

1 Samuel

¹ Now there was a man named Elkanah who was from Ramathaim-zophim in the hill country of Ephraim. He was the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

² He had two wives, one named Hannah and the other Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

³ Year after year Elkanah would go up from his city to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of Hosts at Shiloh, where Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD.

⁴ And whenever the day came for Elkanah to present his sacrifice, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters.

⁵ But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved her even though the LORD had closed her womb.

⁶ Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival would provoke her viciously to taunt her.

⁷ And this went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival taunted her until she wept and would not eat.

⁸ "Hannah, why are you crying?" her husband Elkanah asked. "Why won't you eat? Why is your heart so grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

⁹ So after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD.

¹⁰ In her bitter distress, Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears.

¹¹ And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD of Hosts, if only You will look upon the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, not forgetting Your maidservant but giving her a son, then I will dedicate him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall ever touch his head."

¹² As Hannah kept on praying before the LORD, Eli watched her mouth.

¹³ Hannah was praying in her heart, and though her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought she was drunk

¹⁴ and said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put away your wine!"

¹⁵ "No, my lord," Hannah replied. "I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have not had any wine or strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD.

¹⁶ Do not take your servant for a wicked woman, for all this time I have been praying out of the depth of my anguish and grief."

¹⁷ "Go in peace," Eli replied, "and may the God of Israel grant the petition you have asked of Him."

¹⁸ "May your maidservant find favor with you," said Hannah. Then she went on her way, and she began to eat, and her face was no longer downcast.

¹⁹ The next morning they got up early to bow in

worship before the LORD, and then they returned home to Ramah. And Elkanah had relations with his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her.

²⁰ So in the course of time, Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked for him from the LORD."

²¹ Then Elkanah and all his house went up to make the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow,

²² but Hannah did not go. "After the boy is weaned," she said to her husband, "I will take him to appear before the LORD and to stay there permanently."

²³ "Do what you think is best," her husband Elkanah replied, "and stay here until you have weaned him. Only may the LORD confirm His word." So Hannah stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

²⁴ Once she had weaned him, Hannah took the boy with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. Though the boy was still young, she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh.

²⁵ And when they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli.

²⁶ "Please, my lord," said Hannah, "as surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD."

²⁷ I prayed for this boy, and since the LORD has granted me what I asked of Him,

²⁸ I now dedicate the boy to the LORD. For as long as he lives, he is dedicated to the LORD." So they worshiped the LORD there.

2

¹ At that time Hannah prayed: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, for I rejoice in Your salvation.

² There is no one holy like the LORD. Indeed, there is no one besides You! And there is no Rock like our God.

³ Do not boast so proudly, or let arrogance come from your mouth, for the LORD is a God who knows, and by Him actions are weighed.

⁴ The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble are equipped with strength.

⁵ The well-fed hire themselves out for food, but the starving hunger no more. The barren woman gives birth to seven, but she who has many sons pines away.

⁶ The LORD brings death and gives life; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

⁷ The LORD sends poverty and wealth; He humbles and He exalts.

⁸ He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. He seats them among princes and bestows on them a throne of honor. For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's, and upon them He has set the world.

⁹ He guards the steps of His faithful ones, but the wicked perish in darkness; for by his own strength shall no man prevail.

¹⁰ Those who oppose the LORD will be shattered. He will thunder from heaven against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth and will give power to His king. He will exalt the horn of

His anointed.”

¹¹ Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy began ministering to the LORD before Eli the priest.

¹² Now the sons of Eli were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD

¹³ or for the custom of the priests with the people. When any man offered a sacrifice, the servant of the priest would come with a three-pronged meat fork while the meat was boiling

¹⁴ and plunge it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or cooking pot. And the priest would claim for himself whatever the meat fork brought up. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh.

¹⁵ Even before the fat was burned, the servant of the priest would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give the priest some meat to roast, because he will not accept boiled meat from you, but only raw.”

¹⁶ And if any man said to him, “The fat must be burned first; then you may take whatever you want,” the servant would reply, “No, you must give it to me right now. If you refuse, I will take it by force!”

¹⁷ Thus the sin of these young men was severe in the sight of the LORD, for they were treating the LORD’s offering with contempt.

¹⁸ Now Samuel was ministering before the LORD—a boy wearing a linen ephod.

¹⁹ Each year his mother would make him a little robe and bring it to him when she went with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice.

20 And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, "May the LORD give you children by this woman in place of the one she dedicated to the LORD." Then they would go home.

21 So the LORD attended to Hannah, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

22 Now Eli was very old, and he heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they were sleeping with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

23 "Why are you doing these things?" Eli said to his sons. "I hear about your wicked deeds from all these people.

24 No, my sons; it is not a good report I hear circulating among the LORD's people.

25 If a man sins against another man, God can intercede for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to their father, since the LORD intended to put them to death.

26 And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with man.

27 Then a man of God came to Eli and told him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Did I not clearly reveal Myself to your father's house when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh's house?

28 And out of all the tribes of Israel I selected your father to be My priest, to offer sacrifices on My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in My presence. I also gave to the house of your father all the food offerings of the Israelites.

29 Why then do you kick at My sacrifice and offering that I have prescribed for My dwelling place? You have honored your sons more than Me by fattening yourselves with the best of all the offerings of My people Israel.'

30 Therefore, the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever. But now the LORD declares: Far be it from Me! For I will honor those who honor Me, but those who despise Me will be disdained.

31 Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that no one in it will reach old age.

32 You will see distress in My dwelling place. Despite all that is good in Israel, no one in your house will ever again reach old age.

33 And every one of you that I do not cut off from My altar, I will cause your eyes to fail and your heart to grieve. All your descendants will die by the sword of men.

34 And this sign shall come to you concerning your two sons Hophni and Phinehas: They will both die on the same day.

35 Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest. He will do whatever is in My heart and mind. And I will build for him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed one for all time.

36 And everyone left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or a morsel of bread, pleading, "Please appoint me to some priestly office so that I can eat a piece of bread." ' "

3

¹ And the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. Now in those days the word of the LORD was rare, and visions were scarce.

² And at that time Eli, whose eyesight had grown so dim that he could not see, was lying in his room.

³ Before the lamp of God had gone out, Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was located.

⁴ Then the LORD called to Samuel, and he answered, "Here I am."

⁵ He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you have called me." "I did not call," Eli replied. "Go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

⁶ Once again the LORD called, "Samuel!" So Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you have called me." "My son, I did not call," Eli replied. "Go back and lie down."

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, because the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸ Once again, for the third time, the LORD called to Samuel. He got up, went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you have called me." Then Eli realized that it was the LORD who was calling the boy.

⁹ "Go and lie down," he said to Samuel, "and if He calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ Then the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant is listening."

¹¹ Then the LORD said to Samuel, "I am about to

do something in Israel at which the ears of all who hear it will tingle.

¹² On that day I will carry out against Eli everything I have spoken about his house, from beginning to end.

¹³ I told him that I would judge his house forever for the iniquity of which he knows, because his sons blasphemed God and he did not restrain them.

¹⁴ Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, 'The iniquity of Eli's house shall never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.' "

¹⁵ Samuel lay down until the morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision,

¹⁶ but Eli called to him and said, "Samuel, my son." "Here I am," answered Samuel.

¹⁷ "What was the message He gave you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God punish you, and ever so severely, if you hide from me anything He said to you."

¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything and did not hide a thing from him. "He is the LORD," replied Eli. "Let Him do what is good in His eyes."

¹⁹ And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and He let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground.

²⁰ So all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD.

²¹ And the LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, because there He revealed Himself to Samuel by His word.

4

¹ Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now the Israelites went out to meet the Philistines in battle and camped at Ebenezer, while the Philistines camped at Aphek.

² The Philistines arrayed themselves against Israel, and as the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who struck down about four thousand men on the battlefield.

³ When the troops returned to the camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why has the LORD brought defeat on us before the Philistines today? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Shiloh, so that it may go with us to save us from the hand of our enemies."

⁴ So the people sent men to Shiloh, and they brought back the ark of the covenant of the LORD of Hosts, who sits enthroned between the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

⁵ When the ark of the covenant of the LORD entered the camp, all the Israelites raised such a great shout that the ground shook.

⁶ On hearing the noise of the shout, the Philistines asked, "What is this loud shouting in the camp of the Hebrews?" And when they realized that the ark of the LORD had entered the camp,

⁷ the Philistines were afraid. "The gods have entered their camp!" they said. "Woe to us, for nothing like this has happened before."

⁸ Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in

the wilderness.

⁹ Take courage and be men, O Philistines! Otherwise, you will serve the Hebrews just as they served you. Now be men and fight!"

¹⁰ So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and each man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great—thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell.

¹¹ The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

¹² That same day a Benjamite ran from the battle line all the way to Shiloh, with his clothes torn and dirt on his head.

¹³ When he arrived, there was Eli, sitting on his chair beside the road and watching, because his heart trembled for the ark of God. When the man entered the city to give a report, the whole city cried out.

¹⁴ Eli heard the outcry and asked, "Why this commotion?" So the man hurried over and reported to Eli.

¹⁵ Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his gaze was fixed because he could not see.

¹⁶ "I have just come from the battle," the man said to Eli. "I fled from there today." "What happened, my son?" Eli asked.

¹⁷ The messenger answered, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are both dead, and the ark of God has been captured."

¹⁸ As soon as the ark of God was mentioned, Eli fell backward from his chair by the city gate, and being old and heavy, he broke his neck and died.

And Eli had judged Israel forty years.

¹⁹ Now Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and about to give birth. When she heard the news of the capture of God's ark and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband, she collapsed and gave birth, for her labor pains overtook her.

²⁰ As she was dying, the women attending to her said, "Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son!" But she did not respond or pay any heed.

²¹ And she named the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God had been captured and her father-in-law and her husband had been killed.

²² "The glory has departed from Israel," she said, "for the ark of God has been captured."

5

¹ After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod,

² carried it into the temple of Dagon, and set it beside his statue.

³ When the people of Ashdod got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on his face before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and returned him to his place.

⁴ But when they got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on his face before the ark of the LORD, with his head and his hands broken off and lying on the threshold. Only the torso remained.

⁵ That is why, to this day, the priests of Dagon and all who enter the temple of Dagon in Ashdod do

not step on the threshold.

⁶ Now the hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod and its vicinity, ravaging them and afflicting them with tumors.

⁷ And when the men of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not stay here with us, because His hand is heavy upon us and upon our god Dagon."

⁸ So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and asked, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" "It must be moved to Gath," they replied. So they carried away the ark of the God of Israel.

⁹ But after they had moved the ark to Gath, the LORD's hand was also against that city, throwing it into great confusion and afflicting the men of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumors.

¹⁰ So they sent the ark of God to Ekron, but as it arrived, the Ekronites cried out, "They have brought us the ark of the God of Israel in order to kill us and our people!"

¹¹ Then the Ekronites called together all the rulers of the Philistines and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel. It must return to its place, so that it will not kill us and our people!" For a deadly confusion had pervaded the city; the hand of God was very heavy upon it.

¹² Those who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

6

¹ When the ark of the LORD had been in the land

of the Philistines seven months,

² the Philistines summoned the priests and diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how to send it back to its place."

³ They replied, "If you return the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it away empty, but by all means return it to Him with a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and you will understand why His hand has not been lifted from you."

⁴ "What guilt offering should we send back to Him?" asked the Philistines. "Five gold tumors and five gold rats," they said, "according to the number of rulers of the Philistines, since the same plague has struck both you and your rulers."

⁵ Make images of your tumors and of the rats that are ravaging the land. Give glory to the God of Israel, and perhaps He will lift His hand from you and your gods and your land.

⁶ Why harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened theirs? When He afflicted them, did they not send the people out so they could go on their way?

⁷ Now, therefore, prepare one new cart with two milk cows that have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen them up.

⁸ Take the ark of the LORD, set it on the cart, and in a chest beside it put the gold objects you are sending back to Him as a guilt offering. Then send the ark on its way,

⁹ but keep watching it. If it goes up the road to its homeland, toward Beth-shemesh, it is the LORD who has brought on us this great disaster. But if

it does not, then we will know that it was not His hand that punished us and that it happened by chance.”

¹⁰ So the men did as instructed. They took two milk cows, hitched them to the cart, and penned up their calves.

¹¹ Then they put the ark of the LORD on the cart, along with the chest containing the gold rats and the images of the tumors.

¹² And the cows headed straight up the road toward Beth-shemesh, staying on that one highway and lowing as they went, never straying to the right or to the left. The rulers of the Philistines followed behind them to the border of Beth-shemesh.

¹³ Now the people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they were overjoyed at the sight.

¹⁴ The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped there near a large rock. The people chopped up the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD.

¹⁵ And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the chest containing the gold objects, and they placed them on the large rock. That day the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD.

¹⁶ And when the five rulers of the Philistines saw this, they returned to Ekron that same day.

¹⁷ As a guilt offering to the LORD, the Philistines had sent back one gold tumor for each city: Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron.

¹⁸ The number of gold rats also corresponded to the number of Philistine cities belonging to the

five rulers—the fortified cities and their outlying villages. And the large rock on which they placed the ark of the LORD stands to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh.

¹⁹ But God struck down some of the people of Beth-shemesh because they looked inside the ark of the LORD. He struck down seventy men, and the people mourned because the LORD had struck them with a great slaughter.

²⁰ The men of Beth-shemesh asked, “Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God? To whom should the ark go up from here?”

²¹ So they sent messengers to the people of Kiriath-jearim, saying, “The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up with you.”

7

¹ Then the men of Kiriath-jearim came for the ark of the LORD and took it into Abinadab's house on the hill. And they consecrated his son Eleazar to guard the ark of the LORD.

² And from that day a long time passed, twenty years in all, as the ark remained at Kiriath-jearim. And all the house of Israel mournfully sought the LORD.

³ Then Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and Ash-toreths among you, prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only. And He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.”

⁴ So the Israelites put away the Baals and Ash-toreths and served only the LORD.

⁵ Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD on your behalf."

⁶ When they had gathered at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted, and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the Israelites at Mizpah.

⁷ When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, their rulers marched up toward Israel. And when the Israelites learned of this, they feared the Philistines

⁸ and said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

⁹ Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on behalf of Israel, and the LORD answered him.

¹⁰ As the Philistines drew near to fight against Israel, Samuel was offering up the burnt offering. But that day the LORD thundered loudly against the Philistines and threw them into such confusion that they fled before Israel.

¹¹ Then the men of Israel charged out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, striking them down all the way to an area below Beth-car.

¹² Afterward, Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

¹³ So the Philistines were subdued, and they stopped invading the territory of Israel. And the

hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

¹⁴ The cities from Ekron to Gath, which the Philistines had taken, were restored to Israel, who also delivered the surrounding territory from the hand of the Philistines. And there was peace between the Israelites and the Amorites.

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

¹⁶ Every year he would go on a circuit from Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah, judging Israel in all these places.

¹⁷ Then he would return to Ramah because his home was there, and there he judged Israel and built an altar to the LORD.

8

¹ When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges over Israel.

² The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second was Abijah. They were judges in Beersheba.

³ But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside toward dishonest gain, accepting bribes and perverting justice.

⁴ So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.

⁵ "Look," they said, "you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king to judge us like all the other nations."

⁶ But when they said, "Give us a king to judge us," their demand was displeasing in the sight of Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD.

⁷ And the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you.

For it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected Me as their king.

⁸ Just as they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking Me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.

⁹ Now listen to their voice; but you must solemnly warn them and show them the manner of the king who will reign over them.”

¹⁰ So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king.

¹¹ He said, “This will be the manner of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them to serve his own chariots and horses, and to run in front of his chariots.

¹² He will appoint some for himself as commanders of thousands and of fifties, and others to plow his ground, to reap his harvest, and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

¹³ And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers.

¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his servants.

¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and grape harvest and give it to his officials and servants.

¹⁶ And he will take your menservants and maid-servants and your best cattle and donkeys and put them to his own use.

¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves.

¹⁸ When that day comes, you will beg for relief from the king you have chosen, but the LORD will

not answer you on that day.”

¹⁹ Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We must have a king over us.

²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to judge us, to go out before us, and to fight our battles.”

²¹ Samuel listened to all the words of the people and repeated them in the hearing of the LORD.

²² “Listen to their voice,” the LORD said to Samuel. “Appoint a king for them.” Then Samuel told the men of Israel, “Everyone must go back to his city.”

9

¹ Now there was a Benjamite, a powerful man, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin.

² And he had a son named Saul, choice and handsome, without equal among the Israelites—a head taller than any of the people.

³ One day the donkeys of Saul’s father Kish wandered off, and Kish said to his son Saul, “Take one of the servants and go look for the donkeys.”

⁴ So Saul passed through the hill country of Ephraim and then through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find the donkeys. He and the servant went through the region of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they went through the land of Benjamin, and still they did not find them.

⁵ When they reached the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant, “Come, let us go back, or my father

will stop worrying about the donkeys and start worrying about us.”

⁶ “Look,” said the servant, “in this city there is a man of God who is highly respected; everything he says surely comes to pass. Let us go there now. Perhaps he will tell us which way to go.”

⁷ “If we do go,” Saul replied, “what can we give the man? For the bread in our packs is gone, and there is no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?”

⁸ The servant answered him again. “Look,” he said, “I have here in my hand a quarter shekel of silver. I will give it to the man of God, and he will tell us our way.”

⁹ (Formerly in Israel, a man on his way to inquire of God would say, “Come, let us go to the seer.” For the prophet of today was formerly called the seer.)

¹⁰ “Good,” said Saul to his servant. “Come, let us go.” So they set out for the city where the man of God was.

¹¹ And as they were climbing the hill to the city, they met some young women coming out to draw water and asked, “Is the seer here?”

¹² “Yes, he is ahead of you,” they answered. “Hurry now, for today he has come to the city because the people have a sacrifice on the high place.

¹³ As soon as you enter the city, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; after that, the guests will eat. Go up at once; you will find him.”

¹⁴ So Saul and his servant went up toward the city,

and as they were entering it, there was Samuel coming toward them on his way up to the high place.

¹⁵ Now on the day before Saul's arrival, the LORD had revealed to Samuel,

¹⁶ "At this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you are to anoint him ruler over My people Israel; he will save them from the hand of the Philistines. For I have looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me."

¹⁷ When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man of whom I spoke; he shall rule over My people."

¹⁸ Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, "Would you please tell me where the seer's house is?"

¹⁹ "I am the seer," Samuel replied. "Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today. And when I send you off in the morning, I will tell you all that is in your heart."

²⁰ As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them, for they have been found. And upon whom is all the desire of Israel, if not upon you and all your father's house?"

²¹ Saul replied, "Am I not a Benjamite from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of Benjamin? So why would you say such a thing to me?"

²² Then Samuel took Saul and his servant, brought them into the hall, and seated them in the place of honor among those who were invited—about thirty in all.

²³ And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion I gave you and told you to set aside."

²⁴ So the cook picked up the leg and what was attached to it and set it before Saul. Then Samuel said, "Here is what was kept back. It was set apart for you. Eat, for it has been kept for you for this occasion, from the time I said, 'I have invited the people.' " So Saul dined with Samuel that day.

²⁵ And after they had come down from the high place into the city, Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof of his house.

²⁶ They got up early in the morning, and just before dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Get ready, and I will send you on your way!" So Saul got ready, and both he and Samuel went outside together.

²⁷ As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go on ahead of us, but you stay for a while, and I will reveal to you the word of God." So the servant went on.

10

¹ Then Samuel took a flask of oil, poured it on Saul's head, kissed him, and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you ruler over His inheritance?"

² When you leave me today, you will find two men at Rachel's tomb in Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you, "The donkeys you seek have been found, and now your father has stopped worrying about the donkeys and started worrying about you, asking, "What should I do about my son?" ' "

³ Then you will go on from there until you come to the Oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine.

⁴ They will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from their hands.

⁵ After that you will come to Gibeah of God, where the Philistines have an outpost. As you approach the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place, preceded by harps, tambourines, flutes, and lyres, and they will be prophesying.

⁶ Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be transformed into a different person.

⁷ When these signs have come, do as the occasion demands, for God is with you.

⁸ And you shall go before me to Gilgal, and surely I will come to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Wait seven days until I come to you and show you what you are to do."

⁹ As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all the signs came to pass that day.

¹⁰ When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a group of prophets met him. Then the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied along with them.

¹¹ When all those who had formerly known Saul saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked one another, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

12 Then a man who lived there replied, "And who is their father?" So the saying became a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

13 And when Saul had finished prophesying, he went up to the high place.

14 Now Saul's uncle asked him and his servant, "Where did you go?" "To look for the donkeys," Saul replied. "When we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel."

15 "Tell me," Saul's uncle asked, "what did Samuel say to you?"

16 And Saul replied, "He assured us that the donkeys had been found." But Saul did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship.

17 After this, Samuel summoned the people to the LORD at Mizpah

18 and said to the Israelites, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I rescued you from the hands of the Egyptians and of all the kingdoms that oppressed you.'

19 But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your troubles and afflictions, and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us.' Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."

20 Thus Samuel had all the tribes of Israel come forward, and the tribe of Benjamin was selected.

21 Then he had the tribe of Benjamin come forward by its clans, and the clan of Matri was selected. Finally, Saul son of Kish was selected. But when they looked for him, they could not find him.

²² So again they inquired of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?" And the LORD replied, "Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage."

²³ So they ran and brought Saul, and when he stood among the people, he was a head taller than any of the others.

²⁴ Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the one the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people." And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

²⁵ Then Samuel explained to the people the rights of kingship. He wrote them on a scroll and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, each to his own home.

²⁶ Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, and the men of valor whose hearts God had touched went with him.

²⁷ But some worthless men said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him and brought him no gifts; but Saul remained silent about it.

11

¹ Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and laid siege to Jabesh-gilead. All the men of Jabesh said to him, "Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you."

² But Nahash the Ammonite replied, "I will make a treaty with you on one condition, that I may put out everyone's right eye and bring reproach upon all Israel."

³ "Hold off for seven days," replied the elders of Jabesh, "and let us send messengers throughout Israel. If there is no one to save us, we will surrender to you."

⁴ When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and relayed these words in the hearing of the people, they all wept aloud.

⁵ Just then Saul was returning from the field, behind his oxen. "What troubles the people?" asked Saul. "Why are they weeping?" And they relayed to him the words of the men from Jabesh.

⁶ When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he burned with great anger.

⁷ He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent them by messengers throughout the land of Israel, proclaiming, "This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not march behind Saul and Samuel." Then the terror of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out together as one man.

⁸ And when Saul numbered them at Bezek, there were 300,000 Israelites and 30,000 men of Judah.

⁹ So they said to the messengers who had come, "Tell the men of Jabesh-gilead: 'Deliverance will be yours tomorrow by the time the sun is hot.' " And when the messengers relayed this to the men of Jabesh, they rejoiced.

¹⁰ Then the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Tomorrow we will come out, and you can do with us whatever seems good to you."

¹¹ The next day Saul organized the troops into three divisions, and during the morning watch they invaded the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them, until the hottest part of the day. And the survivors were so scattered that no two of them were left together.

¹² Then the people said to Samuel, "Who said that Saul should not reign over us? Bring those men here so we can kill them!"

¹³ But Saul ordered, "No one shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has worked salvation in Israel."

¹⁴ Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingship there."

¹⁵ So all the people went to Gilgal and confirmed Saul as king in the presence of the LORD. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, and Saul and all the Israelites rejoiced greatly.

12

¹ Then Samuel said to all Israel, "I have listened to your voice in all that you have said to me, and I have set over you a king.

² Now here is the king walking before you, and I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you. I have walked before you from my youth until this day.

³ Here I am. Bear witness against me before the LORD and before His anointed: Whose ox or donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated or oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe and closed my eyes? Tell me, and I will restore it to you."

⁴ "You have not cheated us or oppressed us," they replied, "nor have you taken anything from the hand of man."

⁵ Samuel said to them, "The LORD is a witness against you, and His anointed is a witness today, that you have not found anything in my hand." "He is a witness," they replied.

⁶ Then Samuel said to the people, “The LORD is the One who appointed Moses and Aaron, and who brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

⁷ Now present yourselves, so that I may confront you before the LORD with all the righteous acts He has done for you and your fathers.

⁸ When Jacob went to Egypt, your fathers cried out to the LORD, and He sent them Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

⁹ But they forgot the LORD their God, and He sold them into the hand of Sisera the commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against them.

¹⁰ Then they cried out to the LORD and said, ‘We have sinned, for we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and Ashtoreths. Now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, that we may serve You.’

¹¹ So the LORD sent Jerubbaal, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel, and He delivered you from the hands of your enemies on every side, and you dwelt securely.

¹² But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, ‘No, we must have a king to rule over us’—even though the LORD your God was your king.

¹³ Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you requested. Behold, the LORD has placed a king over you.

¹⁴ If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and if you do not rebel against the

command of the LORD, and if both you and the king who rules over you follow the LORD your God, then all will be well.

¹⁵ But if you disobey the LORD and rebel against His command, then the hand of the LORD will be against you as it was against your fathers.

¹⁶ Now, therefore, present yourselves and see this great thing that the LORD will do before your eyes.

¹⁷ Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call on the LORD to send thunder and rain, so that you will know and see what a great evil you have committed in the sight of the LORD by asking for a king."

¹⁸ So Samuel called to the LORD, and on that day the LORD sent thunder and rain. As a result, all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

¹⁹ They pleaded with Samuel, "Pray to the LORD your God for your servants so that we will not die! For we have added to all our sins the evil of asking for a king."

²⁰ "Do not be afraid," Samuel replied. "Even though you have committed all this evil, do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.

²¹ Do not turn aside after worthless things that cannot profit you or deliver you, for they are empty.

²² Indeed, for the sake of His great name, the LORD will not abandon His people, because He was pleased to make you His own.

²³ As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you. And

I will continue to teach you the good and right way.

²⁴ Above all, fear the LORD and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you.

²⁵ But if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away.”

13

¹ Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years.

² He chose for himself three thousand men of Israel: Two thousand were with Saul at Michmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. And the rest of the troops he sent away, each to his own home.

³ Then Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. So Saul blew the ram's horn throughout the land, saying, “Let the Hebrews hear!”

⁴ And all Israel heard the news: “Saul has attacked an outpost of the Philistines, and now Israel has become a stench to the Philistines!” Then the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

⁵ Now the Philistines assembled to fight against Israel with three thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-aven.

⁶ Seeing that they were in danger because their troops were hard-pressed, the men of Israel hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in cellars and cisterns.

⁷ Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul, however, remained at Gilgal, and all his troops were quaking in fear.

⁸ And Saul waited seven days for the time appointed by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the troops began to desert Saul.

⁹ So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." And he offered up the burnt offering.

¹⁰ Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.

¹¹ "What have you done?" Samuel asked. And Saul replied, "When I saw that the troops were deserting me, and that you did not come at the appointed time and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash,

¹² I thought, 'Now the Philistines will descend upon me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering."

¹³ "You have acted foolishly," Samuel declared. "You have not kept the command that the LORD your God gave you; if you had, the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time.

¹⁴ But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought a man after His own heart and appointed him ruler over His people, because you have not kept the command of the LORD."

¹⁵ Then Samuel set out from Gilgal and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin. And Saul numbered the troops who were with him, about six hundred men.

¹⁶ Now Saul and Jonathan his son and the troops with them were staying in Geba of Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Michmash.

¹⁷ And raiders went out of the Philistine camp in three divisions. One headed toward Ophrah in the land of Shual,

¹⁸ another toward Beth-horon, and the third down the border road overlooking the Valley of Zeboim facing the wilderness.

¹⁹ And no blacksmith could be found in all the land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, "The Hebrews must not be allowed to make swords or spears."

²⁰ Instead, all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to sharpen their plowshares, mattocks, axes, and sickles.

²¹ The charge was a pim for sharpening a plowshare or mattock, a third of a shekel for sharpening a pitchfork or an axe, and a third of a shekel for repointing an oxgoad.

²² So on the day of battle not a sword or spear could be found in the hands of the troops with Saul and Jonathan; only Saul and his son Jonathan had weapons.

²³ And a garrison of the Philistines had gone out to the pass at Michmash.

14

¹ One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, "Come, let us cross over to the Philistine outpost on the other side." But Jonathan did not tell his father.

² Meanwhile, Saul was staying under the pomegranate tree in Migron on the outskirts of Gibeah. And the troops who were with him numbered about six hundred men,

³ including Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was the son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli the priest of the LORD in Shiloh. But the troops did not know that Jonathan had left.

⁴ Now there were cliffs on both sides of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost. One was named Bozez and the other Seneh.

⁵ One cliff stood to the north toward Michmash, and the other to the south toward Geba.

⁶ Jonathan said to the young man bearing his armor, "Come, let us cross over to the outpost of these uncircumcised men. Perhaps the LORD will work on our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few."

⁷ His armor-bearer replied, "Do all that is in your heart. Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul."

⁸ "Very well," said Jonathan, "we will cross over toward these men and show ourselves to them."

⁹ If they say, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stay where we are and will not go up to them.

¹⁰ But if they say, 'Come on up,' then we will go up, because this will be our sign that the LORD has delivered them into our hands."

¹¹ So the two of them showed themselves to the outpost of the Philistines, who exclaimed, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes in which they were hiding!"

¹² So the men of the outpost called out to Jonathan

and his armor-bearer, "Come on up, and we will teach you a lesson!" "Follow me," Jonathan told his armor-bearer, "for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel."

¹³ So Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer behind him. And the Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and finished them off.

¹⁴ In that first assault, Jonathan and his armor-bearer struck down about twenty men in about half an acre of land.

¹⁵ Then panic struck the Philistines in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. Even those in the outposts and raiding parties trembled. Indeed, the earth quaked, and panic spread from God.

¹⁶ Now when Saul's watchmen at Gibeah in Benjamin looked and saw the troops melting away and scattering in every direction,

¹⁷ Saul said to the troops who were with him, "Call the roll and see who has left us." And when they had called the roll, they saw that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there.

¹⁸ Then Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God." (For at that time it was with the Israelites.)

¹⁹ While Saul was talking to the priest, the commotion in the Philistine camp continued to increase. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

²⁰ Then Saul and all his troops assembled and marched to the battle, and they found the Philistines in total confusion, with each man wielding the sword against his neighbor.

²¹ And the Hebrews who had previously gone up

into the surrounding camps to join the Philistines now went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

²² When all the Israelites who had been hiding in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they also joined the battle in close pursuit.

²³ So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle moved on beyond Beth-aven.

²⁴ Now the men of Israel were in distress that day, for Saul had placed the troops under an oath, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats any food before evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the troops tasted any food.

²⁵ Then all the troops entered the forest, and there was honey on the ground.

²⁶ And when they entered the forest and saw the flowing honey, not one of them put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath.

²⁷ Jonathan, however, had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath. So he reached out the end of the staff in his hand, dipped it into the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.

²⁸ Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father bound the troops with a solemn oath, saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats food today.' That is why the people are faint."

²⁹ "My father has brought trouble to the land," Jonathan replied. "Just look at how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.

³⁰ How much better it would have been if the

troops had eaten freely today from the plunder they took from their enemies! Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been much greater?"

³¹ That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon, the people were very faint.

³² So they rushed greedily to the plunder, taking sheep, cattle, and calves. They slaughtered them on the ground and ate meat with the blood still in it.

³³ Then someone reported to Saul: "Look, the troops are sinning against the LORD by eating meat with the blood still in it." "You have broken faith," said Saul. "Roll a large stone over here at once."

³⁴ Then he said, "Go among the troops and tell them, 'Each man must bring me his ox or his sheep, slaughter them in this place, and then eat. Do not sin against the LORD by eating meat with the blood still in it.' " So that night everyone brought his ox and slaughtered it there.

³⁵ Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had built an altar to the LORD.

³⁶ And Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until dawn, leaving no man alive!" "Do what seems good to you," the troops replied. But the priest said, "We must consult God here."

³⁷ So Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You give them into the hand of Israel?" But God did not answer him that day.

³⁸ Therefore Saul said, "Come here, all you leaders of the troops, and let us investigate how this sin

has occurred today.

³⁹ As surely as the LORD who saves Israel lives, even if it is my son Jonathan, he must die!" But not one of the troops said a word.

⁴⁰ Then Saul said to all Israel, "You stand on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will stand on the other side." "Do what seems good to you," the troops replied.

⁴¹ So Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Why have You not answered Your servant this day? If the fault is with me or my son Jonathan, respond with Urim, but if the fault is with the men of Israel, respond with Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were selected, but the people were cleared of the charge.

⁴² Then Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan." And Jonathan was selected.

⁴³ "Tell me what you have done," Saul commanded him. So Jonathan told him, "I only tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. And now I must die?"

⁴⁴ And Saul declared, "May God punish me, and ever so severely, if you, Jonathan, do not surely die!"

⁴⁵ But the people said to Saul, "Must Jonathan die—he who accomplished such a great deliverance for Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for with God's help he has accomplished this today." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die.

⁴⁶ Then Saul gave up his pursuit of the Philistines, and the Philistines returned to their own land.

⁴⁷ After Saul had assumed the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side—the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he routed them.

⁴⁸ He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of its plunderers.

⁴⁹ Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua. His two daughters were named Merab (his firstborn) and Michal (his younger daughter).

⁵⁰ His wife's name was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of his army was Abner, the son of Saul's uncle Ner.

⁵¹ Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner were sons of Abiel.

⁵² And the war with the Philistines was fierce for all the days of Saul. So whenever he noticed any strong or brave man, Saul would enlist him.

15

¹ Then Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people Israel. Now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD.

² This is what the LORD of Hosts says: 'I witnessed what the Amalekites did to the Israelites when they opposed them on their way up from Egypt.

³ Now go and attack the Amalekites and devote to destruction all that belongs to them. Do not spare them, but put to death men and women, children and infants, oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys.' "

⁴ So Saul summoned the troops and numbered them at Telaim—200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah.

⁵ Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley.

⁶ And he warned the Kenites, “Since you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt, go on and get away from the Amalekites. Otherwise I will sweep you away with them.” So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.

⁷ Then Saul struck down the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt.

⁸ He captured Agag king of Amalek alive, but devoted all the others to destruction with the sword.

⁹ Saul and his troops spared Agag, along with the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs, and the best of everything else. They were unwilling to devote them to destruction, but they devoted to destruction all that was despised and worthless.

¹⁰ Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying,

¹¹ “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned away from following Me and has not carried out My instructions.” And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all that night.

¹² Early in the morning Samuel got up to confront Saul, but he was told, “Saul has gone to Carmel, and behold, he has set up a monument for himself and has turned and gone down to Gilgal.”

¹³ When Samuel reached him, Saul said to him,

"May the LORD bless you. I have carried out the LORD's instructions."

¹⁴ But Samuel replied, "Then what is this bleating of sheep and lowing of cattle that I hear?"

¹⁵ Saul answered, "The troops brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but the rest we devoted to destruction."

¹⁶ "Stop!" exclaimed Samuel. "Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night." "Tell me," Saul replied.

¹⁷ And Samuel said, "Although you were once small in your own eyes, have you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel

¹⁸ and sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and devote to destruction the sinful Amalekites. Fight against them until you have wiped them out.'

¹⁹ So why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you rush upon the plunder and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"

²⁰ "But I did obey the LORD," Saul replied. "I went on the mission that the LORD gave me. I brought back Agag king of Amalek and devoted the Amalekites to destruction.

²¹ The troops took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of the things devoted to destruction, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

²² But Samuel declared: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to His voice? Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice, and attentiveness is better

than the fat of rams.

²³ For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance is like the wickedness of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has rejected you as king.”

²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned; I have transgressed the LORD’s commandment and your instructions, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.

²⁵ Now therefore, please forgive my sin and return with me so I can worship the LORD.”

²⁶ “I will not return with you,” Samuel replied. “For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and He has rejected you as king over Israel.”

²⁷ As Samuel turned to go, Saul grabbed the hem of his robe, and it tore.

²⁸ So Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you.

²⁹ Moreover, the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind, for He is not a man, that He should change His mind.”

³⁰ “I have sinned,” Saul replied. “Please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel. Come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD your God.”

³¹ So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

³² Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag king of the Amalekites.” Agag came to him cheerfully, for he thought, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.”

³³ But Samuel declared: “As your sword has made women childless, so your mother will be childless

among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his home in Gibeah of Saul.

³⁵ And to the day of his death, Samuel never again visited Saul. Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

16

¹ Now the LORD said to Samuel, “How long are you going to mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have selected from his sons a king for Myself.”

² “How can I go?” Samuel asked. “Saul will hear of it and kill me!” The LORD answered, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’”

³ Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you are to do. You are to anoint for Me the one I indicate.”

⁴ So Samuel did what the LORD had said and went to Bethlehem. When the elders of the town met him, they trembled and asked, “Do you come in peace?”

⁵ “In peace,” he replied. “I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and said, “Surely here before the LORD is His anointed.”

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or height, for I have rejected him; the LORD does not see as man does. For man sees the outward appearance, but the LORD sees the heart."

⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and presented him to Samuel, who said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either."

⁹ Next Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either."

¹⁰ Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel told him, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."

¹¹ And Samuel asked him, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse replied, "but he is tending the sheep." "Send for him," Samuel replied. "For we will not sit down to eat until he arrives."

¹² So Jesse sent for his youngest son and brought him in. He was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him, for he is the one."

¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward. Then Samuel set out and went to Ramah.

¹⁴ Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a spirit of distress from the LORD began to torment him.

¹⁵ Saul's servants said to him, "Surely a spirit of distress from God is tormenting you."

¹⁶ Let our lord command your servants here to seek out someone who can skillfully play the

harp. Whenever the spirit of distress from God is upon you, he is to play it, and you will be well."

¹⁷ And Saul commanded his servants, "Find me someone who plays well, and bring him to me."

¹⁸ One of the servants answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a mighty man of valor, a warrior, eloquent and handsome, and the LORD is with him."

¹⁹ So Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep."

²⁰ And Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and one young goat and sent them to Saul with his son David.

²¹ When David came to Saul and entered his service, Saul loved him very much, and David became his armor-bearer.

²² Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, "Let David remain in my service, for I am pleased with him."

²³ And whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would pick up his harp and play. Then Saul would find relief and feel better, and the spirit of distress would depart from him.

17

¹ Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war at Socoh in Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah in Ephes-dammim.

² Saul and the men of Israel assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah, arraying themselves for battle against the Philistines.

³ The Philistines stood on one hill and the Israelites stood on another, with the valley between them.

⁴ Then a champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out from the Philistine camp. He was six cubits and a span in height,

⁵ and he had a bronze helmet on his head. He wore a bronze coat of mail weighing five thousand shekels,

⁶ and he had armor of bronze on his legs and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders.

⁷ The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. In addition, his shield bearer went before him.

⁸ And Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and array yourselves for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose one of your men and have him come down against me.

⁹ If he is able to fight me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and work for us."

¹⁰ Then the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day! Give me a man to fight!"

¹¹ On hearing the words of the Philistine, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and greatly afraid.

¹² Now David was the son of a man named Jesse, an Ephrathite from Bethlehem of Judah who had eight sons. And in the days of Saul, Jesse was old and well along in years.

¹³ The three older sons of Jesse had followed Saul into battle: The firstborn was Eliab, the second was Abinadab, and the third was Shammah.

¹⁴ And David was the youngest. The three oldest

had followed Saul,

¹⁵ but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep in Bethlehem.

¹⁶ For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening to take his stand.

¹⁷ One day Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp.

¹⁸ Take also these ten portions of cheese to the commander of their unit. Check on the welfare of your brothers and bring back an assurance from them.

¹⁹ They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines."

²⁰ So David got up early in the morning, left the flock with a keeper, loaded up, and set out as Jesse had instructed him. He reached the camp as the army was marching out to its position and shouting the battle cry.

²¹ And Israel and the Philistines arrayed in formation against each other.

²² Then David left his supplies in the care of the quartermaster and ran to the battle line. When he arrived, he asked his brothers how they were doing.

²³ And as he was speaking with them, suddenly the champion named Goliath, the Philistine from Gath, came forward from the ranks of the Philistines and shouted his usual words, which David also heard.

²⁴ When all the men of Israel saw Goliath, they fled from him in great fear.

²⁵ Now the men of Israel had been saying, "Do you

see how this man keeps coming out to defy Israel? To the man who kills him the king will give great riches. And he will give him his daughter in marriage and exempt his father's house from taxation in Israel."

²⁶ David asked the men who were standing with him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Just who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

²⁷ The people told him about the offer, saying, "That is what will be done for the man who kills him."

²⁸ Now when David's oldest brother Eliab heard him speaking to the men, his anger burned against David. "Why have you come down here?" he asked. "And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and wickedness of heart—you have come down to see the battle!"

²⁹ "What have I done now?" said David. "Was it not just a question?"

³⁰ Then he turned from him toward another and asked about the offer, and those people answered him just as the first ones had answered.

³¹ Now David's words were overheard and reported to Saul, who sent for him.

³² And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of this Philistine. Your servant will go and fight him!"

³³ But Saul replied, "You cannot go out against this Philistine to fight him. You are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth."

³⁴ David replied, "Your servant has been tending

his father's sheep, and whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock,

³⁵ I went after it, struck it down, and delivered the lamb from its mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur, strike it down, and kill it.

³⁶ Your servant has killed lions and bears; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God."

³⁷ David added, "The LORD, who delivered me from the claws of the lion and the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." "Go," said Saul, "and may the LORD be with you."

³⁸ Then Saul clothed David in his own tunic, put a bronze helmet on his head, and dressed him in armor.

³⁹ David strapped his sword over the tunic and tried to walk, but he was not accustomed to them. "I cannot walk in these," David said to Saul. "I am not accustomed to them." So David took them off.

⁴⁰ And David took his staff in his hand, selected five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag. And with his sling in hand, he approached the Philistine.

⁴¹ Now the Philistine came closer and closer to David, with his shield-bearer before him.

⁴² When the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised him because he was just a boy, ruddy and handsome.

⁴³ "Am I a dog," he said to David, "that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

⁴⁴ "Come here," he called to David, "and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"

⁴⁵ But David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand. This day I will strike you down, cut off your head, and give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the creatures of the earth. Then the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.

⁴⁷ And all those assembled here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and He will give all of you into our hands.”

⁴⁸ As the Philistine started forward to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.

⁴⁹ Then David reached into his bag, took out a stone, and slung it, striking the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

⁵⁰ Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

⁵¹ David ran and stood over him. He grabbed the Philistine’s sword and pulled it from its sheath and killed him, and he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.

⁵² Then the men of Israel and Judah charged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. And the bodies of the Philistines were strewn

along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron.

⁵³ When the Israelites returned from their pursuit of the Philistines, they plundered their camps.

⁵⁴ David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, and he put Goliath's weapons in his own tent.

⁵⁵ As Saul had watched David going out to confront the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?" "As surely as you live, O king," Abner replied, "I do not know."

⁵⁶ "Find out whose son this young man is!" said the king.

⁵⁷ So when David returned from killing the Philistine, still holding his head in his hand, Abner took him and brought him before Saul.

⁵⁸ "Whose son are you, young man?" asked Saul. "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem," David replied.

18

¹ After David had finished speaking with Saul, the souls of Jonathan and David were knit together, and Jonathan loved him as himself.

² And from that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house.

³ Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

⁴ And Jonathan removed the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, his sword, his bow, and his belt.

⁵ So David marched out and prospered in everything Saul sent him to do, and Saul set him over

the men of war. And this was pleasing in the sight of all the people, and of Saul's officers as well.

⁶ As the troops were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs, and with tambourines and other instruments.

⁷ And as the women danced, they sang out: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."

⁸ And Saul was furious and resented this song. "They have ascribed tens of thousands to David," he said, "but only thousands to me. What more can he have but the kingdom?"

⁹ And from that day forward Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

¹⁰ The next day a spirit of distress sent from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house while David played the harp as usual. Now Saul was holding a spear,

¹¹ and he hurled it, thinking, "I will pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.

¹² So Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had departed from Saul.

¹³ Therefore Saul sent David away and gave him command of a thousand men. David led the troops out to battle and back,

¹⁴ and he continued to prosper in all his ways, because the LORD was with him.

¹⁵ When Saul saw that David was very successful, he was afraid of him.

¹⁶ But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he was leading them out to battle and back.

¹⁷ Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older

daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage. Only be valiant for me and fight the LORD's battles." But Saul was thinking, "I need not raise my hand against him; let the hand of the Philistines be against him."

¹⁸ And David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel, that I should become the son-in-law of the king?"

¹⁹ So when it was time to give Saul's daughter Merab to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.

²⁰ Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David, and when this was reported to Saul, it pleased him.

²¹ "I will give her to David," Saul thought, "so that she may be a snare to him, and the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So Saul said to David, "For a second time now you can be my son-in-law."

²² Then Saul ordered his servants, "Speak to David privately and tell him, 'Behold, the king is pleased with you, and all his servants love you. Now therefore, become his son-in-law.' "

²³ But when Saul's servants relayed these words to David, he replied, "Does it seem trivial in your sight to be the son-in-law of the king? I am a poor man and lightly esteemed."

²⁴ And the servants told Saul what David had said.

²⁵ Saul replied, "Say to David, 'The king desires no other dowry but a hundred Philistine foreskins as revenge on his enemies.' " But Saul intended to cause David's death at the hands of the Philistines.

²⁶ When the servants reported these terms to

David, he was pleased to become the king's son-in-law. Before the wedding day arrived,

²⁷ David and his men went out and killed two hundred Philistines. He brought their foreskins and presented them as payment in full to become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave his daughter Michal to David in marriage.

²⁸ When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David,

²⁹ he grew even more afraid of David. So from then on Saul was David's enemy.

³⁰ Every time the Philistine commanders came out for battle, David was more successful than all of Saul's officers, so that his name was highly esteemed.

19

¹ Then Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David. But Jonathan delighted greatly in David,

² so he warned David, saying, "My father Saul intends to kill you. Be on your guard in the morning; find a secret place and hide there.

³ I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, so I can ask about you. And if I find out anything, I will tell you."

⁴ Then Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul and said to him, "The king should not sin against his servant David; he has not sinned against you. In fact, his actions have been highly beneficial to you.

⁵ He took his life in his hands when he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD worked a great

salvation for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced, so why would you sin against innocent blood by killing David for no reason?"

⁶ Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan and swore an oath: "As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be put to death."

⁷ So Jonathan summoned David and told him all these things. Then Jonathan brought David to Saul, and David was with Saul as before.

⁸ When war broke out again, David went out and fought the Philistines and struck them with such a mighty blow that they fled before him.

⁹ But as Saul was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, a spirit of distress from the LORD came upon him. While David was playing the harp,

¹⁰ Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear. But David eluded him and the spear struck the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.

¹¹ Then Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him and kill him in the morning. But David's wife Michal warned him, "If you do not run for your life tonight, tomorrow you will be dead!"

¹² So Michal lowered David from the window, and he ran away and escaped.

¹³ Then Michal took a household idol and laid it in the bed, placed some goat hair on its head, and covered it with a garment.

¹⁴ When Saul sent the messengers to seize David, Michal said, "He is ill."

¹⁵ But Saul sent the messengers back to see David and told them, "Bring him up to me in his bed so

I can kill him.”

¹⁶ And when the messengers entered, there was the idol in the bed with the goat hair on its head.

¹⁷ And Saul said to Michal, “Why did you deceive me like this? You sent my enemy away, and he has escaped!” Michal replied, “He said to me, ‘Help me get away, or I will kill you!’ ”

¹⁸ So David ran away and escaped. And he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there.

¹⁹ When Saul was told that David was at Naioth in Ramah,

²⁰ he sent messengers to seize him. But when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel leading them, the Spirit of God came upon them, and Saul’s messengers also began to prophesy.

²¹ When this was reported to Saul, he sent more messengers, but they began to prophesy as well. So Saul tried again and sent messengers a third time, and even they began to prophesy.

²² Finally, Saul himself left for Ramah and came to the large cistern at Secu, where he asked, “Where are Samuel and David?” “At Naioth in Ramah,” he was told.

²³ So Saul went to Naioth in Ramah. But the Spirit of God came upon even Saul, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

²⁴ Then Saul stripped off his robes and also prophesied before Samuel. And he collapsed and lay naked all that day and night. That is why it is said, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

20

¹ Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah. He came to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What is my iniquity? How have I sinned against your father, that he wants to take my life?"

² "Far from it!" Jonathan replied. "You will not die. Indeed, my father does nothing, great or small, without telling me. So why would he hide this matter from me? This cannot be true!"

³ But David again vowed, "Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Jonathan must not know of this, or he will be grieved.' As surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, there is but a step between me and death."

⁴ Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you desire, I will do for you."

⁵ So David told him, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon, and I am supposed to dine with the king. Instead, let me go and hide in the field until the third evening from now."

⁶ If your father misses me at all, tell him, 'David urgently requested my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because there is an annual sacrifice for his whole clan.'

⁷ If he says, 'Good,' then your servant is safe, but if he is enraged, you will know he has evil intentions.

⁸ Therefore show kindness to your servant, for you have brought me into a covenant with you before the LORD. If there is iniquity in me, then kill me yourself; why should you bring me to your father?"

⁹ "Never!" Jonathan replied. "If I ever found out

that my father had evil intentions against you, would I not tell you?"

¹⁰ Then David asked Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?"

¹¹ "Come," he replied, "let us go out to the field." So the two of them went out into the field,

¹² and Jonathan said, "By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will sound out my father by this time tomorrow or the next day. If he is favorable toward you, will I not send for you and tell you?"

¹³ But if my father intends to bring evil on you, then may the LORD punish me, and ever so severely, if I do not tell you and send you on your way in safety. May the LORD be with you, just as He has been with my father.

¹⁴ And as long as I live, treat me with the LORD's loving devotion, that I may not die,

¹⁵ and do not ever cut off your loving devotion from my household—not even when the LORD cuts off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."

¹⁶ So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD hold David's enemies accountable."

¹⁷ And Jonathan had David reaffirm his vow out of love for him, for Jonathan loved David as he loved himself.

¹⁸ Then Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow is the New Moon, and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty.

¹⁹ When you have stayed three days, hurry down to the place you hid on the day this trouble began, and remain beside the stone Ezel.

²⁰ I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as if I were aiming at a target.

²¹ Then I will send a boy and say, 'Go, find the arrows!' Now, if I expressly say to him, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them,' then come, because as surely as the LORD lives, it is safe for you, and there is no danger.

²² But if I say to the young man, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,' then you must go, for the LORD has sent you away.

²³ And as for the matter you and I have discussed, the LORD is a witness between you and me forever."

²⁴ So David hid in the field, and when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat.

²⁵ He sat in his usual place by the wall, opposite Jonathan and beside Abner, but David's place was empty.

²⁶ Saul said nothing that day because he thought, "Something has happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean—surely he is unclean."

²⁷ But on the day after the New Moon, the second day, David's place was still empty, and Saul asked his son Jonathan, "Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the meal either yesterday or today?"

²⁸ Jonathan answered, "David urgently requested my permission to go to Bethlehem,

²⁹ saying, 'Please let me go, because our clan is holding a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has told me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me go and see my brothers.' That is why he has not come to the king's table."

³⁰ Then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you?"

³¹ For as long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Now send for him and bring him to me, for he must surely die!"

³² "Why must he be put to death?" Jonathan replied. "What has he done?"

³³ Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan to kill him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to kill David.

³⁴ Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger and did not eat any food that second day of the month, for he was grieved by his father's shameful treatment of David.

³⁵ In the morning Jonathan went out to the field for the appointment with David, and a small boy was with him.

³⁶ He said to the boy, "Run and find the arrows I shoot." And as the boy ran, Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him.

³⁷ When the boy reached the place where Jonathan's arrow had fallen, Jonathan called to him, "Isn't the arrow beyond you?"

³⁸ Then Jonathan cried out, "Hurry! Make haste! Do not delay!" So the boy picked up the arrow and returned to his master.

³⁹ But the boy did not know anything; only Jonathan and David knew the arrangement.

⁴⁰ Then Jonathan gave his equipment to the boy

and said, "Go, take it back to the city."

⁴¹ When the young man had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone, fell facedown, and bowed three times. Then he and Jonathan kissed each other and wept together—though David wept more.

⁴² And Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for the two of us have sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD be a witness between you and me, and between your descendants and mine forever.' " Then David got up and departed, and Jonathan went back into the city.

21

¹ Then David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And when Ahimelech met David, he trembled and asked him, "Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?"

² "The king has given me a mission," David replied. "He told me no one is to know about the mission on which I am sending you. And I have directed my young men to meet me at a certain place.

³ Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found."

⁴ "There is no common bread on hand," the priest replied, "but there is some consecrated bread—provided that the young men have kept themselves from women."

⁵ David answered, "Women have indeed been kept from us, as is usual when I set out. And the bodies of the young men are holy even on common missions. How much more so today!"

⁶ So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there but the Bread of the Presence, which had been removed from before the LORD and replaced with hot bread on the day it was taken away.

⁷ Now one of Saul's servants was there that day, detained before the LORD. And his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief shepherd for Saul.

⁸ Then David asked Ahimelech, "Is there not a spear or sword on hand here? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's mission was urgent."

⁹ The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want, you may take it. For there is no other but this one here." And David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."

¹⁰ That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath.

¹¹ But the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David, the king of the land? Did they not sing about him in their dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands'?"

¹² Now David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

¹³ So he changed his behavior before them and feigned madness in their hands; he scratched on the doors of the gate and let his saliva run down his beard.

¹⁴ Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you can see that the man is insane! Why have you brought him to me?"

¹⁵ Am I in need of madmen, that you have brought this man to rave in my presence? Must this man come into my house?"

22

¹ So David left Gath and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and the rest of his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there.

² And all who were distressed or indebted or discontented rallied around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.

³ From there David went to Mizpeh of Moab, where he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother stay with you until I learn what God will do for me."

⁴ So he left them in the care of the king of Moab, and they stayed with him the whole time David was in the stronghold.

⁵ Then the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold. Depart and go into the land of Judah." So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.

⁶ Soon Saul learned that David and his men had been discovered. At that time Saul was sitting under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with his spear in hand and all his servants standing around him.

⁷ Then Saul said to his servants, "Listen, men of Benjamin! Is the son of Jesse giving all of you fields and vineyards and making you commanders of thousands or hundreds?"

⁸ Is that why all of you have conspired against me? Not one of you told me that my own son had made a covenant with the son of Jesse. Not one of you has shown concern for me or revealed to me that my son has stirred up my own servant to lie in wait against me, as is the case today.”

⁹ But Doeg the Edomite, who had stationed himself with Saul’s servants, answered: “I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob.

¹⁰ Ahimelech inquired of the LORD for him and gave him provisions. He also gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

¹¹ Then the king sent messengers to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and his father’s whole family, who were priests at Nob. And all of them came to the king.

¹² “Listen now, son of Ahitub,” said Saul. “Here I am, my lord,” he replied.

¹³ And Saul asked him, “Why have you and the son of Jesse conspired against me? You gave him bread and a sword and inquired of God for him so that he could rise up against me to lie in wait, as he is doing today.”

¹⁴ Ahimelech answered the king, “Who among all your servants is as faithful as David, the king’s son-in-law, the captain of your bodyguard and honored in your house?

¹⁵ Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Far be it from me! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of my father’s household, for your servant knew nothing of this whole affair—not in part or in whole.”

¹⁶ But the king replied, “You will surely die,

Ahimelech, you and all your father's house!"

¹⁷ Then the king ordered the guards at his side, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because they too sided with David. For they knew he was fleeing, but they did not tell me." But the king's servants would not lift a hand to strike the priests of the LORD.

¹⁸ So the king ordered Doeg, "You turn and strike down the priests!" And Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests himself. On that day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod.

¹⁹ He also put to the sword Nob, the city of the priests, with its men and women, children and infants, oxen, donkeys, and sheep.

²⁰ But one of the sons of Ahimelech son of Ahitub escaped. His name was Abiathar, and he fled to David.

²¹ And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD.

²² Then David said to Abiathar, "I knew that Doeg the Edomite was there that day, and that he was sure to tell Saul. I myself am responsible for the lives of everyone in your father's house.

²³ Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks your life is seeking mine as well. You will be safe with me."

23

¹ Now it was reported to David, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and looting the threshing floors."

² So David inquired of the LORD, "Should I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah."

³ But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?"

⁴ Once again, David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him: "Go at once to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into your hand."

⁵ Then David and his men went to Keilah, fought against the Philistines, and carried off their livestock, striking them with a mighty blow. So David saved the people of Keilah.

⁶ (Now Abiathar son of Ahimelech had brought the ephod with him when he fled to David at Keilah.)

⁷ When Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, he said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he has trapped himself by entering a town with gates and bars."

⁸ Then Saul summoned all his troops to go to war at Keilah and besiege David and his men.

⁹ When David learned that Saul was plotting evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod."

¹⁰ And David said, "O LORD, God of Israel, Your servant has heard that Saul intends to come to Keilah and destroy the city on my account.

¹¹ Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD, God of Israel, please tell Your servant." "He will," said the LORD.

¹² So David asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah

surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" "They will," said the LORD.

¹³ Then David and his men, about six hundred strong, set out and departed from Keilah, moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he declined to go forth.

¹⁴ And David stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hill country of the Wilderness of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God would not deliver David into his hand.

¹⁵ While David was in Horesh in the Wilderness of Ziph, he saw that Saul had come out to take his life.

¹⁶ And Saul's son Jonathan came to David in Horesh and strengthened his hand in God,

¹⁷ saying, "Do not be afraid, for my father Saul will never lay a hand on you. And you will be king over Israel, and I will be your second-in-command. Even my father Saul knows this is true."

¹⁸ So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David remained in Horesh, while Jonathan went home.

¹⁹ Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah south of Jeshimon?"

²⁰ Now, O king, come down whenever your soul desires, and we will be responsible for delivering him into your hand."

²¹ "May you be blessed by the LORD," replied Saul, "for you have had compassion on me.

²² Please go and prepare further. Investigate and

watch carefully where he goes and who has seen him there, for I am told that he is extremely cunning.

²³ Observe and find out all the places where he hides. Then come back to me with certainty, and I will go with you. If he is in the land, I will search him out among all the clans of Judah.”

²⁴ So they set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the Wilderness of Maon in the Arabah south of Jeshimon,

²⁵ and Saul and his men went to seek him. When David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard of this, he pursued David there.

²⁶ Saul was proceeding along one side of the mountain, and David and his men along the other side. Even though David was hurrying to get away, Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them.

²⁷ Then a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Come quickly, for the Philistines have raided the land!”

²⁸ So Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why that place is called Sela-hammahlekoth.

²⁹ And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En-gedi.

24

¹ After Saul had returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, “David is in the wilderness of En-gedi.”

² So Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to look for David and his men in the region of the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

³ Soon Saul came to the sheepfolds along the road, where there was a cave, and he went in to relieve himself. And David and his men were hiding in the recesses of the cave.

⁴ So David's men said to him, "This is the day about which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do with him as you wish.' " Then David crept up and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

⁵ Afterward, David's conscience was stricken because he had cut off the corner of Saul's robe.

⁶ So he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed. May I never lift my hand against him, since he is the LORD's anointed."

⁷ With these words David restrained his men, and he did not let them rise up against Saul. Then Saul left the cave and went on his way.

⁸ After that, David got up, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed facedown in reverence

⁹ and said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Look, David intends to harm you'?"

¹⁰ Behold, this day you have seen with your own eyes that the LORD delivered you into my hand in the cave. I was told to kill you, but I spared you and said, 'I will not lift my hand against my lord, since he is the LORD's anointed.'

¹¹ See, my father, look at the corner of your robe in my hand. For I cut it off, but I did not kill you. Know and see that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands. I have not sinned against you, even

though you are hunting me down to take my life.

¹² May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD take vengeance on you, but my hand will never be against you.

¹³ As the old proverb says, 'Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand will never be against you.

¹⁴ Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea?

¹⁵ May the LORD be our judge and decide between you and me. May He take notice and plead my case and deliver me from your hand."

¹⁶ When David had finished saying these things, Saul called back, "Is that your voice, David my son?" Then Saul wept aloud

¹⁷ and said to David, "You are more righteous than I, for you have rewarded me with good, though I have rewarded you with evil.

¹⁸ And you have declared this day how you have treated me well, for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me.

¹⁹ When a man finds his enemy, does he let him go away unharmed? May the LORD reward you with good for what you have done for me this day.

²⁰ Now I know for sure that you will be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands.

²¹ So now, swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's house."

²² So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up

to the stronghold.

25

¹ When Samuel died, all Israel gathered to mourn for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David set out and went down to the Wilderness of Paran.

² Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. He was a very wealthy man with a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel.

³ His name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was harsh and evil in his dealings.

⁴ While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep.

⁵ So David sent ten young men and instructed them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel. Greet him in my name

⁶ and say to him, 'Long life to you, and peace to you and to your house and to all that belongs to you.

⁷ Now I hear that it is time for shearing. When your shepherds were with us, we did not harass them, and nothing of theirs was missing the whole time they were in Carmel.

⁸ Ask your young men, and they will tell you. So let my young men find favor with you, for we have come on the day of a feast. Please give whatever you can spare to your servants and to your son David.' "

⁹ When David's young men arrived, they relayed all these words to Nabal on behalf of David. Then they waited.

¹⁰ But Nabal asked them, "Who is David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants these days are breaking away from their masters.

¹¹ Why should I take my bread and water and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give them to these men whose origin I do not know?"

¹² So David's men turned around and went back, and they relayed to him all these words.

¹³ And David said to his men, "Strap on your swords!" So David and all his men strapped on their swords, and about four hundred men followed David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.

¹⁴ Meanwhile, one of Nabal's young men informed Nabal's wife Abigail, "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he screamed at them.

¹⁵ Yet these men were very good to us. When we were in the field, we were not harassed, and nothing of ours went missing the whole time we lived among them.

¹⁶ They were a wall around us, both day and night, the whole time we were herding our sheep near them.

¹⁷ Now consider carefully what you must do, because disaster looms over our master and all his household. For he is such a scoundrel that nobody can speak to him!"

¹⁸ Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five butchered

sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs. She loaded them on donkeys

¹⁹ and said to her young men, "Go ahead of me. I will be right behind you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

²⁰ As Abigail came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, she saw David and his men coming down toward her, and she met them.

²¹ Now David had just said, "In vain I have protected all that belonged to this man in the wilderness. Nothing that belongs to him has gone missing, yet he has paid me back evil for good.

²² May God punish David, and ever so severely, if I let one male belonging to Nabal survive until morning."

²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off the donkey, fell facedown, and bowed before him.

²⁴ She fell at his feet and said, "My lord, may the blame be on me alone, but please let your servant speak to you; hear the words of your servant.

²⁵ My lord should pay no attention to this scoundrel Nabal, for he lives up to his name: His name means Fool, and folly accompanies him. I, your servant, did not see my lord's young men whom you sent.

²⁶ Now, my lord, as surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, since the LORD has held you back from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hand, may your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be like Nabal.

²⁷ Now let this gift your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow you.

²⁸ Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will surely make a lasting dynasty for my lord, because he fights the LORD's battles. May no evil be found in you as long as you live.

²⁹ And should someone pursue you and seek your life, then the life of my lord will be bound securely by the LORD your God in the bundle of the living. But He shall fling away the lives of your enemies like stones from a sling.

³⁰ When the LORD has done for my lord all the good He promised, and when He has appointed you ruler over Israel,

³¹ then my lord will have no remorse or guilt of conscience over needless bloodshed and revenge. And when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, may you remember your servant."

³² Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you to meet me this day!

³³ Blessed is your discernment, and blessed are you, because today you kept me from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand.

³⁴ Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, then surely no male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by morning light."

³⁵ Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him, and he said to her, "Go home in peace. See, I have heeded your voice and granted your request."

³⁶ When Abigail returned to Nabal, there he was in the house, holding a feast fit for a king, in high

spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until morning light.

³⁷ In the morning when Nabal was sober, his wife told him about these events, and his heart failed within him, and he became like a stone.

³⁸ About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal dead.

³⁹ On hearing that Nabal was dead, David said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has upheld my cause against the reproach of Nabal and has restrained His servant from evil. For the LORD has brought the wickedness of Nabal down upon his own head." Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife.

⁴⁰ When his servants came to Abigail at Carmel, they said, "David has sent us to take you as his wife."

⁴¹ She arose, bowed facedown, and said, "Here is your servant, ready to serve and to wash the feet of my lord's servants."

⁴² So Abigail hurried and got on a donkey, and attended by five of her maidens, she followed David's messengers and became his wife.

⁴³ David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. So she and Abigail were both his wives.

⁴⁴ But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Palti son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

26

¹ Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding on the hill of Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon?"

² So Saul, accompanied by three thousand chosen men of Israel, went down to the Wilderness of Ziph to search for David there.

³ Saul camped beside the road at the hill of Hachilah opposite Jeshimon, but David was living in the wilderness. When he realized that Saul had followed him there,

⁴ David sent out spies to verify that Saul had arrived.

⁵ Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw the place where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the general of his army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the inner circle of the camp, with the troops camped around him.

⁶ And David asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?" "I will go with you," answered Abishai.

⁷ That night David and Abishai came to the troops, and Saul was lying there asleep in the inner circle of the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the troops were lying around him.

⁸ Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand. Now, therefore, please let me thrust the spear through him into the ground with one stroke. I will not need to strike him twice!"

⁹ But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can extend a hand against the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?"

¹⁰ David added, "As surely as the LORD lives, the LORD Himself will strike him down; either his day will come and he will die, or he will go into

battle and perish.

¹¹ But the LORD forbid that I should extend my hand against the LORD's anointed. Instead, take the spear and water jug by his head, and let us go."

¹² So David took the spear and water jug by Saul's head, and they departed. No one saw them or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up; they all remained asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

¹³ Then David crossed to the other side and stood atop the mountain at a distance; there was a wide gulf between them.

¹⁴ And David shouted to the troops and to Abner son of Ner, "Will you not answer me, Abner?" "Who are you who calls to the king?" Abner replied.

¹⁵ So David said to Abner, "You are a man, aren't you? And who in Israel is your equal? Why then did you not protect your lord the king when one of the people came to destroy him?"

¹⁶ This thing you have done is not good. As surely as the LORD lives, all of you deserve to die, since you did not protect your lord, the LORD's anointed. Now look around. Where are the king's spear and water jug that were by his head?"

¹⁷ Then Saul recognized David's voice and asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" "It is my voice, my lord and king," David said.

¹⁸ And he continued, "Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done? What evil is in my hand?"

¹⁹ Now please, may my lord the king hear the

words of his servant: If the LORD has stirred you up against me, then may He accept an offering. But if men have done it, may they be cursed in the presence of the LORD! For today they have driven me away from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.'

²⁰ So do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the LORD. For the king of Israel has come out to look for a flea, like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains."

²¹ Then Saul replied, "I have sinned. Come back, David my son. I will never harm you again, because today you considered my life precious. I have played the fool and have committed a grave error!"

²² "Here is the king's spear," David answered. "Let one of the young men come over and get it."

²³ May the LORD repay every man for his righteousness and faithfulness. For the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not extend my hand against the LORD's anointed.

²⁴ As surely as I valued your life today, so may the LORD value my life and rescue me from all trouble."

²⁵ Saul said to him, "May you be blessed, David my son. You will accomplish great things and will surely prevail." So David went on his way, and Saul returned home.

27

¹ David, however, said to himself, "One of these days now I will be swept away by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul

will stop searching for me all over Israel, and I will slip out of his hand.”

² So David set out with his six hundred men and went to Achish son of Maach, the king of Gath.

³ David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal.

⁴ And when Saul learned that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him.

⁵ Then David said to Achish, “If I have found favor in your eyes, let me be assigned a place in one of the outlying towns, so I can live there. For why should your servant live in the royal city with you?”

⁶ That day Achish gave him Ziklag, and to this day it still belongs to the kings of Judah.

⁷ And the time that David lived in Philistine territory amounted to a year and four months.

⁸ Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Gittites, and the Amalekites. (From ancient times these people had inhabited the land extending to Shur and Egypt.)

⁹ Whenever David attacked a territory, he did not leave a man or woman alive, but he took the flocks and herds, the donkeys, camels, and clothing. Then he would return to Achish,

¹⁰ who would ask him, “What have you raided today?” And David would reply, “The Negev of Judah,” or “The Negev of Jerahmeel,” or “The Negev of the Kenites.”

¹¹ David did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he said, “Otherwise they will report us, saying, ‘This is what David did.’”

And this was David's custom the whole time he lived in Philistine territory.

¹² So Achish trusted David, thinking, "Since he has made himself an utter stench to his people Israel, he will be my servant forever."

28

¹ Now in those days the Philistines gathered their forces for warfare against Israel. So Achish said to David, "You must understand that you and your men are to go out to battle with me."

² David replied, "Then you will come to know what your servant can do." "Very well," said Achish. "I will make you my bodyguard for life."

³ Now by this time Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had removed the mediums and spiritists from the land.

⁴ The Philistines gathered together and camped at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and camped at Gilboa.

⁵ When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid and trembled violently.

⁶ He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets.

⁷ Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I can go and consult her." "There is a medium at Endor," his servants replied.

⁸ So Saul disguised himself by putting on different clothes, and he set out with two of his men. They came to the woman at night, and Saul said,

“Consult a spirit for me. Bring up for me the one I name.”

⁹ But the woman replied, “Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has killed the mediums and spiritists in the land. Why have you set a trap to get me killed?”

¹⁰ Then Saul swore to her by the LORD: “As surely as the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this.”

¹¹ “Whom shall I bring up for you?” the woman asked. “Bring up Samuel,” he replied.

¹² But when the woman saw Samuel, she cried out in a loud voice and said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!”

¹³ “Do not be afraid,” the king replied. “What do you see?” “I see a god coming up out of the earth,” the woman answered.

¹⁴ “What does he look like?” asked Saul. “An old man is coming up,” she replied. “And he is wearing a robe.” So Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed facedown in reverence.

¹⁵ Then Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” “I am deeply distressed,” replied Saul. “The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do.”

¹⁶ “Why do you consult me,” asked Samuel, “since the LORD has turned away from you and become your enemy?”

¹⁷ He has done exactly what He spoke through me: The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor David.

¹⁸ Because you did not obey the LORD or carry out His burning anger against Amalek, the LORD has done this to you today.

¹⁹ Moreover, the LORD will deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. And the LORD will deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”

²⁰ Immediately Saul fell flat on the ground, terrified by the words of Samuel. And his strength was gone, because he had not eaten anything all that day and night.

²¹ When the woman came to Saul and saw how distraught he was, she said to him, “Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice. I took my life in my hands and did as you told me.

²² Now please listen to your servant and let me set a morsel of bread before you so you may eat and have the strength to go on your way.”

²³ Saul refused, saying, “I will not eat.” But his servants joined the woman in urging him, and he heeded their voice. He got up from the ground and sat on the bed.

²⁴ The woman had a fattened calf at her house, and she quickly slaughtered it. She also took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread.

²⁵ She served it to Saul and his servants, and they ate. And that night they got up and left.

29

¹ Now the Philistines brought all their forces together at Aphek, while Israel camped by the spring in Jezreel.

² As the Philistine leaders marched out with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men marched behind them with Achish.

³ Then the commanders of the Philistines asked, "What about these Hebrews?" Achish replied, "Is this not David, the servant of King Saul of Israel? He has been with me all these days, even years, and from the day he defected until today I have found no fault in him."

⁴ But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with Achish and told him, "Send that man back and let him return to the place you assigned him. He must not go down with us into battle only to become our adversary during the war. What better way for him to regain the favor of his master than with the heads of our men?"

⁵ Is this not the David about whom they sing in their dances: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands'?"

⁶ So Achish summoned David and told him, "As surely as the LORD lives, you have been upright, and it seems right in my sight that you should march in and out with me in the army, because I have found no fault in you from the day you came to me until this day. But you are not good in the sight of the leaders.

⁷ Therefore turn back now and go in peace, so that you will not do anything to displease the leaders of the Philistines."

⁸ "But what have I done?" David replied. "What have you found against your servant, from the day I came to you until today, to keep me from going along to fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

⁹ Achish replied, "I know that you are as pleasing in my sight as an angel of God. But the commanders of the Philistines have said, 'He must not go into battle with us.'

¹⁰ Now then, get up early in the morning, along with your master's servants who came with you, and go as soon as it is light."

¹¹ So David and his men got up early in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

30

¹ On the third day David and his men arrived in Ziklag, and the Amalekites had raided the Negev, attacked Ziklag, and burned it down.

² They had taken captive the women and all who were there, both young and old. They had not killed anyone, but had carried them off as they went on their way.

³ When David and his men came to the city, they found it burned down and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive.

⁴ So David and the troops with him lifted up their voices and wept until they had no strength left to weep.

⁵ David's two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel, had been taken captive.

⁶ And David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of every man grieved for his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

⁷ Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought it to him,

⁸ and David inquired of the LORD: "Should I pursue these raiders? Will I overtake them?" "Pursue them," the LORD replied, "for you will surely overtake them and rescue the captives."

⁹ So David and his six hundred men went to the Brook of Besor, where some stayed behind

¹⁰ because two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the brook. But David and four hundred men continued in pursuit.

¹¹ Now his men found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David. They gave the man water to drink and food to eat—

¹² a piece of a fig cake and two clusters of raisins. So he ate and was revived, for he had not had any food or water for three days and three nights.

¹³ Then David asked him, "To whom do you belong, and where are you from?" "I am an Egyptian," he replied, "the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me three days ago when I fell ill.

¹⁴ We raided the Negev of the Cherethites, the territory of Judah, and the Negev of Caleb, and we burned down Ziklag."

¹⁵ "Will you lead me to these raiders?" David asked. And the man replied, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me or deliver me into the hand of my master, and I will lead you to them."

¹⁶ So he led David down, and there were the Amalekites spread out over all the land, eating, drinking, and celebrating the great amount of

plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and the land of Judah.

¹⁷ And David struck them down from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man escaped, except four hundred young men who fled, riding off on camels.

¹⁸ So David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives.

¹⁹ Nothing was missing, young or old, son or daughter, or any of the plunder the Amalekites had taken. David brought everything back.

²⁰ And he took all the flocks and herds, which his men drove ahead of the other livestock, calling out, "This is David's plunder!"

²¹ When David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Brook of Besor, they came out to meet him and the troops with him. As David approached the men, he greeted them,

²² but all the wicked and worthless men among those who had gone with David said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered, except for each man's wife and children. They may take them and go."

²³ But David said, "My brothers, you must not do this with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and delivered into our hands the raiders who came against us.

²⁴ Who will listen to your proposal? The share of the one who went to battle will match the share of the one who stayed with the supplies. They will share alike."

²⁵ And so it has been from that day forward. David established this statute and ordinance for Israel to this very day.

²⁶ When David arrived in Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to his friends, the elders of Judah, saying, "Here is a gift for you from the plunder of the LORD's enemies."

²⁷ He sent gifts to those in Bethel, Ramoth Negev, and Jattir;

²⁸ to those in Aroer, Siphmoth, and Eshtemoa;

²⁹ to those in Racal and in the cities of the Jerahmeelites and Kenites;

³⁰ to those in Hormah, Bor-ashan, and Athach;

³¹ and to those in Hebron and in all the places where David and his men had roamed.

31

¹ Now the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before them, and many fell slain on Mount Gilboa.

² The Philistines hotly pursued Saul and his sons, and they killed Saul's sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua.

³ When the battle intensified against Saul, the archers overtook him and wounded him critically.

⁴ Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through with it, or these uncircumcised men will come and run me through and torture me!" But his armor-bearer was terrified and refused to do it. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it.

⁵ When his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his own sword and died with him.

⁶ So Saul, his three sons, his armor-bearer, and all his men died together that same day.

⁷ When the Israelites along the valley and those on the other side of the Jordan saw that the army of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their cities and ran away. So the Philistines came and occupied their cities.

⁸ The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.

⁹ They cut off Saul's head, stripped off his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news in the temples of their idols and among their people.

¹⁰ They put his armor in the temple of the Ash-toreths and hung his body on the wall of Beth-shan.

¹¹ When the people of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul,

¹² all their men of valor set out, journeyed all night, and retrieved the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth-shan. When they arrived at Jabesh, they burned the bodies there.

¹³ Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.

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