

Read the Bible in A Year: Chronological

Readings for April 7-12, 2020

Ruth 1-4; 1 Samuel 1-14; 1 Chronicles 2:9-55; 4:1-23; 9:35-39



NAOMI AND HER DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW.

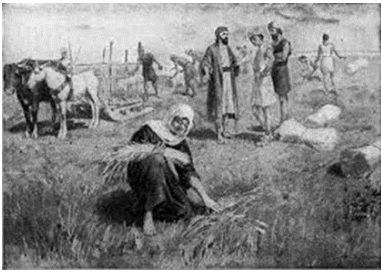
The Story of Ruth During the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. A man with his wife and two sons went from Bethlehem of Judah to dwell in the territory of Moab. The name of that man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They entered the territory of Moab and settled there. But Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died. Then only she was left, along with her two sons. They took wives for themselves, Moabite women; the name of the first was Orpah and the name of the second was Ruth. And they lived there for about ten years. But both of the sons, Mahlon and Chilion, also died. Only the woman was left, without her two children and without her husband. Then she arose along with her daughters-in-law to return from the field of Moab,

because while in the territory of Moab she had heard that the LORD had paid attention to his people by providing food for them. She left the place where she had been, and her two daughters-in-law went with her. They went along the road to return to the land of Judah.

Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, "Go, turn back, each of you to the household of your mother. May the LORD deal faithfully with you, just as you have done with the dead and with me. May the LORD provide for you so that you may find security, each woman in the household of her husband." Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. But they replied to her, "No, instead we will return with you, to your people." Naomi replied, "Turn back, my daughters. Why would you go with me? Will there again be sons in my womb, that they would be husbands for you? Turn back, my daughters. Go. I am too old for a husband. If I were to say that I have hope, even if I had a husband tonight, and even more, if I were to bear sons— would you wait until they grew up? Would you refrain from having a husband? No, my daughters. This is more bitter for me than for you, since the LORD's will has come out against me." Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth stayed with her. Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law is returning to her people and to her gods. Turn back after your sister-in-law." But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to abandon you, to turn back from following after you. Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD do this to me and more so if even death separates me from you." When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her about it.

So both of them went along until they arrived at Bethlehem. When they arrived at Bethlehem, the whole town was excited on account of them, and the women of the town asked, "Can this be Naomi?" She replied to them, "Don't call me Naomi, but call me Mara, for the Almighty has made me very bitter. I went away full, but the LORD has returned me empty. Why would you call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has deemed me guilty?" Thus Naomi returned. And Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, returned with her from the territory of Moab. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest

Now Naomi had a respected relative, a man of worth, through her husband from the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz. Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field so that I may glean among the ears of grain behind someone in whose eyes I might find favor." Naomi replied to her, "Go, my daughter." So she went; she arrived, and she gleaned in the field behind the harvesters. By chance, it happened to be the portion of the field that belonged to Boaz, who was from the family of Elimelech.



Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem. He said to the harvesters, “May the LORD be with you.” And they said to him, “May the LORD bless you.” Boaz said to his young man, the one who was overseeing the harvesters, “To whom does this young woman belong?” The young man who was overseeing the harvesters answered, “She’s a young Moabite woman, the one who returned with Naomi from the territory of Moab. She said, ‘Please let me glean so that I might gather up grain from among the bundles behind the harvesters.’ She arrived and has been on her feet from the morning until now, and has sat down for only a moment.”

Boaz said to Ruth, “Haven’t you understood, my daughter? Don’t go glean in another field; don’t go anywhere else. Instead, stay here with my young women. Keep your eyes on the field that they are harvesting and go along after them. I’ve ordered the young men not to assault you. Whenever you are thirsty, go to the jugs and drink from what the young men have filled.” Then she bowed down, face to the ground, and replied to him, “How is it that I’ve found favor in your eyes, that you notice me? I’m an immigrant.” Boaz responded to her, “Everything that you did for your mother-in-law after your husband’s death has been reported fully to me: how you left behind your father, your mother, and the land of your birth, and came to a people you hadn’t known beforehand. May the LORD reward you for your deed. May you receive a rich reward from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you’ve come to seek refuge.” She said, “May I continue to find favor in your eyes, sir, because you’ve comforted me and because you’ve spoken kindly to your female servant—even though I’m not one of your female servants.” At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come over here, eat some of the bread, and dip your piece in the vinegar.” She sat alongside the harvesters, and he served roasted grain to her. She ate, was satisfied, and had leftovers. Then she got up to glean.

Boaz ordered his young men, “Let her glean between the bundles, and don’t humiliate her. Also, pull out some from the bales for her and leave them behind for her to glean. And don’t scold her.” So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed what she had gleaned; it was about an ephah of barley. She picked it up and went into town. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She brought out what she had left over after eating her fill and gave it to her. Her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? May the one who noticed you be blessed.” She told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, “The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz.” Naomi replied to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed by the LORD, who hasn’t abandoned his faithfulness with the living or with the dead.” Naomi said to her, “The man is one of our close relatives; he’s one of our redeemers.” Ruth the Moabite replied, “Furthermore, he said to me, ‘Stay with my workers until they’ve finished all of my harvest.’” Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It’s good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, so that men don’t assault you in another field.” Thus she stayed with Boaz’s young women, gleaning until the completion of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shouldn’t I seek security for you, so that things might go well for you? Now isn’t Boaz, whose young women you were with, our relative? Tonight, he will be winnowing barley at the threshing floor. You should bathe, put on some perfume, wear nice clothes, and then go down to the threshing floor. Don’t make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, notice the place where he is lying. Then go, uncover his feet, and lie down. And he will tell you what to do.” Ruth replied to her, “I’ll do everything you are telling me.”



So she went down to the threshing floor, and she did everything just as her mother-in-law had ordered. Boaz ate and drank, and he was in a good mood. He went over to lie down by the edge of the grain pile. Then she quietly approached, uncovered his legs, and lay down. During the middle of the night, the man shuddered and turned over—and there was a woman lying at his feet. “Who are you?” he asked. She replied, “I’m Ruth your servant. Spread out your robe over your servant, because you are a redeemer.” He said, “May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter! You have acted even more faithfully than you did at first. You haven’t gone after rich or poor young men. And now, my

daughter, don’t be afraid. I’ll do for you everything you are asking. Indeed, my people—all who are at the gate—know that you are a woman of worth. Now, although it’s certainly true that I’m a redeemer, there’s a redeemer who is a closer relative than I am. Stay the night. And in the morning, if he’ll redeem you—good, let him redeem. But if he doesn’t want

to redeem you, then—as the LORD lives—I myself will redeem you. Lie down until the morning.” So she lay at his feet until morning. Then she got up before one person could recognize another, for he had said, “No one should know that the woman came to the threshing floor.” He said, “Bring the cloak that you have on and hold it out.” She held it out, and he measured out six measures of barley and placed it upon her. Then she went into town.

She came to her mother-in-law, who said, “How are you, my daughter?” So Ruth told her everything the man had done for her. She said, “He gave me these six measures of barley, for he said to me, ‘Don’t go away empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’” “Sit tight, my daughter,” Naomi replied, “until you know how it turns out. The man won’t rest until he resolves the matter today.”

Meanwhile, Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. Just then, the redeemer about whom Boaz had spoken was passing by. He said, “Sir, come over here and sit down.” So he turned aside and sat down. Then he took ten men from the town’s elders and said, “Sit down here.” And they sat down. Boaz said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has returned from the field of Moab, is selling the portion of the field that belonged to our brother Elimelech. I thought that I should let you know and say, ‘Buy it, in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.’ If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you won’t redeem it, tell me so that I may know. There isn’t anyone to redeem it except you, and I’m next in line after you.” He replied, “I will redeem it.”

Then Boaz said, “On the day when you buy the field from Naomi, you also buy Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the dead man, in order to preserve the dead man’s name for his inheritance.” But the redeemer replied, “Then I can’t redeem it for myself, without risking damage to my own inheritance. Redeem it for yourself. You can have my right of redemption, because I’m unable to act as redeemer.” In Israel, in former times, this was the practice regarding redemption and exchange to confirm any such matter: a man would take off his sandal and give it to the other person. This was the process of making a transaction binding in Israel. Then the redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself,” and he took off his sandal.

Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I’ve bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. And also Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, I’ve bought to be my wife, to preserve the dead man’s name for his inheritance so that the name of the dead man might not be cut off from his brothers or from the gate of his hometown—today you are witnesses.” Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD grant that the woman who is coming into your household be like Rachel and like Leah, both of whom built up the house of Israel. May you be fertile in Ephrathah and may you preserve a name in Bethlehem. And may your household be like the household of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah—through the children that the LORD will give you from this young woman.”

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. He was intimate with her, the LORD let her become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son. The women said to Naomi, “May the LORD be blessed, who today hasn’t left you without a redeemer. May his name be proclaimed in Israel. He will restore your life and sustain you in your old age. Your daughter-in-law who loves you has given birth to him. She’s better for you than seven sons.” Naomi took the child and held him to her breast, and she became his guardian. The neighborhood women gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They called his name Obed. He became Jesse’s father and David’s grandfather.

This is the family tree of Perez: Perez had Hezron, Hezron had Ram, Ram had Amminadab, Amminadab had Nahshon, Nahshon had Salmon, Salmon had Boaz, Boaz had Obed, Obed had Jesse, and Jesse had David.



1 Chronicles 2:9-55 and 4:1-23 – various family trees are provided. You can pretty much skim this- the point for us to note is how detailed family records were and how much one’s identity was about their lineage. There is one section in bold for you that you may want to notice- if you remember the Prayer of Jabez that was so popular several years ago...

Hezron’s family, who were born to him: Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai. Ram was the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab was the father of Nahshon, tribal chief of the Judeans. Nahshon was the father of Salma, Salma was the father of Boaz, Boaz was the father of Obed, and Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the

father of Eliab his oldest son, Abinadab his second, Shimea his third, Nethanel his fourth, Raddai his fifth, Ozem his sixth, and David his seventh. Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. Zeruiah's family: Abishai, Joab, and Asahel—three in all. Abigail gave birth to Amasa, whose father was Jether the Ishmaelite.

Caleb, Hezron's son, had children with his wife Azubah, and with Jerioth. These were her sons: Jeshur, Shobab, and Ardon. After Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath, who gave birth to Hur for him. Hur was the father of Uri, and Uri was the father of Bezalel. Later, Hezron had sexual relations with the daughter of Machir, Gilead's father, whom he married when he was 60 years old, and she gave birth to Segub for him. Segub was the father of Jair, who owned twenty-three towns in the land of Gilead, but Geshur and Aram took Havvoth-jair from them, as well as Kenath and its villages, sixty towns. All these were descendants of Machir, Gilead's father. After Hezron's death, Caleb went to Ephrath. Abijah, Hezron's wife, bore him Ashhur, Tekoa's father.

The family of Jerahmeel, Hezron's oldest son: Ram his oldest, Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. Jerahmeel had another wife named Atarah; she was the mother of Onam. The family of Ram, Jerahmeel's oldest son: Maaz, Jamin, and Eker. Onam's family: Shammai and Jada. Shammai's family: Nadab and Abishur. Abishur's wife's name was Abihail, and she gave birth to Ahban and Molid for him. Nadab's family: Seled and Appaim, but Seled died without children. Appaim's family: Ishi Ishi's family: Sheshan. Sheshan's family: Ahlai. The family of Jada, Shammai's brother: Jether and Jonathan, but Jether died without children. Jonathan's family: Peleth and Zaza. These were Jerahmeel's descendants. Sheshan had no sons, only daughters; but Sheshan had an Egyptian servant whose name was Jarha. Sheshan gave his daughter in marriage to Jarha his servant, and she gave birth to Attai for him. Attai was the father of Nathan, Nathan was the father of Zabad, Zabad was the father of Ephlal, Ephlal was the father of Obed, Obed was the father of Jehu, Jehu was the father of Azariah, Azariah was the father of Helez, Helez was the father of Eleasah, Eleasah was the father of Sismai, Sismai was the father of Shallum, Shallum was the father of Jekamiah, and Jekamiah was the father of Elishama.

The family of Caleb, Jerahmeel's brother: Mesha his oldest son and Ziph's father; and his second son Mareshah, Hebron's father. Hebron's family: Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. Shema was the father of Raham, Jorkeam's father; and Rekem was the father of Shammai. Shammai's son: Maon; Maon was Beth-zur's father. Ephah, Caleb's secondary wife, gave birth to Haran, Moza, and Gazez. Haran was the father of Gazez. Jahdai's family: Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph. Maacah, Caleb's secondary wife, gave birth to Sheber and Tirhanah. She also gave birth to Shaaph, Madmannah's father; and to Sheva, Machbenah and Gibeab's father. Caleb's daughter was Achsah. These were Caleb's descendants.

The family of Hur, Ephrathah's oldest son: Shobal, Kiriath-jearim's father; Salma, Bethlehem's father; and Hareph, Bethgader's father. Shobal, Kiriath-jearim's father, had a family: Haroeh, and the ancestor of half of the Menuhoth. Kiriath-jearim's clans: the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites, and the Mishraitites. From these came the Zorathites and the Eshtaolites. The family of Salma, Bethlehem's father: the Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joab, half of the Manahathites, and the Zorites. The clans of the scribes who lived at Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and the Sucathites. They were Kenites who descended from Hammath, Beth-rechab's father.

This was Etam's family:^[b] Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash. Their sister's name was Hazzelelponi. Penuel was Gedor's father, and Ezer was Hushah's father. This was the family of Hur the oldest son of Ephrathah, Bethlehem's father: Ashhur, Tekoa's father, had two wives, Helah and Naarah. Naarah gave birth to Ahuzzam, Hopher, Temeni, and Haahashtari for him. This was Naarah's family. Helah's family: Zereth, Zohar, and Ethnan. Koz was the father of Anub, Hazzobebah, and the clans of Aharhel, Harum's son.

Jabez was more honored than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, "I bore him in pain." Jabez called on Israel's God: "If only you would greatly bless me and increase my territory. May your power go with me to keep me from trouble, so as not to cause me pain." And God granted his request.

Chelub, Shuhah's brother, was the father of Mehir, who was Eshton's father. Eshton was the father of Beth-rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah, Ir-nahash's father. These are the men of Rechab. Kenaz's family: Othniel and Seraiah. Othniel's family: Hathath and Meonothai. Meonothai was the father of Ophrah. Seraiah was the father of Joab the father of Geharashim, so-called because they were skilled workers.

The family of Caleb, Jephunneh's son: Iru, Elah, and Naam. This was Kenaz's family. Jehallelel's family: Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel. Ezra's family: Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. Jether was the father of^[1] Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah, Eshtemoa's father. His Judean wife gave birth to Jered, Gedor's father; Heber, Soco's father; and Jekuthiel, Zanoah's father. This is the family of Bithiah, Pharaoh's daughter, whom Mered married. The family of his Judean wife, the sister of Naham, Keilah's father the Garmite and Eshtemoa the Maacathite. Shimon's family: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon. Ishi's family: Zoheth and Ben-zoheth.

Now we move into the stories of Samuel and Saul...



Now there was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the highlands of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah. He was from the tribe of Ephraim, and he was the son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph. Elkanah had two wives, one named Hannah and the other named Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah didn't. Every year this man would leave his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of heavenly forces in Shiloh, where Eli's two sons Hophni and Phinehas were the LORD's priests. Whenever he sacrificed, Elkanah would give parts of the sacrifice to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. But he would give only one part of it to Hannah, though he loved her, because the LORD had kept her from conceiving. And because the LORD had kept Hannah from conceiving, her rival would make fun of her mercilessly, just to bother her. So that is what took place year after year. Whenever Hannah went to the Lord's house, Peninnah would make fun of her. Then she would cry and wouldn't eat anything. "Hannah, why are you crying?" her husband Elkanah would say to her. "Why won't you eat? Why are you so sad? Aren't I worth more to you than ten sons?"

One time, after eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah got up and presented herself before the LORD. (Now Eli the priest was sitting in the chair by the doorpost of the LORD's temple.) Hannah was very upset and couldn't stop crying as she prayed to the LORD. Then she made this promise: "LORD of heavenly forces, just look at your servant's pain and remember me! Don't forget your servant! Give her a boy! Then I'll give him to the LORD for his entire life. No razor will ever touch his head." As she kept praying before the LORD, Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah was praying in her heart; her lips were moving, but her voice was silent, so Eli thought she was drunk. "How long will you act like a drunk? Sober up!" Eli told her. "No sir!" Hannah replied. "I'm just a very sad woman. I haven't had any wine or beer but have been pouring out my heart to the LORD. Don't think your servant is some good-for-nothing woman. This whole time I've been praying out of my great worry and trouble!" Eli responded, "Then go in peace. And may the God of Israel give you what you've asked from him." "Please think well of me, your servant," Hannah said. Then the woman went on her way, ate some food, and wasn't sad any longer. They got up early the next morning and worshipped the LORD. Then they went back home to Ramah. Elkanah had sex with his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. So in the course of time, Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, which means "I asked the LORD for him."

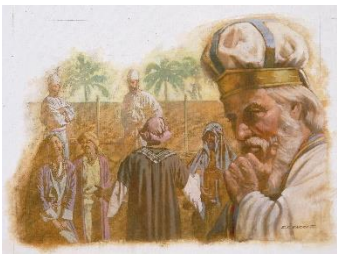


When Elkanah and all his household went up to make the annual sacrifice and keep his solemn promise, Hannah didn't go. "I'll bring the boy when he is weaned," she told her husband, "so he can be presented to the LORD and stay there permanently. I will offer him as a nazirite forever." "Do what seems best to you," said her husband Elkanah. "Stay here until you've weaned him. But may the LORD bring to pass what you've promised." So the woman stayed home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

When he had been weaned and was still very young, Hannah took him, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a jar of wine, and brought him to the LORD's house at Shiloh. They slaughtered the bull, then brought the boy to Eli. "Excuse me, sir!" Hannah said. "As surely as you live, sir, I am the woman who stood here next to you, praying to the LORD. I prayed for this boy, and the LORD gave me what I asked from him. So now I give this boy back to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is given to the LORD." Then they worshipped there before the LORD.

Then Hannah prayed: “My heart rejoices in the LORD. My strength rises up in the LORD! My mouth mocks my enemies because I rejoice in your deliverance! No one is holy like the LORD— no, no one except you! There is no rock like our God! Don’t go on and on, talking so proudly, spouting arrogance from your mouth, because the LORD is the God who knows, and he weighs every act. The bows of mighty warriors are shattered, but those who were stumbling now dress themselves in power! Those who were filled full now sell themselves for bread, but the ones who were starving are now fat from food! The woman who was barren has birthed seven children, but the mother with many sons has lost them all! The LORD! He brings death, gives life, takes down to the grave, and raises up! The LORD! He makes poor, gives wealth, brings low, but also lifts up high! God raises the poor from the dust, lifts up the needy from the garbage pile. God sits them with officials, gives them the seat of honor! The pillars of the earth belong to the LORD; he set the world on top of them! God guards the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked die in darkness because no one succeeds by strength alone! The LORD! His enemies are terrified! God thunders against them from heaven! The LORD! He judges the far corners of the earth! May God give strength to his king and raise high the strength of his anointed one.”

Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy served the LORD under Eli the priest.



Now Eli’s sons were despicable men who didn’t know the LORD. This was how the priest was supposed to act with the people: Whenever anyone made a sacrifice, while the meat was boiling, the priest’s assistant would come with a three-pronged fork in hand. He would thrust it into the cauldron or the pot. Whatever the fork brought up, the priest would take for himself. This is how it was done for all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. But with Eli’s sons, even before the fat was burned, the priest’s assistant would come and say to the person offering the sacrifice, “Give the priest some meat to roast. He won’t accept boiled meat from you.” If anyone said, “Let the fat be burned off first, as usual, then take whatever you like for yourself,” the assistant would reply, “No, hand it over now. If not, I’ll take it by force.” The sin of these priestly assistants was very serious in the LORD’s sight because they were disrespecting the Lord’s own offering.

Now Samuel was serving the LORD. He was a young boy, clothed in a linen priestly vest. His mother would make a small robe for him and take it to him every year when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife: “May the LORD replace the child of this woman that you gave back to the LORD.” Then they would return home. The LORD paid attention to Hannah, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the LORD’s service.

Eli was very old, but he heard everything his sons were doing to the Israelites, and how they had sex with the women who served at the meeting tent’s entrance. Eli said to his sons, “Why are you doing these terrible things that I’m hearing about from everybody? No, my sons. Don’t do this. The report I hear spreading among God’s people isn’t good. If someone sins against someone else, God can intercede; but if someone sins against the LORD, who will intercede then?” But they wouldn’t obey their father because the LORD wanted to kill them. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel kept growing up and was more and more liked by both the LORD and the people.

Now a man of God came to Eli and said, “This is what the LORD says: I revealed myself very clearly to your father’s household when they were slaves^[u] in Egypt to the house of Pharaoh. I chose your father from all of Israel’s tribes to be my priest, to go up onto my altar, to burn incense, and to wear the priestly vest in my presence. I also gave all of the Israelites’ food offerings to your father’s household. Why then do you kick my sacrifices and my offerings—the very ones I commanded for my dwelling place? Why do you respect your sons more than me, getting fat off the best parts of every offering from my people Israel? Because of all that, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: I had promised that your household and your father’s household would serve me forever. But now—this is what the LORD declares: I’ll do no such thing! No. I honor those who honor me, and whoever despises me will be cursed. The days are coming soon when I will eliminate both your children and the children of your father’s household. There won’t be an old person left in your family tree. You’ll see trouble in my dwelling place, though all will go well for Israel. But there will never be an old person in your family tree. One of your descendants whom I don’t eliminate from serving at my altar will cry his eyes out and be full of grief. Any descendants in your household will die by the sword. And what happens to your two sons Hophni and Phinehas will be a sign for you: they will both die on the same day. Then I will establish for myself a trustworthy priest who will act in accordance with my thoughts and desires. I will build a trustworthy household for him, and he will serve

before my anointed one forever. Anyone left from your household will come and beg him for a bit of silver or a loaf of bread, saying: ‘Please appoint me to some priestly duty so I can have a scrap of bread to eat.’”



Now the boy Samuel was serving the LORD under Eli. The LORD’s word was rare at that time, and visions weren’t widely known. One day Eli, whose eyes had grown so weak he was unable to see, was lying down in his room. God’s lamp hadn’t gone out yet, and Samuel was lying down in the LORD’s temple, where God’s chest was. The LORD called to Samuel. “I’m here,” he said. Samuel hurried to Eli and said, “I’m here. You called me?” “I didn’t call you,” Eli replied. “Go lie down.” So he did. Again the LORD called Samuel, so Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said, “I’m here. You called me?” “I didn’t call, my son,” Eli replied. “Go and lie down.” (Now Samuel didn’t yet know the LORD, and the LORD’s word hadn’t yet been revealed to him.) A third time the LORD called Samuel. He got up, went to Eli, and said, “I’m here. You called me?” Then Eli realized that it was the LORD who was calling the boy. So Eli said to Samuel, “Go and lie down. If he calls you, say, ‘Speak, LORD. Your servant is listening.’”

So Samuel went and lay down where he’d been. Then the LORD came and stood there, calling just as before, “Samuel, Samuel!” Samuel said, “Speak. Your servant is listening.” The LORD said to Samuel, “I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of all who hear it tingle! On that day, I will bring to pass against Eli everything I said about his household—every last bit of it! I told him that I would punish his family forever because of the wrongdoing he knew about—how his sons were cursing God, but he wouldn’t stop them. Because of that I swore about Eli’s household that his family’s wrongdoing will never be reconciled by sacrifice or by offering.”

Samuel lay there until morning, then opened the doors of the LORD’s house. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel, saying: “Samuel, my son!” “I’m here,” Samuel said. “What did he say to you?” Eli asked. “Don’t hide anything from me. May God deal harshly with you and worse still if you hide from me a single word from everything he said to you.” So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. “He is the LORD,” Eli said. “He will do as he pleases.”

So Samuel grew up, and the LORD was with him, not allowing any of his words to fail. All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was trustworthy as the LORD’s prophet. The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh because the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh through the LORD’s own word. And Samuel’s word went out to all Israel.



In those days the Philistines gathered for war against Israel, so Israel went out to engage the Philistines in war. Israel camped at Ebenezer, while the Philistines camped at Aphek. The Philistines readied themselves to fight Israel. When the battle was joined, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield. When the troops returned to the camp, Israel’s elders said, “Why did the LORD defeat us today before the Philistines? Let’s bring the chest containing the LORD’s covenant from Shiloh so it can go with us and save us from our enemies’ power.” So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the chest containing the covenant of the LORD of heavenly forces, who sits enthroned on the winged heavenly creatures. Eli’s two sons Hophni and Phinehas were there with the chest containing God’s covenant.

When the chest containing the LORD’s covenant entered the camp, all Israel let out such a loud shout that the ground shook. When the Philistines heard the sound of that shout, they asked, “What is that loud shouting in the Hebrew camp about?” When they learned that the LORD’s chest had come into the camp, the Philistines were afraid and said, “A god has come into that camp! We’re doomed,” they said, “because nothing like this has ever happened before. We’re doomed! Who will deliver us from the grip of these powerful deities? They are the same gods who struck the Egyptians in the desert with every kind of wound. Pull yourselves together and act like men, Philistines! Otherwise, you’ll serve the Hebrews like they’ve been serving you. Act like men and fight!” So the Philistines fought. Israel was defeated, and everyone fled to their homes. It was a massive defeat: thirty thousand Israelite foot soldiers fell, God’s chest was taken, and Eli’s two sons Hophni and Phinehas died.

That very day, a Benjaminite ran from the battle to Shiloh. His clothes were torn, and dirt was on his head. When he got there, Eli was sitting in a chair beside the road, waiting because he was nervous about God’s chest. The man arrived and gave the news to the city, and the whole city cried out. Eli heard the sound of the cry and said, “What’s all this noise

about?" The man hurriedly went and told Eli the news. (Now Eli was 98 years old, and his eyes stared straight ahead, unable to see.) The man told Eli, "I'm the one who just came from the battle. I fled from the battle today." "What's the report, my son?" Eli asked. The messenger answered, "Israel has fled from the Philistines. The army has suffered a massive defeat. Also, your own two sons Hophni and Phinehas have died, and God's chest has been taken!" At the mention of God's chest, Eli fell backward off the chair beside the gate. His neck broke, and he died because he was an old man and overweight. Eli had judged Israel for forty years.

Now Eli's daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was pregnant and about to give birth. When she heard the news that God's chest had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she doubled over and gave birth because her labor pains overwhelmed her. As she was about to die, the women standing by helping her said, "Don't be afraid. You've given birth to a son!" But she didn't answer or pay them any attention. She named the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has left Israel," referring to the capture of God's chest and the death of her father-in-law and her husband. "The glory has left Israel because God's chest has been taken," she said.



After the Philistines took God's chest, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. Then the Philistines took God's chest and brought it into Dagon's temple and set it next to Dagon. But when the citizens of Ashdod got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen face down on the ground before the LORD's chest! So they took Dagon and set him back up where he belonged. But when they got up early the next morning, there was Dagon again, fallen face down on the ground before the LORD's chest—and this time Dagon's head along with both his hands were cut off and lying on the doorstep! Only Dagon's body was left intact. That's why to this day Dagon's

priests or anyone else who enters his temple in Ashdod doesn't step on the threshold. The LORD's hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod: God terrified them and struck them in Ashdod and its surroundings with tumors. When Ashdod's inhabitants saw what was happening, they said, "The chest of Israel's God must not stay here with us because his hand is hard against us and against our god Dagon." So they summoned all the Philistine rulers to a meeting and asked, "What should we do with the chest of Israel's God?" The people of Gath said, "Let the chest of Israel's God be moved to us." So they moved the chest of Israel's God to Gath. But once they moved it, the LORD's hand came against the city, causing a huge panic. God struck the city's inhabitants, both young and old, and tumors broke out on them.

Then they sent God's chest to Ekron, but as soon as God's chest entered Ekron, the inhabitants cried out, "Why have you moved the chest of Israel's God to us? In order to kill us and our people?" So they summoned all the Philistine rulers to a meeting and said, "Send the chest of Israel's God away! Let it go back to its own home so it doesn't kill us and our people," because there was a deadly panic throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there. The people who didn't die were struck with tumors, and the screams of the city went all the way up to heaven.

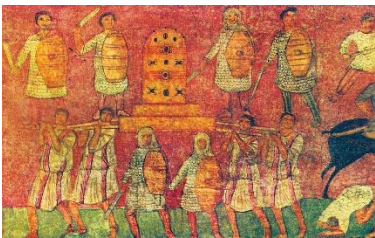
The LORD's chest was in Philistine territory for seven months. The Philistines called for the priests and the diviners. "What should we do with the LORD's chest?" they asked. "Tell us how we should send it back to its own home." They replied, "If you are returning the chest of Israel's God, don't send it back empty, but be sure to return a guilt offering to him. Then you will be healed, and it will become clear to you why God's hand hasn't left you alone." "What compensation offering should we return to him?" they asked. The priests and diviners replied: "Five gold tumors^[a] and five gold mice, matching the number of the Philistine rulers, because the same plague came on all of you and your rulers. You must make images of your tumors and the mice that have devastated the land. Honor Israel's God. Perhaps he will lighten the weight of his hand on you, your gods, and your land. Why be stubborn like the Egyptians and Pharaoh? After God had dealt harshly with them, didn't they send the Israelites on their way? So get a new cart ready along with two nursing cows that have never been yoked before. Harness the cows to the cart, but take any of their calves that are following back home. Next, take the LORD's chest and put it in the cart. Set the gold items that you are giving God as a compensation offering in a box next to the chest. Then send it on its way. Then watch what happens: If the cart goes up the road to its own territory toward Beth-shemesh, then Israel's God has brought this great disaster on us. If the cart goes another way, then we'll know that it wasn't God's hand that struck us. It happened to us randomly."

The rulers did just that. They took two nursing cows and harnessed them to the cart, penning their calves up at home. They put the LORD's chest on the cart along with the box containing the gold mice and the images of their

tumors. The cows went straight ahead, following the road to Beth-shemesh. They kept to one route, mooing as they went, without turning right or left. The Philistine rulers followed them as far as the territory of Beth-shemesh.

Now the people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley. When they looked up and saw the chest, they were overjoyed at the sight. The cart entered the field belonging to Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped right by a large stone. They chopped up the wood of the cart and offered the cows as an entirely burned offering to the LORD. The Levites unloaded the LORD's chest and the box that was with it that contained all the gold items, and they set them on the large stone. That very day the people of Beth-shemesh offered entirely burned offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD. When the five Philistine rulers witnessed this, they went straight back to Ekron.

¹These are the gold tumors that the Philistines returned as a compensation offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, and one for Ekron. The gold mice matched the number of Philistine cities belonging to the five rulers, from fortified cities to country villages. And the large stone they set the LORD's chest on is a witness even now in the field that belongs to Joshua of Beth-shemesh. But God struck down some of the people from Beth-shemesh because they looked into the LORD's chest. God struck seventy people, and the community grieved because the LORD had struck them so severely. The people of Beth-shemesh said, "Who can stand before the LORD, this holy God? Where can he go that is away from us here?" They sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim. "The Philistines returned the LORD's chest!" they said. "Come down and take it back with you." So the people of Kiriath-jearim came and took the LORD's chest. They brought it to Abinadab's house, which was on the hill. Then they dedicated Eleazar, Abinadab's son, to care for the LORD's chest.



Now a long time passed—a total of twenty years—after the chest came to stay in Kiriath-jearim, and the whole house of Israel yearned for the LORD. Then Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are turning to the LORD with all your heart, then get rid of all the foreign gods and the Astartes you have. Set your heart on the LORD! Worship him only! Then he will deliver you from the Philistines' power." So the Israelites got rid of the Baals and the Astartes and worshipped the LORD only.

Next Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah. I will pray to the LORD for you." So they assembled at Mizpah, and they drew water and poured it out in the LORD's presence. They fasted that same day and confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." Samuel served as judge of the Israelites at Mizpah. When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had assembled at Mizpah, the Philistine rulers went up to attack Israel. When the Israelites learned of this, they were afraid of the Philistines. The Israelites said to Samuel, "Please don't stop praying to the LORD our God for us, so God will save us from the Philistines' power!" So Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as an entirely burned offering to the LORD. Samuel cried out in prayer to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.

While Samuel was offering the entirely burned offering, the Philistines advanced to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered against the Philistines with a great blast on that very day, throwing the Philistines into such a panic that they were defeated by Israel. The Israelite soldiers came out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines. They struck them down until they reached a place just below Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Jeshanah. He named it Ebenezer, explaining, "The LORD helped us to this very point." So the Philistines were defeated, and they stopped coming into Israelite territory. The LORD's hand was against the Philistines throughout Samuel's life. The towns the Philistines had captured from Israel, from Ekron to Gath, were returned to Israel. Israel also recovered the territory around those two cities from the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

Samuel served as Israel's judge his whole life. Each year he traveled between Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, serving as Israel's judge in each of those locations. Then he would return to Ramah because that's where his home was. In Ramah too he served as Israel's judge, and that is also where he built an altar to the Lord.



Now when Samuel got old, he appointed his sons to serve as Israel's judges. The name of his oldest son was Joel; the name of the second was Abijah. They served as judges in Beer-sheba. But Samuel's sons didn't follow in his footsteps. They tried to turn a profit, they accepted bribes, and they perverted justice. So all the Israelite elders got together and went to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "Listen. You are old now, and your sons

don't follow in your footsteps. So appoint us a king to judge us like all the other nations have." It seemed very bad to Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us," so he prayed to the LORD.

The LORD answered Samuel, "Comply with the people's request—everything they ask of you—because they haven't rejected you. No, they've rejected me as king over them. They are doing to you only what they've been doing to me from the day I brought them out of Egypt to this very minute, abandoning me and worshipping other gods. So comply with their request, but give them a clear warning, telling them how the king will rule over them."

Then Samuel explained everything the LORD had said to the people who were asking for a king. "This is how the king will rule over you," Samuel said: "He will take your sons, and will use them for his chariots and his cavalry and as runners for his chariot. He will use them as his commanders of troops of one thousand and troops of fifty, or to do his plowing and his harvesting, or to make his weapons or parts for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, or bakers. He will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves and give them to his servants. He will give one-tenth of your grain and your vineyards to his officials and servants. He will take your male and female servants, along with the best of your cattle and donkeys, and make them do his work. He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and then you yourselves will become his slaves! When that day comes, you will cry out because of the king you chose for yourselves, but on that day the LORD won't answer you."

But the people refused to listen to Samuel and said, "No! There must be a king over us so we can be like all the other nations. Our king will judge us and lead us and fight our battles." Samuel listened to everything the people said and repeated it directly to the LORD. Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Comply with their request. Give them a king." Samuel then told the Israelite people, "Go back, each of you, to your own hometown."

There was a wealthy man from the tribe of Benjamin named Kish. He was the son of Abiel son of Zeror son of Becorath son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite. He had a son named Saul, who was a handsome young man. No one in Israel was more handsome than Saul, and he stood head and shoulders above everyone else. When the donkeys belonging to Saul's father Kish were lost, Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servant boys with you and go look for the donkeys." So he traveled through the highlands of Ephraim and the land of Shalishah, but they didn't find anything. They traveled through the land of Shaalim, but still found nothing, so they crossed back into the land of Benjamin, but they still couldn't find the donkeys. When they came to the territory of Zuph, Saul said to the boy who was with him, "Let's go back before my father stops worrying about the donkeys and starts worrying about us."

But the boy said to him, "Listen, there's a man of God in this town. He's famous—everything he says actually happens! So let's go there. Maybe he'll be able to tell us which way we should go." Saul said to his young boy, "But if we go, what should we bring to the man? The food in our bags is all gone. We don't have any gift to offer the man of God. Do we have anything?" "Here," the boy answered Saul, "I've got a quarter-shekel of silver. I'll give that to the man of God so he tells us which way to go." (Earlier in Israel, someone going to consult with God would say, "Let's go to the seer," because the people who are called prophets today were previously called seers.) Saul said to the boy, "Great idea! Let's go." So they went into the town where the man of God lived. They were going up the hill to the town when they met some young women coming out to draw water. "Is the seer here?" they asked them. "He's just ahead of you," they answered. "Hurry up! He has just come to town because there is a sacrifice today for the people at the shrine. You'll find him as soon as you enter the town, before he goes up to the shrine to eat. The people won't eat until he gets there, because he must bless the sacrifice. Only after that can the invited guests eat. Now get going because you'll find him momentarily."

So Saul and the boy went up to the town, and as they entered it, suddenly Samuel came toward them on his way up to the shrine. Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed the following to Samuel: "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the Benjaminite territory. You will anoint him as leader of my people Israel. He will save my people from the Philistines' power because I have seen the suffering of my people, and their cry for help has reached me." When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "That's the man I told you about. That's the one who will rule my people."

Saul approached Samuel in the city gate and said, "Please tell me where the seer's house is." "I'm the seer," Samuel told Saul. "Go on ahead of me to the shrine. You can eat with me today. In the morning I'll send you on your way, and I will tell you everything you want to know. As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, don't be worried about them because they've been found. Who owns all of Israel's treasures, anyway? Isn't it you and your whole family?" "I'm a

Benjaminite,” Saul responded, “from the smallest Israelite tribe, and my family is the littlest of the families in the tribe of Benjamin. Why would you say something like that to me?”

Then Samuel took Saul and his young servant and brought them to the banquet room. He gave them an honored place among the invited guests. There were about thirty total. Samuel said to the cook, “Serve the portion I gave you—the one



I told you to set aside.” So the cook took the thigh and what was on it, and put it in front of Saul. Samuel said, “Look, what had been reserved is now in front of you. Eat up, because it was set apart for you for this specific occasion, ever since I invited the guests.” So Saul ate with Samuel that day. When they came back from the shrine to the town, a bed was made for Saul on the roof, and he slept. Near dawn, Samuel called to Saul on the roof, “Wake up! I will send you on your way.” So Saul got up, and the two of them, he and Samuel, went outside. As they were nearing the edge of town Samuel said, “Tell the boy to go on ahead of us” (the servant did so) “but you stop for a bit so I can tell you God’s word.”

Samuel took a small jar of oil and poured it over Saul’s head and kissed him. “The LORD hereby anoints you leader of his people Israel,” Samuel said. “You will rule the LORD’s people and save them from the power of the enemies who surround them. And this will be the sign for you that the LORD has anointed you as leader of his very own possession: When you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel’s tomb at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will tell you, ‘The donkeys you went looking for have been found. Now your father has stopped thinking about the donkeys and is worried about you. He’s asking: What should I do about my son?’ Then, when you’ve gone on a bit farther, you will come to the oak at Tabor. Three men who are going to consult God at Bethel will meet up with you there, one carrying three young goats, one carrying three loaves of bread, and one carrying a jar of wine. They will ask how you’re doing and will offer you sacrificial bread, which you should accept. After that, you will come to Gibeath-elohim, which is a Philistine fort. When you enter the town, you will encounter a group of prophets coming down from the shrine preceded by harps, tambourines, flutes, and lyres. They will be caught up in a prophetic frenzy. Then the LORD’s spirit will come over you, and you will be caught up in a prophetic frenzy right along with them; it will be like you’ve become a completely different person. Once these signs have happened to you, do whatever you would like to do, because God is with you. Then go down to Gilgal ahead of me. I’ll come down to meet you to offer entirely burned offerings and to make well-being sacrifices. Wait seven days until I get to you, then I’ll tell you what you should do next.”

And just as Saul turned to leave Samuel’s side, God gave him a different heart, and all these signs happened that very same day. When Saul and the boy got to Gibeah, there was a group of prophets coming to meet him. God’s spirit came over Saul, and he was caught up in a prophetic frenzy right along with them. When all the people who had known Saul saw him prophesying with the prophets, they said to each other, “What’s happened to Kish’s son? Is Saul also one of the prophets?” One of the locals then asked, “And who is their leader?” So it became a proverb: “Is Saul also one of the prophets?” When the prophetic frenzy was over, Saul went home. Saul’s uncle said to him and to his young servant, “Where did you go?” “To look for the donkeys,” Saul replied, “but when we couldn’t find anything, we went to Samuel.” “Please tell me what Samuel told you,” Saul’s uncle said. “He reassured us that the donkeys had been found,” Saul answered. But Saul didn’t tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship.

Samuel summoned the people to the LORD at Mizpah. Then he told the Israelites: “This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the Egyptians’ power and from the power of all the kingdoms that oppressed you. But today you’ve rejected your God who saved you from all your troubles and difficulties by saying, ‘No! Appoint a king over us!’ So now assemble yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans.” Then Samuel brought all the Israelite tribes forward, and the tribe of Benjamin was selected. Next Samuel brought the tribe of Benjamin forward by its families, and the family of Matri was selected. Samuel then brought the family of Matri forward, person by person, and Saul, Kish’s son, was selected. But when they looked for him, he wasn’t to be found. So they asked another question of the LORD: “Has the man come here yet?” The LORD said, “Yes, he’s hiding among the supplies.”²³ They ran and retrieved Saul from there, and when he stood up in the middle of the people, he was head and shoulders taller than anyone else. “Can you see the one the LORD has chosen?” Samuel asked all the people. “He has no equal among the people.” Then the people shouted, “Long live the king!”

Samuel then explained to the people how the monarchy should operate and wrote it in a scroll and placed it in the LORD’s presence. Then Samuel sent every person back to their homes. Saul also went back to his home in Gibeah.

Along with him went courageous men whose hearts God had touched. But some despicable people said, "How can this man save us?" They despised Saul and didn't bring him gifts, but Saul didn't say anything.



Nahash the Ammonite king had been severely oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He gouged out everyone's right eye, thereby not allowing Israel to have a deliverer. There wasn't a single Israelite left across the Jordan River who hadn't had their right eye gouged out by the Ammonite king Nahash. But seven thousand people had escaped from the Ammonites' power and fled to Jabesh-gilead.

About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite went up and laid siege to Jabesh-gilead. All the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we'll be your servants." "I will make a treaty with you on one condition: that everyone's right eye be gouged out!" Nahash the Ammonite said to them. "That's how I bring humiliation on all Israel." The elders of Jabesh replied to him, "Leave us alone for seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel's territory. If there's no one to save us, then we'll surrender to you."

When the messengers reached Gibeah where Saul lived, they reported the news directly to the people there. Then they all wept aloud. At just that moment, Saul was coming back from keeping the cattle in the fields. "What's wrong with everybody?" he asked. "Why are they crying?" Saul was then told what the men from Jabesh had said. God's spirit came over Saul when he heard those words, and he burned with anger. He took two oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent them by messengers throughout Israel's territory. "This is exactly what will be done to the oxen of anyone who doesn't come to the aid of Saul and Samuel," he said. Great fear of the LORD came over the people, and they came to Saul completely unified. When Saul counted them at Bezek, the soldiers from Israel totaled three hundred thousand and those from Judah thirty thousand. The messengers who had come were then told, "Say this to the people of Jabesh-gilead: Tomorrow by the time the sun is hot, you will be saved." When the messengers returned and reported this to the people of Jabesh, they were overjoyed. Then the people of Jabesh told the Ammonites, "We will surrender to you tomorrow. Then you can do whatever you want to us."

The next day Saul organized his troops into three formations. They attacked the Ammonite camp during the morning watch and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. The survivors were so scattered that not even two of them could be found together. Then people asked Samuel, "Who was it who said, 'Will Saul rule over us?' Give us those people; we'll kill them!" But Saul said, "No one will be executed because today the LORD has saved Israel." "Let's go to Gilgal," Samuel told the people, "and renew the monarchy there." So everyone went to Gilgal, and there at Gilgal they made Saul king in the LORD's presence. They offered well-being sacrifices in the LORD's presence, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration there.

Samuel said to all Israel: "Listen: I have done everything you asked of me and have placed a king over you. The king will lead you now. I am old and gray, though my sons are still with you, and I've been your leader since I was young until now. So I'm here: Tell the truth about me in the presence of the LORD and his anointed. Have I ever stolen someone's ox? Have I ever taken someone's donkey? Have I ever oppressed or mistreated anyone? Have I ever taken bribes from someone and looked the other way about something? Tell me the truth. I will make it right." "You haven't oppressed or mistreated us, and you've never taken anything from anyone," the people answered. Samuel replied, "The LORD and his anointed one are witnesses against you today that you haven't found anything in my possession." "Agreed," they said.

⁶Then Samuel told the people: "The witness is indeed the LORD, who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your ancestors up from the land of Egypt. So now stand here, and I will judge you in the LORD's presence because of all the LORD's righteous acts that he has done for you and your ancestors: When Jacob entered Egypt, the Egyptians oppressed them. So your ancestors cried out to the LORD. The LORD then sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your ancestors out of Egypt and settled them here. But your ancestors forgot the LORD their God, so he handed them over to Sisera the commander of Hazor's army, and to the Philistines, and to the Moabite king, all of whom fought against them. Then your ancestors cried out to the LORD and said: 'We have sinned because we have abandoned the LORD and have worshipped the Baals and the Astartes. But now deliver us from the power of our enemies, and we will worship you.' So the LORD sent Jerubbaal, Barak, Jephthah, and Samson, and he delivered you from the power of your enemies on every side. And you lived safe and secure. But when you saw that Nahash the Ammonite king was coming against you, you said to me, 'No! There must be a king to rule over us.' But the LORD your God was already your king! So now,

here is the king you chose, the one you asked for. Yes, the LORD has put a king over you! If you will fear the LORD, worship him, obey him, and not rebel against the LORD's command, and if both you and the king who rules over you follow the LORD your God—all will be well. But if you don't obey the LORD and rebel against the LORD's command, then the LORD's power will go against you and your king to destroy you. So now take a stand! Look at this awesome thing the LORD is doing. Isn't the wheat harvest today? I will call upon the LORD to send thunder and rain. Then you will know and will see for yourselves what great evil you've done in the LORD's eyes by asking for a king."

Samuel called upon the LORD, and God sent thunder and rain on that very day. Then all the people were in awe of the LORD and Samuel. All of them said to Samuel, "Please pray for us, your servants, to the LORD your God so we don't die because we have added to our many sins the evil of asking for a king." But Samuel answered the people, "Don't be afraid. Yes, you've done all this evil; just don't turn back from following the LORD. Serve the LORD with all your heart. Don't turn aside to follow useless idols that can't help you or save you. They're absolutely useless! For the sake of his reputation, the LORD won't abandon his people, because the LORD has decided to make you his very own people. But me? I would never sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. I will teach you what is good and right. Just fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. Look at what great things he has done for you! But if you continue to do evil, then both you and your king will be destroyed."

1 Chronicles 9:35-39: Saul's family line...

Jeiel, Gibeon's father, lived in Gibeon. His wife's name was Maacah. His oldest son was Abdon, followed by Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth. Mikloth was the father of Shimeam. They too lived near their relatives in Jerusalem.¹ Ner was the father of Kish, Kish of Saul, Saul of Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-baal.

Saul was 30 years old when he became king, and he ruled over Israel forty-two years. Saul selected three thousand men from Israel. Two thousand of those were with Saul at Michmash in the hills near Bethel, and one thousand were with his son, Jonathan, at Gibeah in Benjamin. He sent the remaining men home. Jonathan attacked the Philistine fort at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. So Saul sounded the alarm throughout the land and said, "Hebrews! Listen up!" When all Israel heard that Saul had attacked the Philistine fort and that Israel was hated by the Philistines, the troops were called to Saul's side at Gilgal. The Philistines also were gathered to fight against Israel. They brought thirty thousand chariots with them, six thousand cavalry, and as many soldiers as there is sand on the seashore to fight Israel. They marched up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-aven. When the Israelites saw that they were in trouble and that their troops were threatened, they hid in caves, in thickets, among rocks, in tunnels, and in cisterns. Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan River, going into the land of Gad and Gilead.

Saul stayed at Gilgal, and the troops followed him anxiously. He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel, but Samuel didn't come to Gilgal, and his troops began to desert. So Saul ordered, "Bring me the entirely burned offering and the well-being sacrifices." Then he offered the entirely burned offering. The very moment Saul finished offering up the entirely burned offering, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet him and welcome him. But Samuel said, "What have you done?" "I saw that my troops were deserting," Saul replied. "You hadn't arrived by the appointed time, and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash. I thought, The Philistines are about to march against me at Gilgal and I haven't yet sought the LORD's favor. So I took control of myself and offered the entirely burned offering." "How stupid of you to have broken the commands the LORD your God gave you!" Samuel told Saul. "The LORD would have established your rule over Israel forever, but now your rule won't last. The LORD will search for a man following the Lord's own heart, and the LORD will commission him as leader over God's people, because you didn't keep the LORD's command."

Samuel got up and went on his way from Gilgal, but the rest of the people followed Saul to join the army, and they went from Gilgal to Gibeah in Benjamin. Saul counted about six hundred men still with him. Saul, his son Jonathan, and the people who were with him were staying at Geba in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Michmash. Three raiding parties left the Philistine camp. One took the road to Ophrah toward the territory of Shual. Another took the road to Beth-horon, and the last took the border road that overlooks the Zeboim Valley toward the desert.

No metalworker was to be found anywhere in Israelite territory because the Philistines had said, "The Hebrews must not make swords and spears." So every Israelite had to go down to the Philistines to sharpen their plowshares, mattocks, axes, and sickles. The cost was two-thirds of a shekel for plowshares and mattocks, but one-third of a shekel for

sharpening axes and for setting goads. So on the day of the battle, no swords or spears were to be found in the possession of any of the troops with Saul and Jonathan, but Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

Now a group of Philistine soldiers had marched out to the pass at Michmash. One day Jonathan, Saul's son, said to his young armor-bearer, "Come on! Let's go over to the Philistine fort on the opposite side." But he didn't tell his father. Saul was sitting on the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree at Migron. He had about six hundred men with him, including Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, who was Ichabod's brother and the son of Phinehas the son of Eli, who was the LORD's priest at Shiloh. He was wearing a priestly vest. None of the troops knew that Jonathan had gone.

There were two stone outcroppings in the pass where Jonathan planned on crossing over to the Philistine fort—one on each side. One of these was named Bozez; the other was named Seneh. One outcropping was on the north side, in front of Michmash, and the other was on the south side, in front of Geba. Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come on, let's go over to the fort of these uncircumcised men. Maybe the LORD will act on our behalf. After all, nothing can stop the LORD from saving, whether there are many soldiers or few." "Go ahead with whatever you're planning," his armor-bearer replied. "I'm with you, whatever you decide." "All right then," Jonathan said. "We'll go over to the men and show ourselves. If they say to us, 'Stay there until we get to you,' then we'll stay where we are and won't go up to them. But if they say, 'Come on up,' then we'll go up because that will be the sign that the LORD has handed them over to us." So they showed themselves to the Philistine fort, and the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes they've been hiding in!" Then the troops in the fort yelled to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, "Come on up! We'll teach you a lesson!" So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Follow me, because the LORD has handed them over to Israel!" So Jonathan scrambled up on his hands and feet with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan. His armor-bearer, coming behind him, would then finish them off. In the first attack, Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed about twenty men in an area of about half an acre. Panic broke out in the camp, in the field, and among all the troops. Even those in the fort and the raiders shook with fear. The very ground shook! It was a terror from God.

Now Saul's lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin saw the Philistine camp running all over the place. Saul said to the troops with him, "Take a count and see who is missing." So they counted, and Jonathan and his armor-bearer were gone. Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the priestly vest!" because at that time, Ahijah wore the priestly vest in Israel's presence. As Saul was talking to the priest, the confusion in the Philistine camp continued to grow. Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." Then Saul called all his troops together, and they went into battle. The Philistines were completely confused; every soldier's sword was turned against his fellow soldier. Even those Hebrews who had earlier joined up with the Philistines and moved into their camp changed sides to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. Similarly, when all the Israelites who had been hiding in the highlands of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they also joined the battle in hot pursuit of the Philistines. The LORD saved Israel that day, and the fighting carried on beyond Beth-aven.



Now the Israelite soldiers were in a difficult situation that day because Saul had bound the troops by a solemn pledge: "Anyone who eats anything before evening when I have taken revenge on my enemies is doomed." So none of the army ate anything. The troops came across a honeycomb with honey on the ground. But even when they came across the honeycomb with the honey still flowing, no one ate any of it because the troops were afraid of the solemn pledge. But Jonathan hadn't heard his father make the people swear the pledge, so he dipped the end of the staff he was carrying into the honeycomb. When he ate some his eyes lit up. Then one of the soldiers spoke up: "Your father bound the troops by a solemn pledge: 'Anyone who eats food today is doomed.' That's why the troops are exhausted." Jonathan said, "My father has brought trouble to the land. Look how my eyes lit up when I tasted just a bit of that honey! It would have been even better if the troops had eaten some of their enemies' plunder today when they found it! But now the Philistine defeat isn't as thorough as it might have been."

That day, after they had fought the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon, the troops were completely exhausted. So the troops tore into the plunder, taking sheep, cattle, and calves. They slaughtered them right on the ground and devoured them with the blood still in them. When it was reported to Saul, "The troops are sinning against the LORD by eating meat with blood in it," Saul said, "All of you are traitors! Roll a large stone over here right now. Go among the troops and say to them, 'Everyone must bring their ox or sheep, and slaughter them here with me. Don't sin against the LORD by eating meat with blood still in it.'" So everyone brought whatever they had and slaughtered it there. And Saul built an altar to the LORD. It was the first altar he had built to the LORD.

“Let’s go after the Philistines tonight and plunder them until morning,” Saul said. “We won’t leave them a single survivor!” “Do whatever you think is best,” the troops replied. But the priest said, “Let’s ask God first.” So Saul questioned God: “Should I go after the Philistines? Will you hand them over to Israel?” But God did not answer him that day. Then Saul said, “All you officers in the army, come forward! Let’s find out what sin was committed today. As surely as the LORD lives—the one who has saved Israel—even if it’s my own son Jonathan, that person will be executed.” Not one of the soldiers answered him. So Saul said to all Israel, “You be on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will be on the other.” “Do whatever you think is best,” the troops said.

Then Saul asked the LORD God of Israel, “Why haven’t you answered your servant today? If the wrongdoing is mine or my son Jonathan’s, respond with Urim, but if the wrongdoing belongs to your people Israel, respond with Thummim.” Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the troops were cleared. Then Saul said, “Decide between me and my son Jonathan.” And Jonathan was selected. “Tell me what you’ve done,” Saul said to Jonathan. So Jonathan told him. “I only took a very small taste of honey on the end of my staff,” he said. “And now I’m supposed to die?” “May God deal harshly with me and worse still if you don’t die today!” Saul swore. But the troops said to Saul, “Why should Jonathan die when he has won this great victory for Israel? No way! As surely as the LORD lives, not one hair off his head will fall to the ground, because he did this today with God’s help.” So the troops rescued Jonathan, and he wasn’t executed. Then Saul stopped chasing the Philistines, and the Philistines went back to their own country.

Saul secured his kingship over Israel. He fought against his enemies on every side: against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the king of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he was victorious. He acted heroically, defeating the Amalekites and rescuing Israel from the power of any who had plundered them.

Saul’s sons were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua. The names of his two daughters were Merab, the oldest, and Michal, the younger daughter. The name of Saul’s wife was Ahinoam, Ahimaaz’s daughter. The name of his general was Abner, Ner’s son, Saul’s uncle. Kish, Saul’s father, and Ner, Abner’s father, were Abiel’s sons.

There was fierce warfare against the Philistines throughout Saul’s lifetime. So whenever Saul saw any strong or heroic man, he would add him to his troops.