you leave me today, when you arrive near Rachel’s tomb at Zelzah, in the area where the descendants of Benjamin live, you will meet two men. They will say to you, ‘The donkeys have been found, but now your father is worrying about you, and he is asking people, ‘Have you seen my son?’ ”

³ When you arrive at the *large* oak tree at Tabor *town*, you will see three men coming toward you. They will be on their way to *worship* God at Bethel *town*. One of them will be leading three young goats, one will be carrying three loaves of bread, and one will be carrying a container of wine. ⁴ They will greet you, and they will offer you two of the loaves of bread. Accept them.

⁵ When you arrive at the hill *where people worship* God near Gibeah *town*, where there is the camp where the Philistine soldiers stay, you will meet a group of prophets who will be coming down from the altar on top of the hill. There will be people in front of them who will be playing *various musical instruments*: a harp, a

tambourine, a flute, and a lyre. And all of them will be speaking messages that come directly from God. ⁶ At that time the Spirit of Yahweh will come upon you, and you also will speak messages that come directly from God. ◀You will be changed/The Spirit of Yahweh will change you▶, so that you will become like a different person. ⁷ After those things occur, do whatever you think is right to do, and God will ◀be with/help▶ you.

⁸ Then go ahead of me, down to Gilgal *city*, and wait for me there, for seven days. Then I will join you there, to burn sacrifices and offer other sacrifices to enable you to maintain fellowship with God. When I arrive there, I will tell you what *other* things you should do.”

What Samuel prophesied came true

⁹ As Saul started to leave there, God changed Saul’s inner being. And all the things that Samuel had predicted happened on that day. ¹⁰ When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeah, they saw some prophets who were *speaking messages that came directly from God*. As the *prophets were* approaching Saul and his servant, God’s Spirit came upon Saul powerfully, and he also began to speak messages from God. ¹¹ When people who had known Saul previously heard him speaking messages from God as the prophets were doing, they said to each other, “What has happened to this son of Kish? Is he now really one of the ◀prophets/men who speak messages from God▶?”

¹² One of the men who lived there replied, “*Saul cannot be a prophet, because all prophets receive their power to speak messages from God, not from their parents.*” And that is why, *when people hear about a report of someone prophesying, they think about what happened to Saul and say, “We are surprised about that person becoming a prophet, like we were surprised to hear that Saul had really become one of the prophets.”* ¹³ When Saul finished speaking the messages that God gave him, he went to the place where the people offered sacrifices.

¹⁴ Later, Saul’s uncle *saw him there, and* asked him, “Where did you go?” Saul replied, “We went to look for the donkeys. When we could not find them, we came here to ask Samuel *if he could tell us where they were.*”

¹⁵ Saul’s uncle replied, “What did Samuel tell you?”

¹⁶ Saul replied, “He assured us that the donkeys had been found.” But he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about him becoming the king of Israel.

¹⁷ *Later* Samuel summoned the people of Israel to gather at Mizpah to *hear a message from Yahweh.* ¹⁸ After they arrived, he said to them, “This is what Yahweh, the God we Israeli people *worship*, says: I brought you Israeli people out of Egypt. I rescued your *ancestors* from the power of the rulers of Egypt and from all the other kings who oppressed them. ¹⁹ I am the one who saves you from all your troubles and difficulties. But today you have rejected me, your God, and you

have said, 'We don't care! Give us a king!' So *I will do what you want*. Now have *representatives of your tribes and of your clans* stand here in the presence of Yahweh.' "

²⁰ When those representatives came near to Samuel, *God indicated that* he had chosen someone from the tribe descended from Benjamin.

²¹ Then Samuel told representatives of the tribe of Benjamin to come forward, and God indicated that *from that tribe* he had chosen someone from the family of Matri, and then God indicated that *from the family of Matri* he had chosen Saul, the son of Kish. But when they looked for Saul, they could not find him. ²² So they asked Yahweh, "Where is Saul?" Yahweh replied, "He is hiding among the army equipment."

²³ So they quickly went there *and found him*, and brought him *in front of all the people*. They could see that *truly* he was a head taller than anyone else. ²⁴ Then Samuel said to all the people there, "This is the man whom Yahweh has chosen to be your king. Among all us Israeli people, there is no one like him!" Then all the people shouted, "We hope that this king will live a long time!"

²⁵ Then Samuel told the people what things the king would force them to do, and all the things the king was required to do. He wrote all those things on a scroll, and then he put it in a sacred place in the temple. Then Samuel sent all the people home.

²⁶ When Saul returned to his home in Gibeah town, a group of men decided to continually

accompany Saul. They did that because God ◀motivated them/put it in their minds▶ to do that. ²⁷ But some worthless men said, “◀How can this man save us *from our enemies?*/This man will not be able to save us *from our enemies.*▶” [RHQ] They despised him, and refused to give him any gifts *to show that they would be loyal to him*. But Saul did not say anything *to rebuke them*.

11

Saul's army rescued the people of Jabesh

¹ About a month later, King Nahash of Ammon *led his army across the Jordan River; and they surrounded Jabesh city in the Gilead region*. But all the men of Jabesh *went and* said to Nahash, “Make an agreement/treaty with us *not to kill us*, and then we will let you rule us.”

² Nahash replied, “I will do that if you do one thing. Allow us to gouge out all the right eyes of your people. By doing that we will cause the people *in other countries* to despise all you Israeli people.”

³ The leaders of Jabesh replied, “Do not attack us for the next seven days. During that time, we will send messengers throughout Israel *to tell them what you are demanding*. If no one will help us, then we will ◀surrender to you/allow you to do to us whatever you want▶.”

⁴ *Being very confident that his army was very superior; Nahash agreed. So the leaders of Jabesh sent messengers throughout Israel. When the messengers came to Gibeah, which was the city*

where Saul lived, and they told the people there about the situation, everyone started to cry. ⁵ At that time, Saul was plowing in the field. When he returned home, he asked, "Why are all the people *crying*?" So they told him what the messengers from Jabesh had reported.

⁶ Then God's Spirit came powerfully upon Saul, and he became very angry *because of what Nahash wanted to do*. ⁷ He took two of his oxen *and killed them* and cut them into pieces. Then he sent messengers *carrying those pieces* throughout Israel to tell people this message: "Saul says that *he cut this ox in pieces, and that he will do the same thing to the oxen of anyone who refuses to come with him and Samuel to fight the army from Ammon!*" Then Yahweh caused all the people of Israel to be afraid of what Saul might do to them (OR, of what Yahweh might do to them) *if they did not go and help Saul*. So the men all gathered together. ⁸ When Saul gave them all weapons at Bezek, he saw that there were 300,000 Israeli men there, as well as 30,000 men from the tribe of Judah.

⁹ So Saul sent messengers back to the people at Jabesh to tell them, "We will rescue/save you by noontime tomorrow." When the people of Jabesh heard that message, they were very joyful/happy. ¹⁰ Then the men of Jabesh told *Nahash*, "Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and then you can do to us whatever you want to."

¹¹ But before the sun rose the next morning, *Saul and his army arrived*. *He divided them*

into three groups. They rushed into the camp of the soldiers from Ammon, and attacked them. By noontime they had killed most of them, and those who were not killed scattered. Each of them who ran away ran away alone.

The people proclaimed Saul as king

¹² Then the people of *Jabesh* said to Samuel, "Where are those men who said that they did not want Saul to be our king? Bring them here, and we will kill them!"

¹³ But Saul replied, "No, we are not going to execute anyone today, because this is the day that Yahweh has saved us Israeli people. *It is a day to rejoice, not to kill anyone.*"

¹⁴ Then Samuel said to the people, "Let's all go to Gilgal, and there we will again proclaim *that Saul is our king.*" ¹⁵ So they went to Gilgal. There, knowing that Yahweh was watching, they proclaimed that Saul was their king. Then they offered sacrifices to enable them to maintain fellowship with Yahweh. And Saul and all the other Israeli people were very happy.

12

Samuel's final speech

¹ Then Samuel said this to all the Israeli people: "I have done everything that you told me to do, and I have given/appointed a king to rule you.

² My own sons *are grown up and* with you now, but I have appointed Saul *instead of one of them*, and he is now your leader. I am now old, and my hair is gray. I have been your leader ever

since I was a boy. ³ Now tell me, while Yahweh is listening, and while the king whom he has chosen is listening: whose ox or donkey have I stolen *during all those years*? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed/treated badly? From whom have I accepted a bribe, in order that I would ignore *the evil things he had done*? If I have done any of those things, tell me, and I will pay back what I owe.”

⁴ They replied, “No, you have never cheated anyone or oppressed anyone or accepted a bribe from anyone.”

⁵ Then Samuel said, “Today Yahweh can testify, and the king whom you chose can testify, that I have not taken a bribe from anyone.” They replied, “Yes, Yahweh can say that he knows that is true.”

⁶ Samuel continued by saying, “Yahweh is the one who appointed Moses and Aaron *to lead* our ancestors. He is the one who brought them out of Egypt. *And he is the one who will testify that what I am saying is true.* ⁷ Now while Yahweh is listening, stand here quietly while I accuse you *and tell you that your requesting a king instead of trusting Yahweh to lead you was wrong.* I will do that by reminding you of all the great miracles that Yahweh performed for you and your ancestors.

⁸ “*Many years* after Jacob went to Egypt, our ancestors pleaded to Yahweh to help them. So Yahweh sent Moses and Aaron to them, and they led our ancestors out of Egypt, and eventually they settled in this land.

⁹ “But our ancestors soon forgot about Yahweh, their God. So he allowed Sisera, the commander of the army from Hazor, to defeat them. He also allowed the Philistines and the army of the king of Moab to fight our ancestors and defeat them. ¹⁰ Then our ancestors pleaded with Yahweh again to help them. They admitted, ‘Yahweh, we have sinned, and we have forsaken you. We have worshiped *idols that represent the god* Baal and *the goddess* Astarte. But if you rescue us from our enemies, we will worship you only.’ ¹¹ So Yahweh sent men such as Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, and me to save you. And as a result, you did not have to worry about any enemies attacking you.

¹² “But now, when king Nahash of Ammon came *with his army* to attack you, *you were afraid*. So, you came to me, and said, ‘We want a king to rule us,’ even though Yahweh was already your king! ¹³ So now, look, here is the king whom you have chosen. You asked for a king, and Yahweh has now appointed a king for you. ¹⁴ If you will revere Yahweh and if you serve him, and if you listen to what he says and obey what he commands, and if you and the king who rules over you do what Yahweh your God wants you to do, *◀things will go well for you all/Yahweh will bless you▶*. ¹⁵ But if you do not listen to what Yahweh says, if you disobey what he commands, then he will punish [MTY] you all, just as he punished our ancestors.

¹⁶ “Now stand here quietly and see the great thing that Yahweh is about to do. ¹⁷ You know

that [RHQ] *it does not rain at this time of the year*, during the time when you harvest wheat. But I will ask Yahweh to send thunder *and lightning* and rain today. When he does that, you will realize that Yahweh considers that you have done a very wicked thing by requesting a king.”

¹⁸ Then Samuel prayed to Yahweh, and Yahweh caused it to thunder *and lightning* and rain. So all the people became very afraid of Yahweh and of Samuel.

¹⁹ They cried out to Samuel, “Pray for us! We have added to our previous sins by requesting a king! Pray to Yahweh, your God, in order that we will not die *because of having done that!*”

²⁰ Samuel replied, “Do not be afraid! You have done this evil thing, but do not turn away from doing the things that Yahweh wants you to do. Instead, serve Yahweh wholeheartedly.

²¹ Do not abandon *Yahweh* and worship useless idols. They cannot help you or save you *from your enemies*, because they are truly useless.

²² Yahweh decided to make us his people. So he will not abandon us people whom he has chosen, because he would injure his own reputation *of being completely faithful* if he did that. ²³ But as for me, I have solemnly promised that I will not sin against Yahweh by ceasing to pray for you.

And I will continue to teach you what things are good and right *for you to do*. ²⁴ But you must revere Yahweh and serve him wholeheartedly. Never forget all the great things that he has done for you. ²⁵ But if you keep doing wicked things,

he will get rid of you and your king!”

13

Saul disobeyed God

¹ Saul was no longer a young man when he became the king. He ruled Israel for 42 years.

² *Several years after he became king*, he chose three thousand men from the Israeli army to go with him *to fight the Philistines*. Then he sent the other soldiers back home. Of the men he chose, 2,000 stayed with Saul at Micmash and in the hilly area near Bethel, and 1,000 stayed with *Saul's son Jonathan* at Gibeah, in the area where the descendants of Benjamin lived.

³ *Jonathan and the men who were with him* attacked the Philistine soldiers who were camped at Geba. The *other Philistines* heard about that. *So Saul realized that the army of Philistia would probably come to fight the Israelis again*. So Saul sent messengers to blow trumpets throughout Israel *to gather the people together and proclaim to them, "All you Hebrews need to hear that now the Philistines will start a war with us!"* ⁴ The messengers told the rest of the army to gather together with Saul at Gilgal. And all the people in Israel heard the news. People were saying, "Saul's army has attacked the Philistine camp, with the result that now the Philistines hate us Israelis very much."

⁵ The Philistines gathered together and were given equipment to fight the Israelis. The Philistines had 3,000 chariots, and 6,000 chariot-drivers. Their soldiers *seemed to be as many as grains of sand on the seashore* [HYP]. They went up and set up their tents at Micmash,

to the east of Beth-Aven (*which means 'house of wickedness', and really referred to Bethel town*). ⁶ The Philistines attacked the Israelis very strongly, and the Israeli soldiers realized that they were in a very bad situation. So many of the Israeli soldiers hid in caves and holes in the ground, or among the rocks, or in pits, or in wells. ⁷ Some of them crossed the Jordan River at a place where it was very shallow. Then they went to the area where the descendants of Gad lived and to *the Gilead region*.

But Saul stayed at Gilgal. All the soldiers who were with him were shaking *because they were so afraid*. ⁸ Saul waited seven days, which was the number of days that Samuel had told him to wait for him. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal *during that time*, so many of the men in Saul's army began to leave him and run away. ⁹ So Saul said to the soldiers, "Bring to me an animal to be completely burned *on the altar* and one for the offering to enable us to maintain fellowship *with God*." *So the men did that*. ¹⁰ And just as he was finished burning those offerings, Samuel arrived. Saul went to greet him.

¹¹ Samuel *saw what Saul had done, and he said to Saul, "Why have you done this?"* Saul replied, "I saw that my men were leaving me and running away, and that you did not come here during the time that you said that you would come, and that the Philistine army was gathering together at Micmash.

¹² "So I thought, 'The Philistine army is going to attack us here at Gilgal, and I have not yet

asked Yahweh to bless/help us.’ So I felt it was necessary to offer the burnt offerings *to seek God’s blessings.*”

¹³ Samuel replied, “What you did was very foolish! You have not obeyed what Yahweh, your God, commanded *about sacrifices*. If you had obeyed him, God would have allowed you and your descendants to rule *Israel* for a long time. ¹⁴ But now *because of what you have done, you will die, and after you die*, none of your descendants will rule. Yahweh is seeking for a man *to be king* who will be just the kind of person that he wants him to be, so that he can appoint him to be the leader of his people. Yahweh will do this because you have not obeyed what he commanded.”

¹⁵ Then Samuel left Gilgal and went up to Gibeah. Saul stayed at Gilgal with his soldiers. There were only about 600 of them left *who had not run away*.

Saul’s army had difficulties

¹⁶ Saul and his son Jonathan and the soldiers who were with them went to Geba *city* in the area of the tribe of Benjamin *and set up their tents there*. The Philistine army set up their tents at Micmash. ¹⁷ Three groups of Philistia men soon left the place where their army was staying, and went and ◀raided the Israeli towns/ attacked the Israelis and took their possessions▶. One group went *north* toward Ophrah *city* in *the Shual region*. ¹⁸ One group went *west* to Beth-Horon *city*. The third group went toward

the *Israeli* border, above Zeboim Valley, near the desert.

¹⁹ At that time, there were no men in Israel who ◀were blacksmiths/could make things from iron▶. *The people of Philistia would not permit the Israelis to do that, because they were afraid that they would make iron swords and spears for the Hebrews to fight with.* ²⁰ So *whenever the Israelis needed to sharpen the blades of their plows, or picks, or axes, or sickles, they were forced to take those things to a Philistia man who could sharpen those things.* ²¹ They needed to pay ◀one fourth of an ounce/8 grams▶ of silver for sharpening a plow, and ◀an eighth of an ounce/4 grams▶ of silver to sharpen an axe, or a sickle, or ◀an ox goad/a pointed rod to jab an ox to make it walk▶.

²² So *because the Israelis could not make weapons from iron, on the day that the Israelis fought against the men of Philistia, Saul and Jonathan were the only Israeli men who had swords. None of the others had a sword; they had only bows and arrows.*

²³ Before the battle started, some Philistia men went to ◀the pass/a narrow place between two cliffs▶ outside Micmash to guard it.

14

Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed many Philistines

¹ One day, Jonathan said to the young man who carried his weapons, "Come with me; we will go over to where the Philistia soldiers have put up

their tents.” So they went, but Jonathan did not tell his father *what they were going to do*.

² On that day, Saul and the 600 soldiers who were with him were sitting around a pomegranate tree at a place where the people threshed grain, near Gibeah. ³ Ahijah the priest was also there. He was wearing the sacred vest. Ahijah was the son of Ahitub, who was a brother of Ichabod. Ichabod and Ahitub were the sons of Phinehas, who was the son of Eli, who had been Yahweh’s priest at Shiloh.

No one knew that Jonathan had left *the Israeli camp*.

⁴ Jonathan planned that he and the young man would go through a narrow ◀pass/place between two cliffs▶ to get to where the Philistia army was. The cliff on one side of the pass was named Bozez, and the other cliff was named Seneh. ⁵ One cliff faced north toward Micmash, and the cliff on the other side faced south toward Geba town.

⁶ Jonathan said to the young man who carried his weapons, “Come with me. We will go to where those ◀pagans/people who do not believe in Yahweh▶ [MTY] have set up their tents. Perhaps Yahweh will help us. It does not matter whether we are only two men or many people; nothing can hinder Yahweh from enabling us to defeat them.”

⁷ The young man who was carrying Jonathan’s weapons said, “Do what you think is the best thing for us to do. I will help you.”

⁸ Then Jonathan said, “Okay, come with me. We will cross the valley to where the Philistia

army is, and allow them to see us. ⁹ If they then say to us, 'You two stay there until we come down to you,' we will stay there and not go up to them. ¹⁰ But if they say to us, 'Come up here *and fight against us*,' that will show us that Yahweh will enable us to defeat them. Then we will go up and fight them."

¹¹ When the two of them crossed the valley, the Philistia soldiers saw them coming. They said, "Look! The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes in which they have been hiding!" ¹² Then the Philistia soldiers who were closest to Jonathan and the young man who carried his weapons said, "Come up here, and we will teach you something *about how to fight* [IDM]!"

Jonathan said to the young man who was with him, "Come behind me and climb up, because Yahweh is going to help us to defeat them!" ¹³ So Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and his feet *because it was very steep*. The young man climbed up following him. As Jonathan climbed, he struck and killed many Philistia soldiers, and the young man who was with him killed many more as he followed behind Jonathan. ¹⁴ In that first battle the two of them killed about 20 Philistia soldiers in an area that was about half an acre.

¹⁵ Then all the other Philistia soldiers, the ones in the camp and the ones who had been attacking the Israeli towns, ones who were out in the field much closer, panicked. Then God caused the ground to shake, and they all became terrified/very afraid.

The Israelis defeated the Philistia army

¹⁶ Saul's lookouts/men who were watching to see if enemies were coming were in Gibeah town in the land of the tribe of Benjamin. They saw that the soldiers of the Philistia army were running away in all directions. ¹⁷ Saul realized that some of his soldiers must have attacked the Philistia army. So he said to the soldiers who were with him, "Check to see if any of our men are not here." So they checked, and they found out that Jonathan and the man who carried his weapons were gone.

¹⁸ So Saul said to Ahijah the Supreme Priest, "Bring the sacred vest here and find out what we should do." On that day Ahijah was wearing the sacred vest, going in front of the Israelis. ¹⁹ But while Saul was talking to the priest, he saw that the Philistia soldiers were becoming more panicked/confused. So Saul said to Ahijah, "Take your hand down from the sacred vest. Do not waste any more time using the marked stones in the vest to find out what Yahweh wants us to do."

²⁰ Then Saul gathered his men and they went toward the battle. They found that the Philistia soldiers were so confused that they were striking each other with their swords. ²¹ Before that, some of the Hebrew men had deserted their army and gone to join with the Philistia army. But now those men revolted and joined with Saul and Jonathan and the other Israeli soldiers. ²² Some of the Israeli soldiers had previously run away and hidden in the mountains where the tribe of Ephraim lived. But when they

heard that the Philistia soldiers were running away, they *came down and* joined the other Israeli soldiers and pursued the Philistia soldiers. ²³ So Yahweh rescued the Israelis on that day. The Israeli soldiers continued to pursue their enemies beyond Beth-Aven *town*.

The dispute about Jonathan eating honey

²⁴ Before Saul's soldiers went to the battle, Saul declared to them solemnly, "I do not want any of you to eat any food before this evening, before we have defeated all our enemies. If anyone eats anything, *Yahweh* will curse/punish him." So none of the Israeli soldiers ate any food, and they became faint/weak because they were very hungry.

²⁵ The Israeli army went into the forest, and they found honeycombs on the ground, but they did not eat any honey. ²⁶ They were afraid to eat any, because they had solemnly promised that they would not eat any food. ²⁷ But Jonathan did not hear what his father commanded *because he had left the camp very early in the morning*. So *when he saw* a honeycomb, he dipped the end of his walking stick into it and ate some honey. After he ate the honey, he felt stronger.

²⁸ But one of the Israeli soldiers saw him and said to him, "Your father solemnly declared to us that *Yahweh* would curse/punish anyone who ate any food today. So now we are *very tired and* weak from being hungry *because we obeyed him*." ²⁹ Jonathan exclaimed, "My father has caused trouble for all of us! See how refreshed/

strong I am after eating a little honey! ³⁰ If he had permitted all of us to eat from the food we took from our enemies while we were pursuing them, we would have been able to kill many more of their soldiers!”

³¹ The Israelis pursued and killed Philistia soldiers all that day, from Micmash *town west* to Aijalon. But they continued to become weaker from being hungry. ³² They had taken *many* sheep and cattle that the Philistia soldiers had abandoned. Now, because they were extremely hungry, they butchered some of those animals and ate the meat without draining the blood from the animals. ³³ One of the soldiers told Saul, “Look! The men are sinning against Yahweh by eating meat that still has blood in it!”

Saul replied *to the men who were near him*, “They have disobeyed Yahweh! Roll a large stone over here!”

³⁴ After they did that, he said to those men, “Go and tell all the soldiers that each of them must bring an ox or a sheep to me, and kill it here on this stone, *and drain the blood* before he eats any of the meat. They should not sin against Yahweh by eating meat *from some animal* without draining its blood.” So that night all the soldiers brought animals and slaughtered them there. Then Saul built an altar to *worship* Yahweh. ³⁵ That was the first *time that he built an altar* for Yahweh.

The soldiers rescued Jonathan from Saul

³⁶ Then Saul said *to the Israeli soldiers*, “Let’s pursue the Philistia soldiers tonight. We can

attack them all night. We will not allow any of them to escape alive.”

The Israeli soldiers answered, “We will do whatever you think is the best thing for us to do.”

But the priest said, “We should ask Yahweh *what he thinks we should do.*” ³⁷ So Saul asked God, “Should we pursue the Philistine soldiers? Will you enable us to defeat them?” But God did not answer Saul that day.

³⁸ Then Saul summoned all the leaders of his army. He said to them, “*I am sure that God has not answered me because someone has sinned. We must find out what sin someone has committed.*” ³⁹ Yahweh has rescued us *from the Philistia army.* Just as certain as Yahweh lives, whoever has sinned must be executed. Even if it is my son Jonathan who has sinned, he must be executed.”

His men knew who was guilty, but none of them said anything *to Saul.* ⁴⁰ Then Saul said to all the Israeli soldiers, “You stand on one side. My son Jonathan and I will stand on the other side.”

His men replied, “Do whatever you think is best.” ⁴¹ Then Saul prayed to Yahweh, the Israelis’ God, “Tell me who is guilty and who is not guilty.” Then the priest ◀cast lots/threw the stones that were marked▶, and they indicated that it was *either* Jonathan or Saul who was the guilty one, and that the other men were not guilty. ⁴² Then Saul said to the priest, “Throw the stones again to indicate which of us two is guilty.” So he did, and the stones indicated that Jonathan was the guilty one.

⁴³ Then Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you have done *that was wrong*.”

Jonathan replied, “I ate a little bit of honey. It was only a little bit that was on the end of my stick. Do I *deserve to be executed because of doing that?*” ⁴⁴ Saul replied, “Yes, you must be executed! I hope/wish that God will strike me and kill me if you are not executed for having done that!”

⁴⁵ But the Israeli soldiers said to Saul, “Jonathan has won a great victory for all us Israelis. Should he be executed for eating some honey [RHQ]? Certainly not! Just as surely as Yahweh lives, we will not allow you to injure him in any manner [IDM], *because* today God helped Jonathan *to kill many soldiers of the Philistia army!*”

So *by saying that* the Israeli soldiers rescued Jonathan, and he was not executed. ⁴⁶ Then Saul ordered his soldiers to stop pursuing the Philistia army, so the Philistia soldiers returned to their homes.

Saul's army defeated many of their enemies

⁴⁷ After Saul became the ruler/king of the Israeli people, his army fought against their enemies in many areas. They fought against armies of the Moab people-group, the Ammon people-group, the Edom people-group, the kings of Zobah *city/area*, and the Philistia people-group. Wherever the Israeli army fought, they defeated their enemies. ⁴⁸ Saul's army fought bravely and defeated the *very tall* descendants of Amalek. His

army rescued the Israelis from those who had ◀plundered/forcefully taken things from▶ them.

⁴⁹ Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishbosheth, and Malchishua. He also had two daughters, Merab and her younger sister Michal. ⁵⁰ Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. The commander of Saul's army was Abner, who was the son of Saul's uncle Ner. ⁵¹ Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner were both sons of Abiel.

⁵² All the time that Saul was alive, his army fought against the Philistia army. And whenever Saul saw a young man who was ◀brave/not afraid to fight▶ and strong, he forced him to join his army.

15

Saul's army defeated the Amalekites

¹ *One day* Samuel said to Saul, "Yahweh sent me to appoint you to be the king of the Israeli people. So now listen to this message from Yahweh: ² Yahweh, *the commander* of the armies of angels has declared this: 'I am going to punish *the descendants of Amalek* for *attacking* the Israeli people after the Israelis left Egypt. ³ So now go *with your army* and attack the Amalek people-group. Destroy them completely—destroy them and everything that belongs to them—the men and women, their children and infants, their cattle and sheep and camels and donkeys. Do not ◀spare any of them/allow any of them to remain alive▶!' "

⁴ So Saul summoned the army, and they gathered at Telaim town. There were 200,000

soldiers. 10,000 of them were from Judah, *and the others were from the other Israeli tribes.*

⁵ Then Saul went *with his army* to a town where some of the Amalek people-group lived. *His army prepared to attack them suddenly by hiding in the valley.* ⁶ Then Saul sent this message to the Ken people-group *who lived in that area:* “You acted kindly toward all our Israeli *ancestors* when they left Egypt. But we are going to kill all of the Amalek people-group, *because they opposed/attacked our ancestors.* So move away from where the Amalek people-group live. *If you do not move away, you will be killed when they are killed.*” So *when* the Ken people-group *heard that, they immediately* left that area.

⁷ Then Saul’s *army* slaughtered the Amalek people-group, from Havilah *town in the east* to Shur *town in the west*. Shur was at the border *between Israel and Egypt.* ⁸ Saul’s army captured Agag, the king of the Amalek people-group, but they killed everyone else. ⁹ They not only ◀spared/did not kill▶ Agag, but they also took the best sheep and goats and cattle. They took everything that was good. They destroyed only the animals that they considered to be worthless.

Yahweh rejected Saul as king

¹⁰ Then Yahweh said to Samuel, ¹¹ “I am sorry that I appointed Saul to be your king, because he has turned away from me and has not obeyed what I commanded him to do.” Samuel was very disturbed/upset *when he heard that*, and he cried out to Yahweh all that night.

¹² Early the next morning, Samuel got up and went to talk with Saul. But someone told Samuel, "Saul went to Camel *city*, where he has set up a monument to honor himself. Now he has left there and gone down to Gilgal."

¹³ When Samuel arrived *at Gilgal* he approached Saul, and Saul said to him,, "I wish/desire that Yahweh will bless you! I have obeyed what Yahweh told me to do."

¹⁴ But Samuel replied, "If that is true, why is it that I hear cattle mooing and I hear sheep bleating?"

¹⁵ Saul replied, "The soldiers took them from the Amalek people-group. They saved the best sheep and cattle, in order to offer them as sacrifices to Yahweh, your God. But we have completely destroyed all the others."

¹⁶ Samuel said to Saul, "Stop *talking!* Allow me to tell you what Yahweh said to me last night."

Saul replied, "Tell me *what he said.*" ¹⁷ Samuel said, "Previously you did not think that you were important. But now you have become [RHQ] the leader of the tribes of Israel. Yahweh appointed you to be their king. ¹⁸ And Yahweh sent you to do something *for him*. He said to you, 'Go and get rid of all those sinful people, the Amalek people-group. Attack them and kill all of them.' ¹⁹ So why did you not obey Yahweh [RHQ]? Why did your men take the best animals [RHQ]? Why did you do what Yahweh said was evil?" [RHQ]

²⁰ Saul replied to Samuel, "Hey, I did what Yahweh sent me to do! I brought back King Agag, but we killed everyone else! ²¹ My men brought

back only the best sheep and cattle and other things, in order to sacrifice them to Yahweh your God here at Gilgal.”

²² But Samuel replied,
 “Which *do you think* pleases Yahweh more,
 animals that are completely burned *on the altar* and other sacrifices,
 or people obeying him [SYN]?
 It is better to obey *Yahweh* than *to offer* sacrifices *to him*.
 It is better to pay attention to what he says than *to burn* the fat of rams, *even though God said they should be sacrificed to him*.

²³ To rebel *against God* is as sinful as doing sorcery/black magic,
 and being stubborn is as sinful as worshiping idols.
 So, because you disobeyed what Yahweh told you to do,
 he has declared that you will no longer be king.”

Saul asks to be forgiven

²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, “Yes, I have sinned. I disobeyed what you told me to do, which is what Yahweh commanded. I did that because I was ◀afraid of/worried about▶ what my men would say *if I did not do what they wanted*. So I did what they demanded. ²⁵ But now, please forgive me for having sinned. And come back with me *to where the people are* in order that I may worship Yahweh.”

²⁶ But Samuel replied, “No, I will not go back with you. You have rejected/disobeyed what Yahweh commanded you to do. So he has

rejected you, *and declared that you will no longer be the king of Israel. So I do not want to talk any more with you.*"

²⁷ As Samuel turned to leave, Saul tried to stop him by grabbing the edge of Samuel's robe, and it tore. ²⁸ Samuel said to him, "*You tore my robe! And today Yahweh has torn away from you the kingdom of Israel! He will appoint someone else to be king, someone who is a better man than you are.*" ²⁹ And since the one who is the glorious *God* of the Israeli people does not lie, he will not change ◀his mind/what he has said▶. Humans sometimes change their minds, but God does not do that, because he is not a human."

³⁰ Then Saul *pleaded again*. He said, "I know that I have sinned. But please honor me in front of the leaders of the Israeli people and in front of all the other Israeli people by coming back *to them* with me in order that I may worship Yahweh your God." ³¹ So Samuel finally agreed to do that, and they went together back *to where the people were*, and Saul worshiped Yahweh there.

Samuel executed King Agag

³² Then Samuel said, "Bring King Agag to me." So they brought Agag to him. Agag was confidently expecting that they would spare him/not kill him. He was thinking, "Surely I will not have to endure an agonizing death!"

³³ But Samuel said to him,
"You have killed the sons of many women with
your sword,

so now your mother will no longer have a son.”
 And Samuel cut Agag into pieces *with his sword*, there at Gilgal, in the presence of Yahweh.

³⁴ Then Samuel left there and returned to his home in Ramah, and Saul went to his home in Gibeah. ³⁵ Samuel never saw Saul again, but he was very sad about *what Saul had done*. And Yahweh was very sorry that he had appointed Saul to be the king of Israel.

16

Samuel appointed David to be king

¹ Finally, Yahweh said to Samuel, “I have decided that I will not allow Saul to continue to be the king. So you should not [RHQ] keep feeling sad *about what he has done*. Put some olive oil in a small container and go to Bethlehem *to anoint someone with the oil, and appoint him to be king*. I am sending you there to a man named Jesse, because I have chosen one of his sons to be the king *of Israel*.”

² But Samuel said, “I am afraid [RHQ] to do that! If Saul hears about it, he will kill me!” Yahweh said, “Take a ◀heifer/young female cow▶ with you, and say to people that you have come to *kill it and offer it as a sacrifice to me*.

³ “Invite Jesse to come to the sacrifice. *When he comes, I will show you what you should do. And I will show you which of his sons I have chosen to be the king. Then you should anoint that one with the olive oil to be the king.*”

⁴ Samuel did what Yahweh told him to do. He went to Bethlehem. When the town leaders

came to him, they trembled, *because they were worried that Samuel had come to rebuke them about something*. One of them asked him, “Have you come *to speak peacefully to us?*”

⁵ Samuel replied, “Yes. I have come peacefully, to make a sacrifice to Yahweh. *Perform the rituals to make yourselves acceptable to Yahweh, and then come with me to where they will offer the sacrifice.*” Then Samuel performed the ritual to make Jesse and his sons acceptable to God, and he also invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they arrived there, Samuel looked at *Jesse’s oldest son Eliab*, and thought, “Surely this is the one whom Yahweh has appointed *to be king!*”

⁷ But Yahweh said to Samuel, “No, he is not the one whom I have chosen. Don’t pay attention to his being handsome and very tall, because I have not chosen him. I do not evaluate people as people do. You people evaluate people by their appearance, but I evaluate people by what is in their inner beings.”

⁸ Then Jesse told *his next oldest son Abinadab* to step forward and walk in front of Samuel. *But when he did that*, Samuel said, “Yahweh has not chosen this one, either.” ⁹ Then Jesse told *his next oldest son Shammah* to step forward. He stepped forward, but Samuel said, “Yahweh has not chosen this one, either.” ¹⁰ Similarly, Jesse told his other four sons to walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, “Yahweh has not chosen any of these sons of yours.” ¹¹ Then Samuel asked Jesse, “Do you have any other

sons?" Jesse replied, "My youngest son *is not here*; he is out *in the fields* taking care of the sheep." Samuel said, "Send someone to bring him here! We will not sit down *to eat* until he gets here."

¹² So Jesse sent *someone* to bring *David there*. *And when David arrived, Samuel saw that he was handsome and healthy, and had bright eyes.* Then Yahweh said, "This is the one *whom I have chosen*; anoint him *to be king*."

¹³ So as David *stood there* in front of his older brothers, Samuel took the container of oil that he had brought and poured some of it on David's head *to set him apart to serve God*. *After they all ate, Samuel left* and returned to Ramah. But Yahweh's Spirit came on David powerfully, and stayed with David for the rest of his life.

David played the harp for Saul

¹⁴ But Yahweh's Spirit left Saul. Instead *of his Spirit staying with Saul*, Yahweh sent an evil spirit to Saul to terrify him *repeatedly*.

¹⁵ One of his servants said to him, "It is evident that an evil spirit sent by God is terrifying you.

¹⁶ So *we suggest that you* allow us, your servants here, to search for a man who plays the harp well. He can play the harp whenever the evil spirit bothers you. Then *you will calm down and you will be okay again*."

¹⁷ Saul replied, "*Fine/Okay*, find for me a man who can play *the harp* well, and bring him to me."

¹⁸ One of his servants said to him, "A man named Jesse, in Bethlehem *town*, has a son who

plays the harp very well. Furthermore, he is a brave man, and is a capable soldier. He is handsome and he always speaks wisely. And Yahweh always protects him.”

¹⁹ So Saul sent this message to Jesse: “Send your son David to me, the one who takes care of sheep.” ²⁰ *So after they went to Jesse and told him that, he agreed. He got a young goat, a container of wine, a donkey on which he put some loaves of bread, and gave them to David to take to Saul as a present.*

²¹ Then David went to Saul and started to work for him. Saul liked David very much, and he became the man who carried Saul’s weapons *when Saul went to fight in battles.* ²² Then Saul sent *a messenger* to Jesse to tell him, “I am pleased with David. Please let him stay here and work for me.”

²³ *Jesse agreed, and after that, whenever the evil spirit whom God sent tormented Saul, David played the harp. Then Saul would become calm, and the evil spirit would leave him.*

17

Goliath challenged the Israeli army

¹ The Philistines gathered their army *to fight the Israeli army.* They gathered together near Socoh, in the area where the descendants of Judah lived. They set up their tents at Ephes-Dammim, which is between Socoh and Azekah.

² Saul gathered the Israeli army near Elah Valley, and they set up their tents. Then they all took their places, ready to fight the Philistines. ³ So

the Philistine and Israeli armies faced each other. They were on two hills, with a valley between them.

⁴ Then Goliath, from Gath *city*, came out from the Philistine camp. He was a champion warrior/soldier. He was ◀over 9 feet/3 meters▶ tall. ⁵ He wore a helmet made of bronze *to protect his head*, and he wore a coat made of metal plates *to protect his body*. The coat weighed ◀125 pounds/56 kg.▶. ⁶ He wore bronze guards/protectors on his legs. He had a long bronze dagger fastened on his back. ⁷ He also had a big spear. It had a cord on it to enable him to throw it better (OR, which was as thick as a weaver's beam). The tip of the spear was made of iron and weighed ◀15 pounds/almost 7 kg.▶. A soldier carrying a huge shield walked in front of him.

⁸ Goliath stood there and shouted to the Israeli army, "Why are you all lined up for battle? I am the great Philistine *soldier*, and I think [RHQ] you are *merely* Saul's slaves. Choose one man to fight for all of you, and send him down here to me! ⁹ If he fights with me and kills me, then my fellow Philistines will all be your slaves. But if I defeat him and kill him, then you Israelis will all be our slaves. ¹⁰ I defy/challenge you men of the Israeli army. Send me a man who will fight with me!" ¹¹ When Saul and all the Israeli soldiers heard that, they were extremely terrified [DOU].

David went to Saul's camp

¹² David was the son of Jesse. Jesse was from the clan of Ephrath. He lived in Bethlehem, in the area where the descendants of Judah

lived. Jesse had eight sons. When Saul *was king*, Jesse had already become a very old man [DOU].

¹³ Jesse's three oldest sons, Eliab and Abinadab and Shammah, had gone with Saul to fight *the Philistines*. ¹⁴ David was Jesse's youngest son.

While his three oldest brothers were with Saul, ¹⁵ David went back and forth: Sometimes he went to Saul's camp, and sometimes he stayed in Bethlehem to take care of his father's sheep.

¹⁶ For 40 days Goliath came out from the Philistine camp and stood there *taunting the Israeli army/telling the Israelis to choose one man to fight with him*. He did it twice each day, once in the morning and once in the evening.

¹⁷ *One day*, Jesse said to David, "Here is a sack of roasted grain and ten loaves of bread. Take these quickly to your *older* brothers. ¹⁸ And here are ten large chunks of cheese. Take them to their commander. And see how things are going with your *older* brothers. Then *if they are okay*, bring back something to show they are all right."

¹⁹ His brothers were with Saul and all the other Israeli soldiers, camped alongside Elah Valley, *preparing to fight the Philistines*. ²⁰ So David arranged for another shepherd to take care of the sheep. Early the next morning he took the food and went to the Israeli camp, as Jesse told him to do. He arrived there just as the Israeli soldiers were forming their ranks and going out to the battlefield. As they went, they were shouting a war cry. ²¹ The Philistine army and the Israeli army stood *on the hillsides*, facing each other, ready for the battle. ²² David gave the food

to the man who was taking care of the war equipment. *He told him to take care of the food that he brought*, and then he went and greeted his older brothers. ²³ While he was talking with them, he saw Goliath coming out from among the Philistine soldiers, shouting *to the Israelis*, challenging them *to send a man to fight him*. David heard what Goliath was saying. ²⁴ When all the Israeli soldiers saw Goliath, they were terrified and started to run away. ²⁵ They were saying to each other, “Look at him coming up toward us! And listen to him as he defies us Israelis! The king says that he will give a big reward to whoever kills this man. He also says that he will give his daughter to that man for him to marry her, and that he will no longer require that man’s family to pay taxes.”

²⁶ David talked to some of the men who were standing near him. He said, “What will be given to whoever kills this Philistine and frees us Israelis from this shame/disgrace? And who *does* this heathen Philistine *think he* is, defying/ridiculing the army that serves the all-powerful God?”

²⁷ They told him the same thing that the other men had said, about what the king would do for anyone who killed Goliath.

²⁸ But when David’s oldest brother Eliab heard David talking to the men, he was angry. He said to David, “Why have you come down here? Is someone taking care of those few sheep that you left in the desert? I know you are just a ◀smart-aleck/brat▶! You just want to watch the battle!”

²⁹ David replied, "Have I done something wrong? I was merely asking a question!" ³⁰ Then he walked over to another man and asked him the same question, but the man gave him the same answer. Each time he asked someone, he received the same answer. ³¹ Finally, someone told king Saul what David had asked, and Saul sent someone to bring David to him.

³² David told king Saul, "No one should ◀worry/become a coward▶ because of that Philistine man. I will go and fight with him!"

³³ Saul said to David, "You are only a young man, and he has been a very capable soldier all his life. So you are not able to go and fight with him!"

³⁴ David replied, "I have been taking care of my father's sheep *for many years*. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried away a lamb, ³⁵ I went after the lion or the bear and attacked it and rescued the lamb from the wild animal's mouth. Then I grabbed the animal by its jaw/throat and struck it and killed it. ³⁶ I have killed both lions and bears. And *I will do* the same to this heathen Philistine, because he has defied/ridiculed the army of the all-powerful God! ³⁷ Yahweh has rescued me from paws of lions and bears, and he will rescue me from this Philistine!" Then Saul said to David, "All right, go *and fight him*, and *I hope/desire* that Yahweh will help you!"

³⁸ Then Saul gave to David his own clothes that he always wore in battles, and he gave him a bronze helmet and a coat made of metal plates.

³⁹ David *put these things on*. Then he fastened

his sword over them, and tried to walk. But he could not walk, because he was not accustomed to wearing those things. So David said to Saul, "I cannot fight wearing all these things, because I am not accustomed to *wearing* them!" So he took them off.

⁴⁰ Then he took his walking/shepherd's stick, and he picked up five smooth stones from the brook/stream. He put them in the pouch of his shoulder-bag. Then he put his sling in his hand and started walking toward Goliath.

David killed Goliath

⁴¹ Goliath walked toward David, with the soldier who was carrying his shield walking in front of him. When he got near David, ⁴² he looked at David closely. He saw that David had a handsome face and healthy body, but that he was only a young man. So he sneered at David. ⁴³ He said to David, "Are you coming to me with a stick because *you think that* I am a dog?" Then he called out to his gods to harm David. ⁴⁴ He said to David, "Come here to me, and I will *kill you and* give your dead body to the birds and wild animals to eat!"

⁴⁵ David replied, "You are coming to me with a sword and a dagger and a spear. But I am coming to you ◀in the name/with the authority▶ of almighty Yahweh. He is the God whom the army of Israel *worships*, and he is the God whom you have defied/ridiculed. ⁴⁶ Today Yahweh will enable me to defeat you. I will strike you down and cut off your head. And *we Israelis will kill* many Philistine *soldiers and* give their bodies to

the birds and wild animals to eat. And everyone in the world will *hear about it and* know that we Israeli people worship an *all-powerful* God.

⁴⁷ And everyone here will know that Yahweh can rescue people without a sword or a spear. Yahweh always wins his battles, and he will enable us to defeat all of you *Philistines*.”

⁴⁸ As Goliath came closer to attack David, David ran quickly toward him. ⁴⁹ He put his hand into his shoulder-bag and took out one stone. He *put it in his sling and* hurled it toward Goliath. The stone hit Goliath on the forehead and penetrated his skull, and he fell face down onto the ground.

⁵⁰⁻⁵¹ Then David ran and stood over Goliath. He pulled Goliath’s sword from its sheath and killed him with it, and then cut off his head. In that way David defeated the Philistine without having his own sword. He used *only* a sling and a stone!

When the other Philistines saw that their great warrior was dead, they ran away. ⁵² The Israeli men shouted and ran after them. They pursued them all the way to Gath and to the gates of Ekron city. They struck them as they went, with the result that dead/wounded Philistines were lying on the road all the way from Shaaraim to Gath and Ekron towns. ⁵³ When the Israelis returned from chasing the Philistines, they ◀plundered/took everything from▶ the Philistine camp. ⁵⁴ David later took the head of Goliath to Jerusalem, but he kept Goliath’s weapons in his own tent.

⁵⁵ As Saul watched David going toward Goliath, he said to Abner, the commanded of his army, “Abner, whose son is that young man?” Abner

replied, “◀As sure as you are alive/Truly▶ [IDM], I do not know.”

⁵⁶ Then the king said, “Find out whose son he is!”

⁵⁷ *Later*, as David returned from killing Goliath, Abner took him to Saul. David was carrying Goliath’s head.

⁵⁸ Saul asked him, “Young man, whose son are you?” David replied, “*Sir, perhaps you have forgotten that I am the son of your servant Jesse, who has served you faithfully, who lives in Bethlehem.*”

18

Saul became jealous of David

¹ After David finished talking with Saul, *he met Saul’s son, Jonathan. Jonathan immediately liked David; in fact, he began to love/like him as much as he loved/liked himself.* ² From that day, Saul kept David with him, and did not let him return home. ³ Because Jonathan loved David so much, he made a solemn agreement with David. *They promised each other that they would always be loyal friends.* ⁴ Jonathan took off his own outer robe and gave it to David. He also gave David his soldier’s tunic, his sword, his bow *and arrows*, and his belt.

⁵ *David went wherever Saul sent him. And whatever Saul told him to do, David did it very successfully. As a result, Saul appointed David to be a commander in the army. All the officers and other men in the army ◀approved of/were very pleased with▶ that.*

⁶ But, when the men in the army were returning home after David had killed Goliath, the women came out from many [HYP] towns in Israel to meet/greet King Saul. They were singing and dancing very joyfully, playing tambourines and lyres. ⁷ As they danced, they sang this song to each other:

“Saul has killed 1,000 *enemy soldiers*,
But David has killed 10,000 *of them*.”

⁸ *When Saul heard them singing that, he did not like it. He became very angry. He said to himself, “They are saying that David killed 10,000 men, but that I have killed only 1,000. Soon they will want to make him their king!”* [RHQ] ⁹ From that time, Saul watched David very closely because he was suspicious *that David would try to become king*.

¹⁰ The next day, an evil spirit sent by God suddenly took control of Saul. He began to act like a madman, inside his house. David was playing the lyre for him, as he did every day. Saul was holding a spear in his hand, ¹¹ and he hurled it *at David*, saying to himself, “I will fasten David to the wall with the spear!” He did that two times, but David jumped aside *both times*.

¹² Because *it became evident that Yahweh had abandoned Saul but that he was helping David*, Saul was afraid of David. ¹³ So he appointed David as a commander of 1,000 soldiers and sent David away from him, *hoping that David would be killed in a battle*. But when David led his soldiers *in their battles*, ¹⁴ he always had great success, because Yahweh was helping him.

15 When Saul heard that David *and his soldiers* were very successful, he became more afraid of David. 16 But all the people of Israel and of Judah loved David, because he led the soldiers very successfully *in the battles*.

David married Saul's daughter

17 One day Saul said to David, "I am ready to give you my oldest daughter, Merab, to be your wife. I will do that if you serve me bravely by fighting battles for Yahweh *against the Philistines*". He said that because he thought, "I will not try to get rid of David by myself. I will allow the Philistines to do that."

18 But David said to Saul, "I am not [RHQ] a very important person, and my family is not very important, and my clan is not a very important Israeli clan. So I do not deserve to become your son-in-law." [RHQ] 19 So, when it was time for Merab to be given to David to become his wife, instead, Saul gave her to a man named Adriel, from Meholah *town*.

20 But Saul's other daughter, Michal, fell in love with David. When they told Saul about that, he was pleased. 21 He thought, "I will let Michal marry him, in order that she may trap him, and the Philistines will be able to kill him." So he said to David, "*You can marry Michal,*" and by saying that, he indicated for the second time that David would become his son-in-law.

22 Saul told his servants, "Talk to David privately, and say to him, 'Listen, the king is pleased with you, and all of us his servants love you. So

now *we think that you should marry Michal and become the king's son-in-law.*' "

²³ So they told that to David. But David said, "It would be a great honor [RHQ] to become the king's son-in-law. But *I do not think that I should do that, because I am only a poor and insignificant man.*"

²⁴ When the servants told Saul what David had said, ²⁵ Saul replied, "Go and say to David, '*In order for the king to allow you to marry Michal, he wants you to kill 100 Philistines and cut off their foreskins and bring the foreskins to him to prove that you have killed them.* In that way he will get revenge on his enemies.' " But what Saul wanted was that the Philistines would kill David *while David was trying to kill them.*

²⁶ When the servants told that to David, he was very pleased that he could become the king's son-in-law *by doing that. The king had said how many days he would allow for David to do that.* But before that time ended, ²⁷ David and his men went and killed, *not 100, but 200 Philistines!* He brought their foreskins to Saul, and counted them *while Saul was watching,* in order to prove that he had *done what the king required so that he could become Saul's son-in-law. So then Saul was obligated to allow David to marry his daughter Michal.*

²⁸ But when Saul realized that Yahweh was helping David, and that his daughter loved David, ²⁹ he became more afraid of David. So, as long as Saul lived, he was David's enemy.

³⁰ The Philistine armies repeatedly came to fight the Israelis, but every time they fought,

David and his soldiers were more successful than any of Saul's other army commanders. As a result, David became very famous.

19

Saul tried to kill David

¹ Then Saul urged all his servants and his son Jonathan to kill David. But Jonathan liked David very much. ² So he warned David, "My father Saul is seeking for a way to kill you. So be careful. Tomorrow morning go and find a place to hide *in the field*. ³ I will ask my father to go out there with me. *While we are out there*, I will talk to him about you. Then I will tell you everything that he tells me." *So David did what Jonathan told him to do.*

⁴ *The next morning*, Jonathan spoke with his father, saying many good things about David. He said, "You should never do anything to harm your servant David! He has never done anything to harm you! Everything that he has done has helped you very much. ⁵ He was in danger of being killed when he fought against *Goliath, the champion of the Philistia army*. *By enabling David to kill him*, Yahweh won a great victory for all the people of Israel. You were very happy when you saw that. Why would you want to do anything now to harm David [RHQ]? There is no reason for you to kill him, because he has not done anything wrong!"

⁶ Saul listened to what Jonathan said. Then Saul said, "I solemnly promise that just as certain as Yahweh lives, I will not kill David."

⁷ Afterward, Jonathan summoned David and told him what he and Saul had said. Then Jonathan brought David to Saul, and David served Saul as he had done before.

⁸ One day a war started again, and David *led his soldiers* to fight against the Philistia army. David's *army* attacked them very furiously, with the result that the Philistia army ran away.

⁹ But one day when sitting in his house, an evil spirit *sent* from Yahweh *suddenly* came upon Saul. While David was playing his harp *for Saul*,
¹⁰ Saul hurled his spear at David to try to fasten him to the wall. David ◀dodged/jumped to one side▶, and the spear did not hit him. The spear stuck in the wall, but that night David escaped.

Michal helped David escape

¹¹ Then Saul sent messengers to David's house. He told them to watch the house and to kill David *while he was leaving the house* the following morning. But David's wife Michal *saw them and* warned him, "To survive, you must run away tonight, because if you do not do that, you will be killed tomorrow!" ¹² So she enabled David to climb out through a window, and he ran away and escaped. ¹³ Then Michal took an idol and put it in the bed. She covered it with some *of David's* clothes, and put some goat's hair on the head of the idol.

¹⁴ When the messengers came *to the house the next morning*, she told them that David was sick *and could not get out of bed*.

¹⁵ *When they reported that to Saul*, he told them to go back to David's house. He said to them,

“Bring him to me lying on his bed, in order that I can kill him!” ¹⁶ But when those men entered David’s house, they saw that there was only an idol in the bed, with goat’s hair on its head.

¹⁷ *When they reported that to Saul, Saul summoned Michal and said to her, “Why did you trick me like that? You allowed my enemy to escape!”*

Michal replied to Saul, “David told me that if I did not help him escape, he would kill me!” [RHQ]

God’s spirit took possession of Saul

¹⁸ After David had escaped from Saul, he went to Samuel, who was *at his home* at Ramah. He told Samuel everything that Saul had done to *try to kill* him. Then David and Samuel went to Naioth, *which was a section of Ramah city*, and they stayed there. ¹⁹ Someone told Saul that David was in Naioth. ²⁰ So Saul sent some messengers to capture David. *When those messengers arrived in Ramah, they met some men who were proclaiming ecstatic messages, and Samuel was there, as their leader. When Saul’s messengers met them, the Spirit of God took control of Saul’s men, and they also spoke ecstatically.* ²¹ When Saul heard about that, he sent messengers a third time, but they also started to speak ecstatically. ²² Finally, Saul himself went to Ramah. When he arrived at the well at *a place named Secu*, he asked people there, “Where are Samuel and David?”

The people replied, “They are at Naioth in Ramah city.” ²³ While Saul was walking toward Naioth, the Spirit of God also took control of him.

While he walked on, he continued speaking ecstatic messages until he came to Naioth. ²⁴ There he took off his clothes, and he spoke messages from God in front of Samuel. He lay on the ground doing that all day and all night. That is the reason that *when people see someone doing something that is very unexpected, they think about what happened to Saul, and they say, "We are surprised, like the people were surprised to see Saul acting like a prophet?"* [RHQ]

20

Jonathan helped David escape from Saul

¹ David ran away from *the Naioth section of Ramah city.* He went to Jonathan and asked him, "What have I done *to displease your father?* What did I do that was wrong? Why is he trying to kill me?"

² Jonathan replied, "My father is surely not trying to kill you! He always tells me before he does anything that he is planning. He tells me about important things and unimportant things that he plans to do. ◀Why would he refuse to tell me *if he were planning to kill me?*/I am sure that he would not refuse to tell me *if he were planning to kill you.*▶ [RHQ] So what you are saying cannot be true."

³ Then David solemnly declared this to Jonathan: "Your father knows very well that you and I are very good friends, so he says to himself, 'I will not tell Jonathan *what I am going to do.* If I tell Jonathan, he will be upset/distressed, *and then he will tell David.*' But just as certain as

Yahweh lives and you live, I am only one step away from being killed.”

⁴ Jonathan said to David, “I will do whatever you tell me to do.”

⁵ David replied, “Tomorrow we will celebrate the Festival of the New Moon. I always eat with the king at that festival. But tomorrow I will hide in the field, and I will stay there for one night. I will stay there until the evening of the day after tomorrow. ⁶ If your father asks why I am not there at the festival, say to him, ‘David requested me to allow him to go to his home in Bethlehem, where his family will offer the sacrifice that they offer *during this festival* every year.’ ⁷ If your father says ‘That is okay’, then I know I will be safe. But if he becomes extremely angry, you will know that he is determined to harm me. ⁸ Please be kind to me. Yahweh heard you when you made a solemn agreement with me *that you and I will always be loyal friends*. If I deserve to be punished [MTY], kill me yourself. I do not want [RHQ] you to allow your father to punish [IDM] me.”

⁹ Jonathan replied, “I will never do that! But if I find out that my father is determined to harm/kill you, I will certainly warn you.” [RHQ]

¹⁰ David asked him, “How will I find out if your father answers you harshly?” ¹¹ Jonathan replied, “Come with me. We will go out into the field.” So they went together out into the field.

¹² There Jonathan said to David, “I promise this while Yahweh, the God whom we Israelis *worship*, is listening: At this time the day after

tomorrow, I will find out what my father is *thinking about you*. If he is saying good things about you, I will certainly send a message to you to tell that to you [RHQ]. ¹³ But if he is planning to hurt/kill you, I will enable you to know [IDM] that, and enable you to go away safely. I desire that Yahweh will punish me severely if I do not do that *for you*. I desire/hope that Yahweh will be with you *and help you* like he has helped my father. ¹⁴ But while I am still alive, please be kind to me in the same way that Yahweh is kind to me, and do not kill me *when you become king*. ¹⁵ But *if I die*, never stop being kind to my family, *even* after Yahweh has gotten rid of all your enemies all over the earth.”

¹⁶ *David agreed*. So Jonathan made a solemn agreement with David. And he said, “I hope/desire that Yahweh will get rid of all your enemies.” ¹⁷ And Jonathan requested David to repeat his solemn promise to be his close friend, because Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself.

¹⁸ Then Jonathan said, “Tomorrow we will celebrate the Festival of the New Moon. When you are not sitting at your place when we eat, my father will ◀miss you/see that you are not there▶. ¹⁹ The day after tomorrow, in the evening, go to the place where you hid before. Wait by the pile of stones. ²⁰ I will come out and shoot three arrows as though I were trying to shoot at a target. *The arrows will hit the ground close to the pile of stones*. ²¹ Then I will send a boy to bring the arrows back to me. If you

hear me say to him, 'They are closer to me', then as surely as Yahweh lives, you will know that everything is fine, *and that Saul will not kill you.* ²² But if I tell him, 'The arrows are farther away', you will know that you must leave immediately, because Yahweh wants you to run away. ²³ I hope/desire that Yahweh will watch you and me and enable us to never forget what we have promised each other."

²⁴ So David went and hid in the field. When the Festival of the New Moon started, the king sat down to eat. ²⁵ He sat where he usually sat, close to the wall. Jonathan sat across from him, and Abner *the army commander* sat next to Saul. But no one was sitting in the place where David *usually sat.* ²⁶ On that day, Saul did not say anything about David, because he was thinking, "Something must have happened that caused David to become unacceptable *to worship God.*" ²⁷ But the next day, when David was not sitting at the place where he usually sat, Saul asked Jonathan, "Why has that son of Jesse not been here to eat with us yesterday and today?"

²⁸ Jonathan replied, "David earnestly requested me that I permit him to go to Bethlehem. ²⁹ He said, 'Please allow me to go, because our family is going to offer a sacrifice. My *older* brother insisted that I be there. So please allow me to go to be with my *older* brothers.' *I allowed David to go,* and that is the reason that he is not here eating with you."

³⁰ Saul was ◀furious/very angry▶ with Jonathan. He yelled at him, "You stupid bastard

[EUP]! I know that you are being loyal to that son of Jesse. By doing that, you will bring shame to yourself and to your mother. ³¹ As long as Jesse's son is living, you will never become the king, and you will never rule over a kingdom! So now, summon David, and bring him to me. He must be executed!"

³² Jonathan asked his father, "Why should David be executed? What wrong has he done?"

³³ Then Saul threw his spear at Jonathan in order to kill him, *but the spear did not hit him*. So Jonathan knew that his father really wanted to kill David.

³⁴ Jonathan was very angry, and he left the room. On that second day of the festival, he refused to eat anything. He was disgusted about what his father had done, and he was worried about David.

³⁵ The following morning Jonathan went out to the field to give a message to David, like he had agreed that he would do. He took a young boy with him. ³⁶ Jonathan said to the boy, "Run and find the arrows that I shoot." The boy started running, and Jonathan shot an arrow ahead of the boy. ³⁷ When the boy ran to the place where the arrow hit the ground, Jonathan called out, "The arrow is further away!" [RHQ] ³⁸ Then he shouted to the boy, "Act quickly; do not wait! Do not stop!" The boy picked up the arrow and brought it back to Jonathan. ³⁹ But the boy did not understand the meaning of what Jonathan had said; only Jonathan and David knew. ⁴⁰ Then

Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to the boy and told him, "Go back to the town."

⁴¹ When the boy left, David came out from the south side of the pile of stones behind which he had been hiding. He went to Jonathan and bowed *in front of Jonathan* three times, with his face touching the ground. Then David and Jonathan kissed each other *on the cheek/neck*, and they cried together. But David cried more than Jonathan.

⁴² Jonathan said to David, "May things go well for you as you go. Yahweh has heard what we solemnly promised to always do for each other, and what we said that our descendants must do for each other." Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

21

David and his men hid in a cave

¹ David fled from there and went to Nob city to see Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he saw David *because he was afraid that something bad had happened*. He said to David, "Why are you alone? Why have no men come with you?"

² David *deceived Ahimelech* by replying, "The king sent me. But he does not want anyone to know anything about what he sent me to do. I have told my men where *they should meet me*."

³ Now *I want to know*, do you have any *food here for me to eat* [IDM]? Could you give me five loaves of bread, or whatever *other food* that you can find?"

⁴ The priest answered David, “There is no ordinary bread here, but I have some of the sacred bread *that was placed before Yahweh*. Your men may eat it if they have not slept with [EUP] women *recently*.”

⁵ David replied, “They have not been near women for many days. I do not allow my men to defile themselves by sleeping with women while they are preparing to fight in battles. They must continue to keep themselves acceptable to God when they are on ordinary trips, and *today they have kept themselves acceptable to God* because now we are doing something very special/important.” ⁶ The only bread that the priest had was the sacred bread that had been placed in Yahweh’s presence *in the Sacred tent*. So the priest gave David some of that bread. On that day the priest had taken those loaves from the table and replaced them with ◀fresh/newly baked▶ loaves.

⁷ It happened that Doeg, from the Edom people-group, was there on that day to make himself acceptable to Yahweh, *and he saw what Ahimelech did*. He was one of Saul’s officials and the leader of Saul’s shepherds.

⁸ David asked Ahimelech, “Do you have a spear or a sword *that I could use*? The king *appointed us to do* this task *and told us to leave* immediately, so I did not have time to bring any weapons.”

⁹ Ahimelech replied, “I have only the sword that belonged to Goliath *the giant* from the Philistia people-group whom you killed in Elah Valley. It is wrapped in a cloth, and is behind

the sacred vest *in the Sacred Tent*. If you want it, take it, because I have no other *weapon* here.”

David replied, “Truly, there is no other sword that is *as good* as that one! Give it to me.”

¹⁰ So Ahimelech gave it to him, and David left there. He *and his men* and went to Gath city *in the Philistia region*, to stay with King Achish.

¹¹ But the officers of King Achish *objected to David being there*. They said to King Achish, “This man is [RHQ] David, the king of Israel! He is the one [RHQ] whom *our enemies*, the *Israeli people*, *honored by dancing and singing*,

‘Saul has killed thousands of *his enemies*,

but David has killed tens of thousands of them!’ ”

¹² David heard what those men were saying, so he was afraid of *what King Achish might do to him*. ¹³ So he pretended that he was insane. He started scratching on the gates *of the city* and allowing his saliva to run down his beard.

¹⁴ Then King Achish said to his men, “Look at this man! He is acting like an insane man! Why have you brought him to me? ¹⁵ Have you brought him because I do not have enough insane men here already [RHQ]? I do not want [RHQ] him to come into my house!”

22

David and his men hid in a cave at Adullam

¹ David *and his men* left Gath and went east to hide in a cave on a hill at Adullam city. Soon his *older brothers* and all his other relatives came and stayed with him there. ² Then other men

came there. Some were men who had caused trouble, some were men who owed money, and some were men who were not content [IDM] *with the government*. They continued to come until there were 400 men there, and David was their leader.

³ Later they left there and went *east* to Mizpah city in the Moab region. There David requested the king of Moab, "Please allow my father and mother to live here with you until I know what God is going to do for me." ⁴ *The king gave him permission*, so David's parents stayed with the king of Moab all the time that David and the men who were with him were hiding *in that area*.

⁵ One day the prophet Gad told David, "Leave ◀your fortress/this area▶ and return to Judah." So David and his men went to Hereth forest *in Judah*.

Saul killed Ahimelech and many other priests

⁶ One day, someone told Saul that David and his men had arrived in Judah. On that day, Saul was sitting underneath the tamarisk tree on a hill at Gibeah town. He was holding his spear, and was surrounded by his army officers.

⁷ He shouted to them, "You men of the tribe of Benjamin, listen to me! Do you think that the son of Jesse will give all of you fields and vineyards *if he becomes your king*? Will he appoint all of you to become generals and captains *in his army* [RHQ]? ⁸ Is that why you have all conspired against me [RHQ]? None of you told me when my son *Jonathan* made a solemn agreement with that son of Jesse. None of you feels sorry for

me. That son of Jesse was my servant, but now my son is encouraging him to hide in order to ◀ambush me/attack me suddenly▶, as he is doing today!”

⁹ Doeg, a man from the Edom people-group, was standing there with Saul’s officers. He said to Saul, “When I was at Nob, I saw that son of Jesse talking to Ahimelech, the priest. ¹⁰ Ahimelech asked Yahweh what David should do. Then Ahimelech gave to David some food and the sword of Goliath, *the giant* from the Philistia people-group.”

¹¹ Then Saul summoned Ahimelech and all Ahimelech’s relatives who were priests at Nob. So they all came to the king. ¹² Saul said to Ahimelech, “You son of Ahitub, listen to me!”

Ahimelech answered, “Yes, sir!” ¹³ Saul said, “Why are you and Jesse’s son conspiring to get rid of me? You gave him some bread and a sword. You requested God to tell David what he should do. David has rebelled against me, and right now he is *hiding somewhere*, waiting *to attack me*.”

¹⁴ Ahimelech replied, “*I do not understand why you are saying that, because David, your son-in-law, the captain of your bodyguards, is very loyal to you. No one is more loyal to you than David! Everyone in your household respects him very much.* ¹⁵ Furthermore, this was certainly not [RHQ] the first time that I requested God to say what he wanted David to do. And it is not right for you to accuse me or any of my relatives of

trying to get rid of you, because I do not know anything about anyone wanting to do that."

¹⁶ The king then shouted, "Ahimelech, you and your all your relatives are going to be executed right now!"

¹⁷ Then he commanded his bodyguards, "Kill these priests of Yahweh, because they are allies of David, and they are conspiring with David against me! They knew that David was trying to run away from me, but they did not tell me!"

But Saul's bodyguards refused to kill Yahweh's priests.

¹⁸ Then the king said to Doeg, "You kill them!" So Doeg, the man from the Edom people-group, went out and struck them with his sword. On that day he killed eighty-five men who were wearing the sacred vests *because they were God's priests*. ¹⁹ He also went and killed many people in Nob, the city where the priests lived. He killed men, women, children, babies, cattle, donkeys, and sheep there.

²⁰ But Abiathar, Ahimelech's son, escaped. He ran away and joined David *and the men who were with him*. ²¹ He told David that Saul had commanded Doeg to kill Yahweh's priests. ²² Then David said to him, "That man from the Edom people-group, Doeg, was there at Nob on the day *that I was there*. I knew that he would surely tell Saul *what happened*. So it is my fault that your father and all of his family have been killed. ²³ You stay with me, and do not be afraid. The man who wants to kill you wants to kill me also, but you will be safe if you stay with me."

23

David saved the people of Keilah

¹ One day someone told David, “You need to know that the Philistia army is attacking Keilah town and they are stealing grain from where men are threshing it.” ² David asked Yahweh, “Should my men and I go to fight against those men from the Philistia people-group?”

Yahweh answered, “Yes, go. Attack them, and rescue the people of Keilah.” ³ But David’s men said to him, “We are afraid *that Saul will attack us* here in Judah. We will be more afraid if we go to Keilah where the Philistia army is!”

⁴ So David asked Yahweh again *if they should go to Keilah*. Yahweh answered, “Yes, go down to Keilah. I will help you to defeat the men of the Philistia people-group.” ⁵ So David and his men went to Keilah. They fought against the men of the Philistia people-group and captured many of their cattle. David and his men killed many of the Philistia men and rescued the people of Keilah.

⁶ Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, fled to be with David at Keilah, and he brought the sacred vest with him *to use it to determine what God wanted to be done*.

Saul pursued David

⁷ Soon Saul found out that David was at Keilah. So he said, “That is good! God is enabling me to capture him! He has trapped himself in that town, because it has high walls with gates around it.”

⁸ So Saul summoned his army, and they prepared to go down to Keilah to attack David and his men.

⁹ But David found out that Saul was planning *for his army* to attack him. So he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring *here* the sacred vest."

¹⁰ *So when Abiathar brought it*, David prayed, "Yahweh, God of us Israelis, I have heard that Saul is planning to come here *with his army* and destroy Keilah because I am here. ¹¹ Will Saul come down *here to Keilah*, as people reported to me? Will the leaders of Keilah enable Saul to capture me? Yahweh, God of us Israelis, please tell me!"

Yahweh answered, "Yes, Saul will come down."

¹² Then David asked, "Will the leaders of Keilah enable Saul's army to capture me and my men *if we stay here?*"

By means of the stones in the sacred vest, Yahweh replied, "Yes, they will." ¹³ So David and his 600 men left Keilah. They continued to move from one place to another, *wherever they thought that Saul would not find them*. And when Saul found out that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there.

¹⁴ David and his men stayed in hiding places in the desert and in the hills of Ziph Desert. Every day Saul *sent men to* search for David, but Yahweh did not allow them to capture David.

¹⁵ While David and his men were at *a place named* Horesh in Ziph desert, he found out that Saul was coming there to kill him. ¹⁶ But Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh,

and encouraged him to continue to trust *God*.
¹⁷ Jonathan told him, "Do not be afraid, because my father will not be able to harm [IDM] you. *Some day* you will be the king of Israel, and I will be the second *most important man in Israel*. My father Saul also knows that." ¹⁸ Then the two of them repeated their solemn promise that Yahweh *had heard them make previously, that they would always be loyal to each other*. Then Jonathan went home, but David stayed at Horesh.

¹⁹ Some people from Ziph went to Saul when he was at Gibeah, and they told him, "David *and his men* are hiding in our land [RHQ]! They are hiding in places at Horesh on Hakilah Hill, south of *a place named Jeshimon*. ²⁰ So, O king, come down there any time that you want to. It is our duty to capture him and turn him over to you."

²¹ Saul replied, "I hope/desire that Yahweh will bless you *for telling that to me*. ²² Go back and find out more about him. Find out exactly where he is staying, and find out who has seen him there. People tell me that he is very clever, *so we need to be clever also to be able to capture him*.
²³ Find out all the places where he and his men hide. Then come back and tell me everything that you have found out. Then I will *take my army and* go there with you. If David is in any of the clans/caves of Judah, we will search for him *and find him!*"

²⁴ So those people went back to Ziph before Saul went there. At that time David and his men were in Maon Desert, south of Jeshimon. ²⁵ Saul

and his soldiers went to search for David, but David heard about that. So he and his men went further *south* to a rocky hill/peak in the Maon Desert. When Saul heard about that, he and his men followed David and his men to the Maon Desert.

²⁶ Saul and his soldiers were walking along one side of the hill/peak, and David and his men were on the other side. David and his men were hurrying to escape from Saul's soldiers, because Saul and his soldiers were coming much closer.

²⁷ But then a messenger came to Saul and said to him, "Come quickly! The Philistia army is attacking the people in our land!" ²⁸ So Saul stopped pursuing David, and he *and his soldiers* went to fight against the Philistia army. That is the reason that people call that place 'Escape Rock'. ²⁹ David and his men also left the Maon Desert and went to places to hide safely at En-Gedi.

24

David spared Saul's life

¹ After Saul *and his soldiers* returned home after fighting against the Philistia army, someone reported to Saul that David *and his men* had gone into the desert near En-Gedi. ² When Saul *heard that*, he chose 3,000 men from various areas in Israel, and they went to search for David and his men at a place named Rocks of Wild Goats.

³ At a place where the road was alongside some sheep pens, Saul *left the road and* entered a cave to defecate [EUP]. *He did not know that* David and his men were hiding further inside that same

cave! ⁴ David's men *saw Saul and* whispered to David, "Today is the day that Yahweh spoke about when he said, 'I will enable you to defeat your enemy.' You can do to him whatever you want to!" So David crept toward the entrance of the cave and *with his knife* he cut off a piece of Saul's robe. ⁵ *And then he returned to his men.*

But then David felt guilty for having cut off a piece of Saul's robe. ⁶ He said to his men, "I should not have done that to the king! I hope/desire that Yahweh will never allow me to attack the one whom God has appointed, because Yahweh is the one who chose him *to be the king.*" ⁷ By saying that, David restrained his men, and did not allow them to kill Saul.

⁸ After Saul left the cave and started to walk on the road again, David came out of the cave and shouted to Saul, "King Saul!" Saul turned around and looked, and David bowed down with his face touching the ground. ⁹ Then he said to Saul, "◀Why do you pay attention to people when they say 'David wants to harm you'?/You should not pay attention to people when they say 'David wants to harm you'.▶ [RHQ] ¹⁰ Today you can see with your own eyes that *what they say is not true.* Yahweh put you in a place where my men and I could have killed you when you were in this cave. Some of my men told me that I should do that, but I did not do that. I said to them, 'I will not harm my master, because he is the king whom Yahweh appointed.' ¹¹ Your majesty, look at this piece of your robe that is in my hand! I cut it from your robe, but I did not kill

you. So now you should be able to understand that I am not planning to do anything evil to you. I have not done anything wrong to you, but you are searching for me to kill me. ¹² I hope/desire that Yahweh will judge and decide which of us *◀is doing what is right/pleases him▶*. And I hope/desire that he will punish you for the wrong things that you have done to me. But I will not try to harm you. ¹³ There is a proverb that has the words, 'Evil things are done by evil people.' But *I am not evil*, so I will not do evil things to you.

¹⁴ "You are the king of Israel. So *◀why are you pursuing me?/you should not be pursuing me▶* [RHQ] I am *as harmless as* [MET] a dead dog or a flea. ¹⁵ I hope/desire that Yahweh will judge which of us *is doing what ◀he wants/is right▶*. I trust that he will *act like a lawyer and judge ◀my case/what I have done▶*, and that he will rescue me from your power [MTY]."

¹⁶ When David finished speaking, Saul *called out to him and* asked, "My son David, is that your voice *that I am hearing?*" Then he began to cry loudly. ¹⁷ He said, "You are a better man than I am. You have done something very good to me when I tried to do something very bad to you. ¹⁸ When Yahweh put me in a place *in that cave* where you could have easily killed me, you did not do that. ¹⁹ *◀Who else would/No one else would▶* find his enemy and allow his enemy to escape *when he could kill him instead* [RHQ]. I hope/desire that Yahweh will reward you for being kindly to me today. ²⁰ I know that

some day you will surely become the king, and that your kingdom will prosper as you rule the Israeli people. ²¹ Now while Yahweh is listening, solemnly promise to me that you will not kill my family and get rid of all my descendants.”

²² David solemnly promised Saul that he would not *harm Saul's family*. Then Saul went back home, and David and his men went back up into the place where they had been hiding.

25

Samuel died

¹ *Soon after that*, Samuel died, and all the Israeli people gathered and mourned for him. They buried his body outside his home in Ramah.

Nabal insulted David

Then David and his men moved to the Maon Desert. ² In Maon *town* there was a man who owned land in Carmel, *a nearby village*. He was very rich; he owned 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. ³ His name was Nabal; he was a descendant of Caleb. His wife Abigail was a wise and beautiful woman, but Nabal was very cruel and treated people very unkindly [IDM].

⁴ One day while David *and his men* were in the desert, someone told him that Nabal was cutting the wool from his sheep. ⁵ So David told ten of his men, “Go to Nabal at Carmel and greet him for me. ⁶ Then tell to him this message from me, ‘I wish/desire that things will go well for you and your family and for everything that you possess.

⁷ ‘ heard people say that you are cutting the wool from your sheep. Previously, when your shepherds were among us, we did not harm them. All the time that your shepherds were among us at Camel, we did not steal any sheep from them. ⁸ You can ask your servants if this is true, and they will tell you *that it is true*. We have come here at a time when you are celebrating, so I ask you to please be kind to us and give these men whatever extra food you have, for me, David, and my men to eat.’ ”

⁹ When David’s men arrived where Nabal was, they gave David’s message to him, and they waited for *him to reply*. But Nabal spoke harshly to them. ¹⁰ He said to them, “Who *does* this man, this son of Jesse, *think that he is*? [DOU, RHQ] There are many slaves who are running away from their masters at the present time, *and it seems to me that he is just one of them*. ¹¹ I give bread and water to the men who are cutting the wool from my sheep, and I give them meat from animals that I have slaughtered. Why should I take some of those things and give them to a group of outlaws [RHQ]? ◀Who knows where they have come from?/I do not even know where they have come from.▶” [RHQ]

¹² Then David’s men returned and told him what Nabal had said. ¹³ When David heard that, he told his men, “*We are going to kill Nabal*; fasten your swords!” So he fastened on his sword and about 400 men fastened on their swords and went with David. There were 200 of his men who stayed with their supplies.

¹⁴ One of Nabal's servants *found out what David and his men were planning to do*, so he went to Nabal's wife Abigail and said to her, "David sent some messengers from the desert to greet our master Nabal, but Nabal only yelled at them. ¹⁵ All the time that we were in the fields close to them, those men of David were very kind to us. They did not harm us. They did not steal anything from us. ¹⁶ They protected us during the daytime and during the night. They were like a wall [MET] around us to protect us while we were taking care of our sheep. ¹⁷ So now you should think about it and decide what you can do. *If you do not do something*, terrible things will happen to our master and to all his family. Nabal is an extremely wicked man, with the result that *he will not heed anyone when that person tries to tell him anything that he should do.*"

¹⁸ *When Abigail heard that*, she very quickly gathered 200 loaves *of bread*, and also got two leather bags full of wine, the meat from five sheep, a bushel of roasted grain, 100 packs of raisins, and 200 packs of dried figs. She put all those things on donkeys. ¹⁹ Then she told her servants, "Go ahead of me. I will follow you." But she did not tell her husband *what she was going to do*.

²⁰ David and his men *had left the place where they were staying and were on the road to Nabal's property*. They were coming down a hill when they met Abigail. ²¹ David had been saying to his men, "It was useless for us to protect that man and all his possessions here in this desert. We did

not steal anything that belonged to him, but he has done evil to me in return for our good *things we did for him*. ²² I hope/desire that God will strike me and kill me [IDM] if he or even one of his men [IDM] is still alive tomorrow morning!"

²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly got down from her donkey and bowed before him, with her face touching the ground. ²⁴ Then she prostrated herself at David's feet and said to him, "Sir, I deserve to be punished *for what my husband has done*. Please listen to what I say to you. ²⁵ Please do not pay attention to [IDM] what this worthless man Nabal has said. His name means 'fool', and he surely is a foolish man. But I, who am *willing to be* your servant, did not see the messengers whom you sent to him. ²⁶ Yahweh has prevented you from getting revenge on anyone and killing anyone. I hope/desire that as surely as Yahweh lives and as surely as you live, your enemies will be *cursed* like Nabal will be. ²⁷ I have brought a gift for you and for the men who are with you. ²⁸ Please forgive me if I have done anything wrong to you. Yahweh will surely *reward you by* allowing many of your descendants to become kings of Israel, because you are fighting the battles that Yahweh *wants you to fight*. And *I know that* throughout all your life you have not done anything wrong. ²⁹ Even when those who are trying to kill you pursue you, you are safe, because Yahweh your God takes care of you. You will be *protected as though you were* [MET] a bundle that he has safely tied up. But your enemies will *disappear*

as fast as stones that are hurled from a sling.
³⁰ Yahweh has promised to do good things for you, and he will do what he has promised. And he will cause you to become the ruler of the Israeli people. ³¹ When that happens, *you will be glad that you did not kill any people in Nabal's household.* You will not think that you deserve to be punished for having taken revenge yourself and killed innocent people. And when Yahweh enables you to successfully *become the king*, please do not forget *to be kind to me.*"

³² David replied to Abigail, "I praise Yahweh, the God whom we Israelis *worship*, because he sent you to *talk with* me. ³³ I hope/desire that Yahweh will bless you for being very wise. You have prevented me from taking revenge myself and killing many people [MTY] today. ³⁴ Just as surely as Yahweh the God whom we Israelis *worship* is alive, he has prevented me from harming you. If you had not come quickly to talk to me, neither Nabal nor even one of Nabal's men [IDM] would be still alive tomorrow morning."

³⁵ Then David accepted the gifts that Abigail had brought to him. He said to her, "I hope/desire that things will go well for you. I have heard what you said, and I will do what you have requested."

Nabal died

³⁶ When Abigail returned to Nabal, he was in his house, having a big celebration like kings have. He was very drunk and feeling very

happy. So Abigail did not say anything to him that night *about her meeting with David*.³⁷ The next morning, when he was no longer drunk, she told him everything *that had happened when she talked with David*. Immediately ◀he had a stroke/ a blood vessel burst in his brain▶ and he became paralyzed [MET].³⁸ About ten days later Yahweh struck him *again* and he died.

³⁹ After David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise Yahweh! Nabal insulted me, but Yahweh ◀vindicated me/ got revenge for me▶. He has prevented me from *doing anything* wrong. And he has punished Nabal for the wrong that he did."

David married Abigail

Then David sent *messengers* to Abigail, to ask her if she would become his wife.⁴⁰ His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, "David sent us to take you to become his wife."⁴¹ Abigail bowed down with her face touching the ground. Then she told *the messengers to tell David*, "*I am happy to become your wife*. I will be your servant. And I am willing to wash the feet of your slaves."⁴² Abigail quickly got on her donkey and went with David's messengers. Five of her maids went with her. *When she arrived where David was*, she became his wife.⁴³ David had previously married Ahinoam, a woman from *Jezeel town near Carmel*. So both Abigail and Ahinoam were now David's wives.⁴⁴ King Saul's daughter Michal was also David's wife, but Saul had given her to Laish's son Paltiel, who was from *Gallim town*.

26

David spared Saul's life again

¹ One day *some of* the people of Ziph *town* went to Saul while he was at Gibeah, and they said to him, "David is hiding in a cave on Hakilah hill, across from Jeshimon *town*."

² So Saul chose 3,000 of the best Israeli soldiers and went with them to Ziph Desert to search for David. ³ Saul and his men set up their tents close to the road on Hakilah hill, east of Jeshimon *town*, but David *and his men* stayed in the desert. When David heard that Saul was searching for him, ⁴ he sent some spies to find out for certain that Saul had come to Hakilah.

⁵ Then *that evening* David went to the place where Saul had set up his tent. *From a distance* he saw where Saul and his army commander, Abner, were sleeping. Saul was sleeping with all his army *sleeping* around him.

⁶ David *went back to where his men were and* talked to Ahimelech, who was from the Heth people-group, and Joab's brother Abishai, whose mother was *David's older sister* Zeruah. He asked them, "Who will go with me down into the camp where Saul is?"

Abishai replied, "I will go with you." ⁷ So that night David and Abishai crept into Saul's camp. They saw that Saul was asleep. His spear was stuck in the ground near his head. Saul was asleep in the middle of the camp. Abner *the army commander* and the other soldiers were sleeping around Saul.

⁸ Abishai whispered to David, “Today Yahweh has enabled us to kill your enemy! Allow me to fasten Saul to the ground *by thrusting* my spear into him. It will be necessary for me to strike him only once. I will not *need to* strike him twice.”

⁹ But David whispered to Abishai, “No, do not kill Saul. Yahweh has appointed him to be king, so Yahweh will surely [RHQ] punish anyone who kills him. ¹⁰ Just as surely as Yahweh lives, he himself will punish Saul. Perhaps Yahweh will strike him when it is Saul’s time to die, or perhaps Saul will be killed in a battle. ¹¹ But I hope/desire that Yahweh will prevent me from harming the king whom he has appointed. Let’s take Saul’s spear and water jug that are near his head. Then let’s get out of here!”

David taunted Abner and Saul

¹² So David took the spear and the jug, and he and Abishai left. No one saw them or knew what they were doing, and no one woke up, because Yahweh had caused them to be sound asleep.

¹³ David and Abishai went across the valley and climbed to the top of the hill, a long way from Saul’s camp.

¹⁴ Then David shouted to Abner, “Abner, can you hear me?”

Abner *woke up and* replied “Who are you, *waking up* the king by calling out to him?”

¹⁵ David replied, “*I am sure that* you are the greatest man in Israel [IRO, RHQ]! So why did you not guard your master, the king? Someone came into your camp in order to kill your master,

the king. ¹⁶ You have done a very poor *job of guarding Saul*. So just as surely as Yahweh lives, you and your men should be executed! You have not guarded your master whom Yahweh appointed to be the king. Where are the king's spear and the water jug that were close to his head?"

¹⁷ *The shouting woke Saul up and he* recognized that it was David's voice. He called out, saying, "My son David, is that your voice?"

David replied, "Yes, your majesty it is my voice."

¹⁸ Then David added, "Sir, why are you pursuing me [RHQ]? What wrong have I done [RHQ]?" ¹⁹ Your majesty, listen to me! If Yahweh has caused you to be angry with me, I should offer a sacrifice *in order to appease him*. But if it is people who have caused you to be angry with me, I hope/desire that Yahweh will curse them. They have forced me to leave the land that Yahweh gave to me. They have told me, 'Go somewhere else and worship other gods!' ²⁰ Now do not force me to die [MTY] far from *where we worship* Yahweh. You, the king of Israel, have come here searching for me. *But I do not want to harm you!* I am *as harmless as* a flea [MET]. You are searching for me like people hunt for a bird in the mountains! [MET]"

²¹ Then Saul said, "David, my son. I have sinned *by trying to kill you*. So come back home. Today you have considered my life to be very valuable *and so you have not killed me*. So I will

not try to harm you. I have made a big mistake and have acted foolishly.”

²² David replied, “ *will leave* your spear here. Send one of your young men here to get it.

²³ Yahweh rewards us for the things that we do that are right and for being loyal *to him*. Even when Yahweh placed me where I could easily have killed you, I refused to do that, because you are the one whom Yahweh has appointed [MTY] to be the king. ²⁴ Just like I considered your life to be valuable *and spared your life* today, I hope/desire that Yahweh will consider my life to be valuable and *spare my life and* save me from all my troubles.”

²⁵ Then Saul said to David, “My son David, I pray that Yahweh will bless you. You will do great things very successfully.”

Then David returned to his men, and Saul went back home.

27

David stayed among the Philistia people-group

¹ But David thought, “Some day Saul will capture me *if I stay around here*. So the best thing that I can do is to escape and go to the Philistia area. If I do that, Saul will stop searching for me here in Israel, and I will be safe.”

² So David and his 600 men left Israel and went to see Maoch’s son Achish, who was king of Gath *city in the Philistia area*. ³ David and his men and their families started to live there in Gath, the city where king Achish lived. David’s two wives were with him—Ahinoam from Jezreel,

and Nabal's widow Abigail, from Carmel. ⁴ When someone told Saul that David had run away *and was living* in Gath, he stopped searching for David.

⁵ *One day* David said to Achish, "If you are pleased with us, give us a place in one of the small villages where we can stay. There is no need [RHQ] for us to stay in the city where you are the king."

⁶ *Achish liked what David suggested.* So that day Achish gave to David Ziklag *town*. As a result, Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah since that time.

⁷ David *and his men* lived in the Philistia area for 16 months. ⁸ *During that time* David and his men raided the people who lived *in the areas* where the Geshur, Girzi, and Amalek people-groups lived. Those people had lived there a long time. That area extended *south* from Telam to the Shur *Desert* and to *the border of* Egypt.

⁹ Whenever David's men attacked them, they killed all the men and women, and they took all the people's sheep and cattle and donkeys and camels, and even their clothes. Then they would bring those things back home, *and David would go to talk* to Achish.

¹⁰ Each time Achish would ask David, "Where did you go raiding today?" David *would lie to him*. Sometimes he would reply that they had gone to the southern part of Judah, and sometimes he would say that they had gone to Jerahmeel, or to the area where the Ken people-group lived. ¹¹ David's men never brought back

to Gath any man or woman who was left alive. David thought, “If *we do not kill everyone, some of them who are still alive* will go and tell Achish *the truth* about what we really did.” David did that all the time that he *and his men* lived in the Philistia area. ¹² So Achish believed *what David told him*, and said to himself, “*Because of what David has done*, his own people, the Israelis, must now hate him very much. So he will have to *stay here and serve me forever.*”

28

Saul consulted a witch/medium

¹ Some time later, the people of Philistia gathered their army to attack the Israelis *again*. King Achish told David, “I am expecting that you and your men will join with my men to attack *the Israelis.*”

² David replied, “*We will go with you, and then you will see for yourself what we can do!*”

Achish said, “Okay, I will appoint you to be my bodyguard permanently.”

³ *While Samuel was still alive, Saul did many things that pleased Yahweh. One of the good things that Saul did was to expel from Israel all the people who were fortune-tellers or who talked to the spirits of dead people. But Samuel had died, and all the Israeli people had mourned for him. Then they had buried him in Ramah, his hometown. After that, Saul did not try to please Yahweh any more.*

⁴ The army of Philistia gathered and set up their tents at Shunem city, *in the north of Israel.*

Saul gathered the Israeli army and set up their tents at Gilboa *in the eastern part of the same valley*. ⁵ When Saul saw the army of Philistia, he became so afraid that his heart pounded/shook. ⁶ He prayed to Yahweh, but Yahweh did not answer him. Yahweh did not *tell Saul what he should do by* giving him a dream, or by *having the priest throw* the marked stones *that were in his sacred vest*, or by *giving a message about Saul* to any prophet. ⁷ Then Saul said to his servants, “Find for me a woman who talks to the spirits of dead people, in order that I can ask her *what will happen.*” His servants replied, “There is a woman in Endor town who does that.”

⁸ So Saul *took off the clothes that showed that he was the king, and he put on ordinary clothes* ◀to disguise himself/so that people would not recognize who he was▶. Then he and two of his men went during the night to talk to that woman. Saul said to her, “I want you to talk to a spirit *of someone who has died*. Cause to appear the person whose name I will *give to you.*”

⁹ But the woman replied, “You surely know what Saul has done. He expelled from this land all the people who talk to spirits of dead people and all fortune-tellers. I think that you are trying to trap me, in order that I will be executed *for doing something that is not permitted.*”

¹⁰ Saul replied, solemnly asking Yahweh to listen to what he was saying, “Just as surely as Yahweh lives, you will not be punished for doing this.”

¹¹ Then the woman said, “Whom do you want me to cause to appear?”

Saul replied, “Cause Samuel to appear.”

¹² So the woman *did that*. But when she saw Samuel, she screamed. She said, “You have tricked me [RHQ]! You are Saul! *You will execute me for doing this!*”

¹³ Saul said to her, “Do not be afraid. What do you see?”

The woman said, “I see a god/spirit coming up out of the ground.” ¹⁴ Saul said, “What does he look like?”

The woman replied, “An old man wearing a robe is appearing.”

Then Saul knew that it was Samuel. So he bowed down with his face touching the ground. ¹⁵ Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you bothered/disturbed me by causing me to appear?”

Saul said, “I am very worried. The army of Philistia is about to attack my army, and God has abandoned me. He does not answer my questions any more. He does not give me dreams *to tell me what to do* or give messages to prophets *to tell me what to do*. That is the reason that I came to see you. So you tell me what I should do!” ¹⁶ Samuel said, “Yahweh has abandoned you and has become your enemy. So why do you ask me *what you should do?* [RHQ] ¹⁷ He has done what he told me *previously* that he would do to you. He has torn the kingdom away from you, and he is giving it to someone who is another Israeli—David. ¹⁸ You did not obey Yahweh. Yahweh was very angry with the Amalek people-group. You did not *kill all of their animals*, with

the result that you did not show that he was very angry with them. That is the reason that he has done this to you today. ¹⁹ Yahweh will enable the Philistia army to defeat you and all the other Israeli soldiers. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me *in the place where spirits of dead people are*. Yahweh will cause the whole Israeli army to be defeated by the Philistia army.” *And after Samuel said that, he disappeared.*

²⁰ Saul immediately fell flat on the ground. He was so afraid because of what Samuel had said that he became paralyzed. He was also very weak because he had not eaten anything all that day and night.

²¹ The woman saw that he was extremely worried/terrified. She said to him, “Listen to me! I have done what you requested me to do. I could be executed for doing that. ²² So now please pay attention to what I say. Allow me to give you some food, in order that you will *eat it and* get enough strength to go back *to your army*.”

²³ But Saul refused. He said, “No, I will not eat anything.” Then Saul’s servants also urged him *to eat something*, and finally he heeded what they said. He got up from the ground and sat on the bed.

²⁴ The woman had a fat calf close to her house. She quickly slaughtered it *and cooked it*. She took some flour and mixed it *with olive oil*, and baked it without putting in any yeast. ²⁵ She placed the food in front of Saul and his servants, and they

ate some of it. Then that night they got up and left.

29

The king of Philistia sent David back home

¹ The Philistia army gathered at Aphek Valley, *which is near Shunem*. The Israelis set up their tents at Jezreel city, *which was in the same valley*.

² The kings of Philistia divided their men into groups; some groups had 100 soldiers and some groups had 1,000 soldiers. David and his men were marching behind, with King Achish. ³ But the Philistia commanders asked, "What are these Hebrews *doing here, marching with us to battle?*"

Achish replied, "*Their leader is David. He previously worked for King Saul of Israel, but now he has been living near me for more than a year. During all the time since he left Saul, I have not seen/found that he has any faults.*"

⁴ But the Philistia army commanders were angry with Achish *for allowing David's army to be going with them*. They said to him, "Send David *and his men* back to the city that you gave to him! We do not want him to go with us into the battle. *If he goes with us, we will have an enemy in our own midst! He would please King Saul by killing our own soldiers [RHQ]!* ⁵ *Have you forgotten that David is the one about whom the Israelis dance and sing, saying,*

'Saul has killed 1000 of our enemies,
but David has killed 10,000 of them!'"

⁶ So Achish summoned David, and said to him, "Just as surely as Yahweh lives, you have been

loyal to me. I would like very much for you to fight along with my army. Since the day that you came to me, I have not found/seen that you have any faults. But the other Philistia rulers do not trust you. ⁷ So all of you go back home, and I hope/desire that things will go well for you. I do not want you(sg) to do anything that the other rulers of Philistia will not be pleased with.”

⁸ David replied, “What wrong have I done? Since the day that I first came to you until today, have I done anything that you think is evil? Your majesty, why will you not allow me to go and fight against your enemies?”

⁹ Achish replied, “I know that you are as just as good as an angel from God. But the commanders of my army have said, ‘We will not allow David *and his men* to go with us into the battle.’ ¹⁰ So early tomorrow morning you and your men must leave. Get up as soon as it is light and leave.”

¹¹ So David and his men got up early the following morning and returned to the area where the Philistia people lived. And the Philistia army went up to Jezreel.

30

David's army defeated the Amalekites

¹ Three days later, when David and his men arrived at Ziklag, *they discovered that* men of the Amalek people-group had raided Ziklag and *towns in* the southern part of Judah. They had destroyed Ziklag and burned down all the

buildings. ² They had captured the women *and the children* and everyone else, and had taken them away. But they had not killed anyone.

³ When David and his men came to Ziklag, they saw that the town had been burned, and that their wives and sons and daughters had been captured and taken away. ⁴ David and his men cried loudly, until *they were so weak that they could not cry any more*. ⁵ David's two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, had also been taken away. ⁶ David's men were threatening to *kill him by* throwing stones at him, because they were very angry because their sons and daughters *had been taken away*. David was very distressed, but Yahweh his God gave him strength.

⁷ David *did not know what to do*, so he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring to me the sacred vest." So Abiathar brought it, ⁸ and David asked Yahweh, "Should I *and my men* pursue the men *who took our families*? Will we *be able to catch up to them*?"

Yahweh answered *by means of the stones in Abiathar's sacred pouch*, "Yes, pursue them. You will catch up to them, and you will be able to rescue *your families*." ⁹ So David and the 600 men who were with him left, and they came to the Besor Ravine. Some of his men stayed there *with some of their supplies*. ¹⁰ David and 400 men continued to pursue *the men who captured their families*. The other 200 men stayed there at the ravine, because they were so exhausted that they could not cross the ravine.

¹¹ *As David and the 400 men were going, they saw a man from Egypt in a field; so they took him to David. They gave the man some water to drink and some food to eat.* ¹² They also gave him a piece of fig cake and two clusters/packs of raisins. The man had not had anything to eat or drink for three days and nights, but *after he ate and drank* he felt refreshed.

¹³ David asked him, "Who is your master? And where do you come from?"

He replied, "I am from Egypt. I am a slave of a man from the Amalek people-group. Three days ago my master left me here, because I was sick *and I was not able to go with them.*" ¹⁴ We had raided the southern part of Judah where the Kereth people-group live, and some other towns in Judah, and the area south of *Hebron city* where the descendants of Caleb live. We also burned *Ziklag town.*"

¹⁵ David asked him, "Can you lead us to this group of raiders?"

He replied, "Yes, *I will do that* if you ask God to listen while you promise that you will not kill me or give me back to my master. If you promise that, I will take you to them." ¹⁶ *David agreed to do that,* so the man from Egypt led David *and his men* to where the men from the Amalek people-group were. Those men were lying on the ground, eating and drinking and celebrating because of having captured many things from the Philistia and Judah areas. ¹⁷ *David and his men* fought against them from sunset that day until the evening of the following day. Four

hundred of them escaped and rode away on camels, but none of the others escaped. ¹⁸ David rescued his two wives, and he and his men got back everything else that the men of the Amalek people-group had taken. ¹⁹ Nothing was missing. They took all their people back *to Ziklag*—young people and old people, *their wives*, their sons and their daughters. They also recovered all the other things that the men of the Amalek people-group had taken from Ziklag. ²⁰ They took with them the sheep and cattle that had been captured, and his men caused those animals to go in front of them, saying, “These are animals that we captured in the battle; they belong to David!”

²¹ David and his men got back to where the other 200 men were waiting, the men who did not go with David because they were very exhausted. They had stayed at Besor Ravine. *When they saw David and his men coming*, they went out to greet them. And David *greeted them and* said to them, “I hope that things are going well with you!”

²² But some of the men who had gone with David, men who were evil and troublemakers, said, “These 200 men did not go with us. So we should not give to them any of the things that we recovered/captured. Each of them should take only his wife and children and go *back to their homes*.”

²³ David replied, “No, my fellow Israelis, it would not be right to divide up like that the things that Yahweh has allowed us to capture.

Yahweh has protected us and enabled us to defeat the enemies who attacked our town.

²⁴ ◀Who will pay attention to you if you say things like that?/No one will pay attention to you if you say things like that.▶ [RHQ] The men who stayed here with our supplies will get the same amount that the men who went into the battle will get. They will all receive the same amount.”

²⁵ David made that to be a law [DOU] for the Israeli people, and that is still a law in Israel.

²⁶ When David *and all the others* arrived in Ziklag, David sent to his friends who were leaders in Judah some of the things that they had captured from the Amalek people-group. He said to them, “Here is a present for you. These are things that we took from Yahweh’s enemies.”

²⁷ *Here is a list of the cities and towns to whose leaders David sent gifts:* Bethel, Ramoth in the southern part of Judah, Jattir, ²⁸ Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa, ²⁹ Racal, the cities where the descendants of Jehrameel lived and the cities where the Ken people-group lived, ³⁰ Hormah, Bor-Ashan, Athach, ³¹ Hebron, and all the other places where David and his men had gone *when they were hiding from Saul.*

31

Saul and his sons died in a battle

¹ Later, the Philistines again fought against the Israelis. The Israelis ran away from them, and ◀many Israelis were killed/the Philistines killed many Israelis▶ on Gilboa Mountain. ² The Philistines caught up with Saul and his three

sons, and they killed *all three of* his sons, Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchishua. ³ The fighting was very fierce around Saul. When the Philistine ◀archers/men with bows and arrows▶ caught up with Saul, they wounded him badly *with their arrows*.

⁴ Saul said to the man who was carrying his weapons, "Take out your sword and kill me with it, in order that these heathen Philistines will not be able to thrust their swords into me and make fun of me *while I am dying*."

But the man who was carrying Saul's weapons was terrified, and refused to do that. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. *The sword pierced his body and he died*. ⁵ When the man carrying his weapons saw that Saul was dead, he also threw himself on his own sword and died. ⁶ So Saul, three of his sons, and the man who carried Saul's weapons, all died on that same day.

⁷ When the Israeli people on the north side of the *Jezreel Valley* and on the east side of the *Jordan River* heard that the Israeli army had run away and that Saul and his sons had died, they left their towns and ran away. Then the Philistines came and occupied their towns.

⁸ The next day, when the Philistines came to take away the weapons of the dead *Israeli soldiers*, they found the bodies of Saul and his three sons on Gilboa Mountain. ⁹ They cut off Saul's head and took his weapons. Then they sent messengers throughout their land, to proclaim the news, in the temple where they kept their idols, and to the other people, *that*

their army had killed Saul. ¹⁰ They put Saul's weapons in the temple of *their goddess Astarte*. They also fastened the bodies of Saul *and his sons* to the wall *that surrounded* Beth-Shan city.

¹¹ When the people who lived in Jabesh in *the Gilead region* heard what the Philistines had done to Saul's corpse, ¹² all their bravest soldiers walked all night to Beth-Shan. They took the corpses of Saul and his sons down from the city wall, and they took them back to Jabesh and burned the corpses there. ¹³ They took the bones and buried them under a *big tamarisk tree*. Then they ◀fasted/abstained from eating food▶ for seven days.

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2024-02-21

PDF generated using Haiola and XeLaTeX on 22 Feb 2024 from source files dated 21 Feb 2024

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