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 only one
portion,‡ though he loved her, for 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.

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* **1:1 1:1** By a different word division (see also 1 Chronicles 6:11 and 20) *from Ramathaim, a Zuphite* † **1:1 1:1** *Elihu* is also called *Eliab* and *Eliel*; see 1 Chronicles 6:12 and 19. ‡ **1:5 1:5** Meaning of Hebrew uncertain; or *a double portion* or *a choice portion*

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.

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§ **1:20 1:20** *Samuel* sounds like the Hebrew for *heard of God.*
* **1:22 1:22** DSS include *I will offer him as a Nazirite for all time.*
† **1:23 1:23** DSS, LXX, and Syriac *your word*

24 Once she had weaned him, Hannah took the
boy with her, along with three bulls,‡ 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."
And he 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 deliverance.
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,

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‡ **1:24 1:24** DSS, LXX, and Syriac *a three-year-old bull* § **1:24 1:24** *An ephah* is approximately 20 dry quarts or 22 liters (probably about 25.5 pounds or 11.6 kilograms of flour). * **1:28 1:28** One DSS manuscript *So they worshiped* * **2:1 2:1** Or *strength*; also in verse 10

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."

† **2:3 2:3** Qere; Ketiv *and actions are not weighed*

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 the men§ were
treating the LORD's offering with contempt.
18 Now Samuel was ministering before the
LORD—a boy wearing a linen ephod.

‡ **2:16 2:16** Qere; Ketiv *To him* § **2:17 2:17** DSS and LXX *they*

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 requested from 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

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* **2:20 2:20** DSS *in place of the one she dedicated to the LORD*
† **2:25 2:25** Or *the judges*

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 the 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 the dwelling place.*
Despite all that is good in Israel, no one in your
house will ever again reach old age.

‡ **2:29 2:29** Or *scorn* § **2:29 2:29** The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. * **2:32 2:32** The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

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 the increase of your
house‡ will die as mortals.§
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.

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† **2:33 2:33** LXX *his eyes will fail and his heart will grieve* ‡ **2:33 2:33** Or *All your descendants* § **2:33 2:33** Or *will die in the prime of life*; DSS and LXX *will die by the sword of men*

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 made themselves
contemptible* 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.

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* **3:13 3:13** LXX *blasphemed God*

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 he 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. “A god has
entered† their camp!” they said. “Woe to us, for
nothing like this has happened before.

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* **4:3 4:3** Or *it may go* † **4:7 4:7** Or *The gods have entered*

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 led‡ 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 Dagon.*

3 When the people of Ashdod got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on his

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‡ **4:18 4:18** Or *judged* or *governed* § **4:21 4:21** *Ichabod* means *no glory*. * **4:21 4:21** Or *gone into exile*; also in verse 22 * **5:2 5:2** Or *set it beside his statue*

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!"

† **5:6 5:6** LXX and Vulgate include *And rats appeared in their land, and death and destruction were throughout the city.*

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.

‡ **5:11 5:11** Or *he will not*

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

* **6:6 6:6** Or *make heavy*; similarly again in this verse

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, as far as the great meadow† on
which they placed the ark of the LORD. It
remains 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,
fifty thousand men,‡ and the people mourned

† **6:18 6:18** Hebrew *Abel-haggedolah*; some Hebrew manuscripts, LXX, and Targum *the large rock* ‡ **6:19 6:19** The numbers are difficult. A few late Hebrew manuscripts and Josephus *seventy men*; LXX *70 men and 50,000 men of the people*; Syriac and Arabic *70 men and 5,000 men*; alternately, possibly *70 men and 50 oxen*

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 Ashtoreths 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 Ashtoreths 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 led* 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.

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* **7:6 7:6** Or *judged* or *governed*; similarly in verses 15, 16, and 17 † **7:12 7:12** LXX and Syriac *Jeshanah* ‡ **7:12 7:12** *Ebenezer* means *stone of help*.

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 led Israel all the days of his life.
16 Every year he would go on a circuit from
Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah, leading Israel in all
these places.
17 Then he would return to Ramah because his
home was there, and there he led 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.

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* **8:1 8:1** Or *governors* or *leaders*; similarly in verses 2, 5, 6, and 20

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 male and female
slaves and your best young men† 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.

† **8:16 8:16** LXX *your best cattle*

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

* **9:8** **9:8** *A quarter shekel* is approximately 0.1 ounces or 2.85 grams of silver.

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

† **9:15 9:15** Literally *had uncovered the ear of Samuel*

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 Terebinth† 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.

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* **10:1 10:1** LXX *"Has not the LORD anointed you ruler over Israel? And you will rule over the LORD's people and save them from their enemies around them. This will be the sign to you that the LORD has appointed you to be leader over his inheritance.* † **10:3 10:3** Or *Oak* or *Great Tree* ‡ **10:5 10:5** Hebrew *Gibeath-Elohim*, meaning *the hill of God*

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?"

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§ **10:10 10:10** *Gibeah* means *the hill.*

"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?"

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* **10:21** **10:21** LXX includes *And he brought the family of the Matrites near, man by man.*

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

† **10:27 10:27** MT and LXX; one DSS manuscript includes *Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had viciously oppressed the people of Gad and Reuben, gouging out the right eye of each Israelite dwelling there. He would not allow anyone to rescue them, and there was no Israelite east of the Jordan whose right eye had not been gouged out. But 7,000 men had escaped from the Ammonites and settled in Jabesh-gilead.* * **11:1 11:1** DSS and LXX *About a month later Nahash*

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.

† **11:1 11:1** Forms of the Hebrew *berit* are translated in most passages as *covenant*. ‡ **11:8 11:8** DSS and LXX *70,000*

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 won a
victory 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.

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* **12:3 12:3** Hebrew *And I will restore it*; LXX *Testify against me, and I will restore it* † **12:6 12:6** LXX *The LORD is the witness who*
‡ **12:8 12:8** LXX includes *and the Egyptians oppressed them*

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,* Bedan,†
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

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§ **12:9 12:9** LXX *the army of Jabin king of Hazor* * **12:11 12:11** *Jerubbaal* is another name for *Gideon* and probably means *let Baal contend*; see Judges 6:32. † **12:11 12:11** LXX and Syriac *Barak* ‡ **12:11 12:11** LXX and Syriac *Samson*

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.

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§ **12:14 12:14** *then all will be well* is implied; Literally *If you fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice, and if you do not rebel against the command of the LORD, (then) both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God.* * **12:15 12:15** LXX *against your king*

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 … years old* when he became king,
and he reigned over Israel 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!"

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* **13:1 13:1** MT has no number (literally *a son of a year*); a number appears to be missing. A few late LXX manuscripts *thirty years old*; the verse is absent from most LXX manuscripts. † **13:1 13:1** Some propose *forty years* or *forty-two years*.

Then the people were summoned to join Saul at
Gilgal.
5 Now the Philistines assembled to fight
against Israel with thirty 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

‡ **13:5 13:5** Some LXX manuscripts and Syriac *three thousand*

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."

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§ **13:15 13:15** LXX *Then Samuel set out, and the rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the army; they went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.*

20 Instead, all the Israelites would go down to
the Philistines to sharpen their plowshares,
mattocks, axes, and plowshares.*
21 The charge was a pim† for sharpening a
plowshare or mattock, a three-pronged fork, or
an axe, and 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,

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* **13:20 13:20** MT (so *plowshare* appears twice in the Hebrew); LXX *sickles* † **13:21 13:21** *A pim* possibly refers to a polished stone weighing approximately 0.25 ounces or 7 grams found in excavations. This is equivalent to about two-thirds of a shekel and likely refers to the price charged by the Philistines for the services listed. ‡ **13:21 13:21** Meaning of several terms uncertain. Others read *a third of a shekel* for the fork and axe; the Hebrew states no unit. * **14:2 14:2** Or *around the rock of Rimmon* or *in the pomegranate cave*; see Judges 20:45, Judges 20:47, and Judges 21:13.

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.)*

† **14:14 14:14** Hebrew *half a yoke.* A *yoke* was the amount of land plowed by a pair of yoked oxen in one day. ‡ **14:15 14:15** Or *and a terrible panic spread* § **14:16 14:16** Or *melting away and going here and there* * **14:18 14:18** LXX *“Bring the ephod.” For at that time he wore the ephod before 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

† **14:27 14:27** Qere; Ketiv *and his eyes saw strength was renewed*; similarly in verse 29
‡ **14:27 14:27** Or *his*
§ **14:32 14:32** Qere; Ketiv *did*

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,
"Give a perfect lot."* And Jonathan and Saul

* **14:41 14:41** LXX and Vulgate *"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."*

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.

† **14:47 14:47** DSS and LXX *king* ‡ **14:47 14:47** Or *he inflicted punishment on them*; LXX *he was victorious*

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.

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* **15:3 15:3** Forms of the Hebrew *cherem* refer to the giving over of things or persons to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; also in verses 8, 9, 15, 18, 20, and 21.

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 grown bulls†
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.”

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† **15:9 15:9** Or *the fat calves*

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 cautiously,‡ 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.’

‡ **15:32** **15:32** Or *cheerfully* or *in chains*; see DSS and LXX.
§ **15:32** **15:32** DSS and LXX *“Surely this is the bitterness of death.”*

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."

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* **16:9 16:9** *Shammah* is a variant of *Shimeah*, *Shimea*, and *Shimei*; see 2 Samuel 13:3, 2 Samuel 21:21, and 1 Chronicles 2:13.

"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 harmful spirit† from the LORD began
to torment him.
15 Saul's servants said to him, "Surely a
harmful spirit 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 harmful spirit 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."

† **16:14 16:14** Or *a spirit of distress*; similarly in verses 15, 16, and 23

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 harmful spirit 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,*

* **17:4 17:4** Goliath was approximately 9 feet 9 inches or 297 centimeters tall; LXX, DSS, and Josephus *four cubits and a span in height* (approximately 6 feet 9 inches or 206 centimeters tall).

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, advanced in age among men.*
13 The three older sons of Jesse had followed
Saul into battle: The firstborn was Eliab, the

† **17:5 17:5** *5,000 shekels* is approximately 125.6 pounds or 57 kilograms. ‡ **17:7 17:7** Qere; Ketiv *arrow* § **17:7 17:7** *600 shekels* is approximately 15.1 pounds or 6.8 kilograms. * **17:12 17:12** Literally *had come among men*; LXX and Syriac *well along in years*

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 some token
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.

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† **17:17 17:17** *An ephah* is approximately 20 dry quarts or 22 liters of roasted grain. ‡ **17:18 17:18** Or *an assurance from them* or *some pledge from them*

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

§ **17:23 17:23** Qere; Ketiv *caves*

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 the valley* 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?"

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* **17:52 17:52** MT *Gai*, that is, *the valley*; LXX *Gath*

“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 harmful spirit† 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.

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* **18:6 18:6** Possibly *three-stringed instruments* or *cymbals* or *lutes* or *lyres* † **18:10 18:10** Or *a spirit of distress*

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 But 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

‡ **18:19 18:19** Or *So when it was time*

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 victory 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 harmful spirit* 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.

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* **19:9 19:9** Or *a spirit of distress*

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
he 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.

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† **19:13 19:13** Or *a household god*; Hebrew *teraphim*; also in verse 16 ‡ **19:20 19:20** LXX and Syriac *they saw*

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.”

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* **20:2 20:2** Qere; Ketiv *if my father had done anything*

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

† **20:5 20:5** That is, the New Moon feast; also in verses 18, 24, and 27

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.

‡ **20:14 20:14** Forms of the Hebrew *chesed* are translated here and in most cases throughout the Scriptures as *loving devotion*; the range of meaning includes *love*, *goodness*, *kindness*, *faithfulness*, and *mercy*, as well as *loyalty to a covenant*. § **20:19 20:19** *Ezel* means *departure*.

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.
Jonathan arose, and Abner sat down by Saul’s
side,* 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

* **20:25 20:25** LXX *by the wall, opposite Jonathan and beside Abner,*

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
arrows† 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."

† **20:38 20:38** Qere; Ketiv *arrow*

41 When the young man had gone, David got
up from the south side,‡ 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.’ ”

21

1 Then David got up and departed, and
Jonathan went back into the city.
2 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?”
3 “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.
4 Now then, what do you have on hand? Give
me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be
found.”
5 “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.”
6 David answered, “Women have indeed been
kept from us, as is usual when I set out. And the

‡ **20:41 20:41** LXX *from beside the stone*

bodies of the young men are holy even on
common missions. How much more so today!"
7 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.
8 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.
9 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."
10 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."
11 That day David fled from Saul and went to
Achish king of Gath.
12 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'?"
13 Now David took these words to heart and
was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath.
14 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.
15 Then Achish said to his servants, “Look, you
can see that the man is insane! Why have you
brought him to me?
16 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 come out* to be with you
until I learn what God will do for me.”
4 So he led them before 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

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* **22:3 22:3** Syriac and Vulgate *stay* † **22:4 22:4** Targum and Syriac *left them with*

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, who has access to your private
council‡ and is 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

‡ **22:14 22:14** The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain; LXX *commander of all your orders* § **22:17 22:17** Qere; Ketiv *him*

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

* **23:11 23:11** Aleppo and Leningrad codices include this question; some manuscripts omit it.

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.†

24

1 And David went up from there and lived in
the strongholds of En-gedi.
2 After Saul had returned from pursuing the
Philistines, he was told, "David is in the
wilderness of En-gedi."
3 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.
4 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.
5 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.

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† **23:28 23:28** *Sela-hammahlekoth* means *Rock of Escape*. * **24:4 24:4** Literally *cover his feet*, a euphemism for relieving oneself
† **24:5 24:5** Qere; Ketiv *enemies*

6 Afterward, David's conscience was stricken
because he had cut off the corner of Saul's robe.
7 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."
8 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.
9 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
10 and said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the
words of men who say, 'Look, David intends to
harm you'?
11 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.'
12 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.
13 May the LORD judge between you and me,
and may the LORD take vengeance on you, but
my hand will never be against you.
14 As the old proverb says, 'Wickedness
proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand will
never be against you.

15 Against whom has the king of Israel come
out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A
flea?
16 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."
17 When David had finished saying these
things, Saul called back, "Is that your voice,
David my son?"
Then Saul wept aloud
18 and said to David, "You are more righteous
than I, for you have rewarded me with good,
though I have rewarded you with evil.
19 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.
20 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.
21 Now I know for sure that you will be king
and that the kingdom of Israel will be
established in your hands.
22 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."
23 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.

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* **25:1 25:1** Hebrew and some LXX manuscripts; other LXX manuscripts *Maon* † **25:3 25:3** Qere; Ketiv *according to his heart*

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

‡ **25:18 25:18** *5 seahs* is approximately 33 dry quarts or 36.5 liters of roasted grain.

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 the enemies of 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

§ **25:22 25:22** Some LXX manuscripts *May God punish David*
* **25:22 25:22** Literally *one who urinates against a wall* † **25:25 25:25** *Nabal* means *fool.*

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

‡ **25:29 25:29** Literally *fling away the souls of your enemies as from the pocket of a sling*

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."

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§ **25:34 25:34** Literally *one who urinates against a wall*

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.

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* **25:44 25:44** *Palti* is a variant of *Paltiel*; see 2 Samuel 3:15.

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 Maoch,* 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.

* **27:2 27:2** *Maoch* is a variant of *Maacah*; see 1 Kings 2:39.

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 Gizrites,† 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.”

† **27:8 27:8** Qere; Ketiv *Girzites*

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.”

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* **28:6 28:6** Literally *Lights*

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 gods† 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?

† **28:13 28:13** Or *a god, a divine being*, or *a spirit*; the verb *coming up* is plural.

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* 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.

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* **30:2 30:2** LXX adds *and all*

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 me,† 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

† **30:22 30:22** Some Hebrew manuscripts and ancient versions *with us*

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
Ashtoreths 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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