

Read the Bible in A Year: Chronological

Readings for April 13-18, 2020

1 Samuel 15-29; 1 Chronicles 12:1-19; Psalm 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 142



The Lord rejects Saul's kingship: Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel. Listen now to the LORD's words! This is what the LORD of heavenly forces says: I am going to punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel: how they attacked the Israelites as they came up from Egypt. So go! Attack the Amalekites; put everything that belongs to them under the ban. Spare no one. Kill men and women, children and infants, oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys." Saul called out the troops and counted them at Telaim: two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand more troops from Judah. Then Saul advanced on the Amalekite city and laid an ambush in the valley. Saul told the Kenites, "Get going! Leave the Amalekites immediately because you showed kindness to the Israelites when they came out of Egypt. Otherwise, I'll destroy you right along with them." So the Kenites left the Amalekites. Then Saul attacked the Amalekites from Havilah

all the way to Shur, which is near Egypt. He captured Agag the Amalekite king alive, but Saul placed all the people under the ban, killing them with the sword. Saul and the troops spared Agag along with the best sheep, cattle, fattened calves, lambs, and everything of value. They weren't willing to put them under the ban; but anything that was despised or of no value they placed under the ban.

Then the LORD's word came to Samuel: "I regret making Saul king because he has turned away from following me and hasn't done what I said." Samuel was upset at this, and he prayed to the LORD all night long. Samuel got up early in the morning to meet Saul, and was told, "Saul went to Carmel, where he is setting up a monument for himself. Then he left and went down to Gilgal." When Samuel reached Saul, Saul greeted him, "The LORD bless you! I have done what the LORD said." "Then what," Samuel asked, "is this bleating of sheep in my ears and mooing of cattle I hear?" "They were taken from the Amalekites," Saul said, "because the troops spared the best sheep and cattle in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God. The rest was placed under the ban."

Samuel then said to Saul, "Enough! Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night." "Tell me," Saul replied. Samuel said, "Even if you think you are insignificant, aren't you the leader of Israel's tribes? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. The LORD sent you on a mission, instructing you, 'Go, and put the sinful Amalekites under the ban. Fight against them until you've wiped them out.' Why didn't you obey the LORD? You did evil in the LORD's eyes when you tore into the plunder!" "But I did obey the LORD!" Saul protested to Samuel. "I went on the mission the LORD sent me on. I captured Agag the Amalekite king, and I put the Amalekites under the ban. Yes, the troops took sheep and cattle from the plunder—the very best items placed under the ban—but in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

Then Samuel replied, "Does the LORD want entirely burned offerings and sacrifices as much as obedience to the LORD? Listen to this: obeying is better than sacrificing, paying attention is better than fat from rams, because rebellion is as bad as the sin of divination; arrogance is like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected what the LORD said, he has rejected you as king."

Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned because I disobeyed the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the troops and obeyed them. But now please forgive my sin! Come back with me, so I can worship the LORD." But Samuel said to Saul, "I can't return with you because you have rejected what the LORD said, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." Samuel turned to leave, but Saul grabbed at the edge of his robe, and it ripped. Then Samuel told him, "The LORD has ripped the kingdom of Israel from you today. He will give it to a friend of yours, someone who is more worthy than you. What's more, the enduring one of Israel doesn't take back what he says and doesn't change his mind. He is not a human being who would change his mind." "I have sinned," Saul said, "but please honor me in front of my people's elders and before Israel, and come back with me so I can worship the LORD your God." So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshipped the LORD. "Bring me Agag the Amalekite king," Samuel said. Agag came to him in chains, asking, "Would death have been as bitter as this is?" Samuel said, "Just as your sword left women without their children,

now your mother will be childless among women.” Then Samuel cut Agag to pieces in the LORD’s presence at Gilgal. Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his home in Gibeah. Samuel never saw Saul again before he died, but he grieved over Saul. However, the LORD regretted making Saul king over Israel.



Samuel anoints David: The LORD said to Samuel, “How long are you going to grieve over Saul? I have rejected him as king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and get going. I’m sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have found my next king among his sons.” “How can I do that?” Samuel asked. “When Saul hears of it, he’ll kill me!” “Take a heifer with you,” the LORD replied, “and say, ‘I have come to make a sacrifice to the LORD.’ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will make clear to you what you should do. You will anoint for me the person I point out to you.”

Samuel did what the LORD instructed. When he came to Bethlehem, the city elders came to meet him. They were shaking with fear. “Do you come in peace?” they asked. “Yes,” Samuel answered. “I’ve come to make a sacrifice to the LORD. Now make yourselves holy, then come with me to the sacrifice.” Samuel made Jesse and his sons holy and invited them to the sacrifice as well. When they arrived, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, That must be the LORD’s anointed right in front. But the LORD said to Samuel, “Have no regard for his appearance or stature, because I haven’t selected him. God doesn’t look at things like humans do. Humans see only what is visible to the eyes, but the LORD sees into the heart.” Next Jesse called for Abinadab, who presented himself to Samuel, but he said, “The LORD hasn’t chosen this one either.” So Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, “No, the LORD hasn’t chosen this one.” Jesse presented seven of his sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD hasn’t picked any of these.” Then Samuel asked Jesse, “Is that all of your boys?” “There is still the youngest one,” Jesse answered, “but he’s out keeping the sheep.” “Send for him,” Samuel told Jesse, “because we can’t proceed until he gets here.” So Jesse sent and brought him in. He was reddish brown, had beautiful eyes, and was good-looking. The LORD said, “That’s the one. Go anoint him.” So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him right there in front of his brothers. The LORD’s spirit came over David from that point forward. Then Samuel left and went to Ramah.

David is introduced to Saul: Now the LORD’s spirit had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him. Saul’s servants said to him, “Look, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. If our master just says the word, your servants will search for someone who knows how to play the lyre. The musician can play whenever the evil spirit from God is affecting you, and then you’ll feel better.” Saul said to his servants, “Find me a good musician and bring him to me.” One of the servants responded, “I know that one of Jesse’s sons from Bethlehem is a good musician. He’s a strong man and heroic, a warrior who speaks well and is good-looking too. The LORD is with him.” So Saul sent messengers to Jesse to say, “Send me your son David, the one who keeps the sheep.” Jesse then took a donkey and loaded it with a homer of bread, a jar of wine, and a young goat, and he sent it along with his son David to Saul. That is how David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked David very much, and David became his armor-bearer. Saul sent a message to Jesse: “Please allow David to remain in my service because I am pleased with him.” Whenever the evil spirit from God affected Saul, David would take the lyre and play it. Then Saul would relax and feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him alone.



David defeats Goliath: The Philistines assembled their troops for war at Socoh of Judah. They camped between Socoh and Azekah at Ephes-dammim. Saul and the Israelite army assembled and camped in the Elah Valley, where they got organized to fight the Philistines. The Philistines took positions on one hill while Israel took positions on the opposite hill. There was a valley between them. A champion named Goliath from Gath came out from the Philistine camp. He was more than nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore bronze scale-armor weighing one hundred twenty-five pounds. He had bronze plates on his shins, and a bronze scimitar hung on his back. His spear shaft was as strong as the bar on a weaver’s loom, and its iron head weighed fifteen pounds. His shield-bearer walked in front of him. He stopped and shouted to the

Israelite troops, “Why have you come and taken up battle formations? I am the Philistine champion, and you are Saul’s servants. Isn’t that right? Select one of your men and let him come down against me. If he is able to fight me and kill me, then we will become your slaves, but if I overcome him and kill him, then you will become our slaves and you will serve

us. I insult Israel's troops today!" The Philistine continued, "Give me an opponent, and we'll fight!" When Saul and all Israel heard what the Philistine said, they were distressed and terrified.

Now David was Jesse's son, an Ephraimite from Bethlehem in Judah who had eight sons. By Saul's time, Jesse was already quite old and far along in age. Jesse's three oldest sons had gone with Saul to war. Their names were Eliab the oldest, Abinadab the second oldest, and Shammah the third oldest. (David was the youngest.) These three older sons followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul's side to shepherd his father's flock in Bethlehem.

For forty days straight the Philistine came out and took his stand, both morning and evening. Jesse said to his son David, "Please take your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread. Deliver them quickly to your brothers in the camp. And here, take these ten wedges of cheese to their unit commander. Find out how your brothers are doing and bring back some sign that they are okay. They are with Saul and all the Israelite troops fighting the Philistines in the Elah Valley."

So David got up early in the morning, left someone in charge of the flock, and loaded up and left, just as his father Jesse had instructed him. He reached the camp right when the army was taking up their battle formations and shouting the war cry. Israel and the Philistines took up their battle formations opposite each other. David left his things with an attendant and ran to the front line. When he arrived, he asked how his brothers were doing. Right when David was speaking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, came forward from the Philistine ranks and said the same things he had said before. David listened. When the Israelites saw Goliath, every one of them ran away terrified of him. (Now the Israelite soldiers had been saying to each other: "Do you see this man who keeps coming out? How he comes to insult Israel? The king will reward with great riches whoever kills that man. The king will give his own daughter to him and make his household exempt from taxes in Israel.")

David asked the soldiers standing by him, "What will be done for the person who kills that Philistine over there and removes this insult from Israel? Who is that uncircumcised Philistine, anyway, that he can get away with insulting the army of the living God?" Then the troops repeated to him what they had been saying. "So that's what will be done for the man who kills him," they said. When David's oldest brother Eliab heard him talking to the soldiers, he got very mad at David. "Why did you come down here?" he said. "Who is watching those few sheep for you in the wilderness? I know how arrogant you are and your devious plan: you came down just to see the battle!" "What did I do wrong this time?" David replied. "It was just a question!" So David turned to someone else and asked the same thing, and the people said the same thing in reply. The things David had said were overheard and reported to Saul, who sent for him.

"Don't let anyone lose courage because of this Philistine!" David told Saul. "I, your servant, will go out and fight him!" "You can't go out and fight this Philistine," Saul answered David. "You are still a boy. But he's been a warrior since he was a boy!" "Your servant has kept his father's sheep," David replied to Saul, "and if ever a lion or a bear came and carried off one of the flock, I would go after it, strike it, and rescue the animal from its mouth. If it turned on me, I would grab it at its jaw, strike it, and kill it. Your servant has fought both lions and bears. This uncircumcised Philistine will be just like one of them because he has insulted the army of the living God. "The LORD," David added, "who rescued me from the power of both lions and bears, will rescue me from the power of this Philistine." "Go!" Saul replied to David. "And may the LORD be with you!"

Then Saul dressed David in his own gear, putting a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David strapped his sword on over the armor, but he couldn't walk around well because he'd never tried it before. "I can't walk in this," David told Saul, "because I've never tried it before." So he took them off. He then grabbed his staff and chose five smooth stones from the streambed. He put them in the pocket of his shepherd's bag and with sling in hand went out to the Philistine.

The Philistine got closer and closer to David, and his shield-bearer was in front of him. When the Philistine looked David over, he sneered at David because he was just a boy, reddish brown and good-looking. The Philistine asked David, "Am I some sort of dog that you come at me with sticks?" And he cursed David by his gods. "Come here," he said to David, "and I'll feed your flesh to the wild birds and the wild animals!" But David told the Philistine, "You are coming against me with sword, spear, and scimitar, but I come against you in the name of the LORD of heavenly forces, the God of Israel's army, the one you've insulted. Today the LORD will hand you over to me. I will strike you down and cut off your head! Today I will feed your dead body and the dead bodies of the entire Philistine camp to the wild birds and the wild animals.

Then the whole world will know that there is a God on Israel's side. And all those gathered here will know that the LORD doesn't save by means of sword and spear. The LORD owns this war, and he will hand all of you over to us."

The Philistine got up and moved closer to attack David, and David ran quickly to the front line to face him. David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone. He slung it, and it hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone penetrated his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. And that's how David triumphed over the Philistine with just a sling and a stone, striking the Philistine down and killing him—and David didn't even have a sword! Then David ran and stood over the Philistine. He grabbed the Philistine's sword, drew it from its sheath, and finished him off. Then David cut off the Philistine's head with the sword.

When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they fled. The soldiers from Israel and Judah jumped up with a shout and chased the Philistines all the way to Gath and the gates of Ekron. The dead Philistines were littered along the Shaarim road all the way to Gath and Ekron. When the Israelites came back from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp. David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put the Philistine's weapons in his own tent.

Now when Saul saw David go out to meet the Philistine, he asked Abner the army general, "Abner, whose son is that boy?" "As surely as you live, Your Majesty, I don't know," Abner answered. "Then find out whose son that young man is," the king replied. So when David came back from killing the Philistine, Abner sent for him and presented him to Saul. The Philistine's head was still in David's hand. Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, my boy?" "I'm the son of your servant Jesse from Bethlehem," David answered.

As soon as David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan's life (Saul's son) became bound up with David's life, and Jonathan loved David as much as himself. From that point forward, Saul kept David in his service and wouldn't allow him to return to his father's household. And Jonathan and David made a covenant together because Jonathan loved David as much as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his armor, as well as his sword, his bow, and his belt. David went out and was successful in every mission Saul sent him to do. So Saul placed him in charge of the soldiers, and this pleased all the troops as well as Saul's servants.

Saul becomes jealous of David: After David came back from killing the Philistine, and as the troops returned home, women from all of Israel's towns came out to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with tambourines, rejoicing, and musical instruments. The women sang in celebration: "Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands!" Saul burned with anger. This song annoyed him. "They've credited David with tens of thousands," he said, "but only credit me with thousands. What's next for him—the kingdom itself?" So Saul kept a close eye on David from that point on.

The next day an evil spirit from God came over Saul, and he acted like he was in a prophetic frenzy in his house. So David played the lyre as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand, and he threw it, thinking, I'll pin David to the wall. But David escaped from him two different times.

Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with David but no longer with Saul. So Saul removed David from his service, placing him in command of a unit of one thousand men. David led the men out to war and back. David was successful in everything he did because the LORD was with him. Saul saw that he was very successful, and he was afraid of him. Everyone in Israel and Judah loved David because he led them out in war and back again.

Saul said to David, "Look, here is my oldest daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage on this condition: you must be my warrior and fight the LORD's battles." I won't raise my hand against him, Saul thought; let the Philistines do that! "I'm not worthy," David replied to Saul, "and neither is my family or my father's clan in Israel, to become the king's son-in-law." And so when the time came for Saul's daughter Merab to be married to David, she was given to Adriel from Meholah instead.

Now Saul's younger daughter Michal loved David. When this was reported to Saul, he was happy about it. I'll give her to him, Saul thought; she'll cause him problems, and the Philistines will be against him. So Saul said to David a second time, "Become my son-in-law now." Saul instructed his servants, "Tell David in private: 'Look, the king likes you, and all his servants love you. You should become the king's son-in-law.'" Saul's servants whispered these things in David's ear. But David said, "Do you think it's a simple matter to become the king's son-in-law? I don't! I'm poor and insignificant." Saul's

servants reported what David said, and Saul replied, "Tell David this: 'The king doesn't want any bridal gift, just a hundred Philistine foreskins as vengeance on the king's enemies.'" (Saul was hoping that David would die at the hands of the Philistines.) When the servants reported this to David, he was happy to become the king's son-in-law. Even before the allotted time had expired, David got up and went with his soldiers and killed one hundred Philistines. David brought their foreskins and counted them out for the king so he could become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave his daughter Michal to him in marriage.

When Saul knew for certain that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved him, then Saul was even more afraid of David. Saul was David's enemy for the rest of his life. And whenever the Philistine commanders came out for battle, David would have more success than the rest of Saul's officers, so his fame spread widely.

David escapes Saul: Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David, but Jonathan, Saul's son, liked David very much. So Jonathan warned David, "My father Saul is trying to kill you. Be on guard tomorrow morning. Stay somewhere safe and hide. I'll go out and stand by my father in the field where you'll be. I'll talk to my father about you, and I'll tell you whatever I find out."

So Jonathan spoke highly about David to his father Saul, telling him, "The king shouldn't do anything wrong to his servant David, because he hasn't wronged you. In fact, his actions have helped you greatly. He risked his own life when he killed that Philistine, and the LORD won a great victory for all Israel. You saw it and were happy about it. Why then would you do something wrong to an innocent person by killing David for no reason?" Saul listened to Jonathan and then swore, "As surely as the LORD lives, David won't be executed." So Jonathan summoned David and told him everything they had talked about. Then Jonathan brought David back to Saul, and David served Saul as he had previously.

War broke out again. When David went out to fight the Philistines, he struck them with such force that they ran from him. Then an evil spirit from the LORD came over Saul. He was sitting in his house with his spear in hand while David was playing music. Saul tried to pin David to the wall with his spear, but David escaped Saul. Saul drove the spear into the wall, but David fled and got away safely. That night Saul sent messengers to David's house to keep watch on it and kill him in the morning. David's wife Michal warned him, "If you don't escape with your life tonight, you are a dead man tomorrow." So Michal lowered David through a window. He took off and ran, and he got away. Then Michal took the household's divine image and laid it in the bed, putting some goat's hair on its head and covering it with clothes. Saul sent messengers to arrest David, but she said, "He's sick." Saul sent the messengers back to check on David for themselves. "Bring him to me on his bed," he ordered, "so he can be executed." When the messengers arrived, they found the idol in the bed with the goat's hair on its head. ¹Saul said to Michal, "Why could you betray me like this, letting my enemy go so that now he has escaped?" Michal said to Saul, "David told me, 'Help me get away or I'll kill you!'"

Psalm 59

A Psalm of David written when Saul had sent men to David's house in order to kill him.

Deliver me from my enemies, O God;
be my fortress against those who are attacking me.
Deliver me from evildoers
and save me from those who are after my blood.
See how they lie in wait for me!

Fierce men conspire against me
for no offense or sin of mine, LORD.
I have done no wrong, yet they are ready to attack me.
Arise to help me; look on my plight!

You, LORD God Almighty,
you who are the God of Israel,
rouse yourself to punish all the nations;
show no mercy to wicked traitors.

They return at evening,
snarling like dogs,
and prowl about the city.
See what they spew from their mouths—
the words from their lips are sharp as swords,
and they think, “Who can hear us?”
But you laugh at them, LORD;
you scoff at all those nations.

You are my strength, I watch for you;
you, God, are my fortress,
my God on whom I can rely.
God will go before me
and will let me gloat over those who slander me.

But do not kill them, Lord our shield,
or my people will forget.
In your might uproot them
and bring them down.
For the sins of their mouths,
for the words of their lips,
let them be caught in their pride.
For the curses and lies they utter,
consume them in your wrath,
consume them till they are no more.
Then it will be known to the ends of the earth
that God rules over Jacob.

They return at evening,
snarling like dogs,
and prowl about the city.
They wander about for food
and howl if not satisfied.

But I will sing of your strength,
in the morning I will sing of your love;
for you are my fortress,
my refuge in times of trouble.

You are my strength, I sing praise to you.
You, God, are my fortress,
my God on whom I can rely.

So David fled and escaped. When he reached Samuel at Ramah, he reported to him everything Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to stay in the camps. When Saul was told that David was in the camps at Ramah, he sent messengers to arrest David. They saw a group of prophets in a prophetic frenzy, with Samuel standing there as their leader. God's spirit came over Saul's messengers, and they also fell into a prophetic frenzy. This was reported to Saul, and he sent different messengers, but they also fell into a prophetic frenzy. So Saul sent a third group of messengers, and they did the very same thing. At that point, Saul went to Ramah himself. He came to the well at the threshing floor that was on the bare hill there and asked, “Where are Samuel and David?” “In the camps at Ramah,” he was told. So Saul went to the camps at Ramah, and God's spirit came over him too. So as he traveled, he was in a prophetic frenzy until he

reached the camps at Ramah. He even took off all his clothes and fell into a prophetic frenzy in front of Samuel. He lay naked that whole day and night. That's why people say, "Is Saul also one of the prophets?"



Jonathan and David's friendship: David fled from the camps at Ramah. He came to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father that he wants me dead?" Jonathan said to him, "No! You are not going to die! Listen: My father doesn't do anything big or small without telling me first. Why would my father hide this from me? It isn't true!" But David solemnly promised in response, "Your father knows full well that you like me. He probably said, 'Jonathan must not learn about this or he'll

be upset.' But I promise you—on the LORD's life and yours! —that I am this close to death!" "What do you want me to do?" Jonathan said to David. "I'll do it." "Okay, listen," David answered Jonathan. "Tomorrow is the new moon, and I'm supposed to sit with the king at the feast. Instead, let me go and I'll hide in the field until nighttime. If your father takes note of my absence, tell him, 'David begged my permission to run down to his hometown Bethlehem, because there is an annual sacrifice there for his whole family.' If Saul says 'Fine,' then I, your servant, am safe. But if he loses his temper, then you'll know for certain that he intends to harm me. So be loyal to your servant, because you've brought your servant into a sacred covenant with you. If I'm guilty, then kill me yourself; just don't take me back to your father." "Enough!" Jonathan replied. "If I can determine for certain that my father intends to harm you, of course I'll tell you!" "Who will tell me if your father responds harshly?" David asked Jonathan.

"Come on," Jonathan said to David. "Let's go into the field." So both of them went out into the field. Then Jonathan told David, "I pledge by the LORD God of Israel that I will question my father by this time tomorrow or on the third day. If he seems favorable toward David, I will definitely send word and make sure you know. But if my father intends to harm you, then may the LORD deal harshly with me, Jonathan, and worse still if I don't tell you right away so that you can escape safely. May the LORD be with you as he once was with my father. If I remain alive, be loyal to me. But if I die, don't ever stop being loyal to my household. Once the LORD has eliminated all of David's enemies from the earth, if Jonathan's name is also eliminated, then the LORD will seek retribution from David!" So Jonathan again made a pledge to David because he loved David as much as himself. "Tomorrow is the festival of the new moon," Jonathan told David. "You will be missed because your seat will be empty. The day after tomorrow, go all the way to the spot where you hid on the day of the incident, and stay close to that mound. On the third day I will shoot an arrow to the side of the mound as if aiming at a target. Then I'll send the servant boy, saying, 'Go retrieve the arrow.' If I yell to the boy, 'Hey! The arrow is on this side of you. Get it!' then you can come out because it will be safe for you. There won't be any trouble—I make a pledge on the LORD's life. But if I yell to the young man, 'Hey! The arrow is past you,' then run for it, because the LORD has sent you away. Either way, the LORD is witness between us forever regarding the promise we made to each other." So David hid himself in the field.

When the new moon came, the king sat at the feast to eat. He took his customary seat by the wall. Jonathan sat opposite him while Abner sat beside Saul. David's seat was empty. Saul didn't say anything that day because he thought, Perhaps David became unclean somehow. That must be it. But on the next day, the second of the new moon, David's seat was still empty. Saul said to his son Jonathan, "Why hasn't Jesse's son come to the table, either yesterday or today?" Jonathan answered Saul, "David begged my permission to go to Bethlehem. He said, 'Please let me go because we have a family sacrifice there in town, and my brother has ordered me to be present. Please do me a favor and let me slip away so I can see my family.' That's why David hasn't been at the king's table." At that, Saul got angry at Jonathan. "You son of a stubborn, rebellious woman!" he said. "Do you think I don't know how you've allied yourself with Jesse's son? Shame on you and on the mother who birthed you! As long as Jesse's son lives on this earth, neither you nor your dynasty will be secure. Now have him brought to me because he's a dead man!" But Jonathan answered his father Saul, "Why should David be executed? What has he done?" At that, Saul threw his spear at Jonathan to strike him, and Jonathan realized that his father intended to kill David. Jonathan got up from the table in a rage. He didn't eat anything on the second day of the new moon because he was worried about David and because his father had humiliated him.

In the morning, Jonathan went out to the field for the meeting with David, and a young servant boy went with him. He said to the boy, "Go quickly and retrieve the arrow that I shoot." So the boy ran off, and he shot an arrow beyond him. When the boy got to the spot where Jonathan shot the arrow, Jonathan yelled to him, "Isn't the arrow past you?" Jonathan yelled again to the boy, "Quick! Hurry up! Don't just stand there!" So Jonathan's servant boy gathered

up the arrow and came back to his master. The boy had no idea what had happened; only Jonathan and David knew. Jonathan handed his weapons to the boy and told him, "Get going. Take these back to town." As soon as the boy was gone, David came out from behind the mound and fell down, face on the ground, bowing low three times. The friends kissed each other, and cried with each other, but David cried hardest. Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace because the two of us made a solemn pledge in the LORD's name when we said, 'The LORD is witness between us and between our descendants forever.'" Then David got up and left, but Jonathan went back to town.

David helped at Nob: David came to Nob where Ahimelech was priest. Ahimelech was shaking in fear when he met David. "Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?" he asked. David answered Ahimelech the priest, "The king has given me orders, but he instructed me, 'Don't let anyone know anything about the mission I'm sending you on or about your orders.' As for my troops, I told them to meet me at an undisclosed location. Now what do you have here with you? Give me five loaves of bread or whatever you can find." "I don't have any regular bread on hand," the priest answered David, "just holy bread—but only if your troops have abstained from sexual activity." "Definitely," David answered the priest. "Whenever I go out to war, women are off-limits; that's our standard operating procedure. Even on regular missions, the men's gear is kept holy. That's even more true today, with the mission holy along with the gear." So the priest gave David holy bread, because there was no other bread except the bread of the presence, which is removed from the LORD's presence and replaced by warm bread as soon as it is taken away. Now one of Saul's servants was there that day, detained in the LORD's presence. His name was Doeg. He was an Edomite and Saul's head shepherd. David asked Ahimelech, "Do you have a spear or sword on hand? I didn't bring my sword or gear with me because the king's mission was urgent." The priest said, "The sword of Goliath, the Philistine you killed in the Elah Valley, is here wrapped in a cloth behind a priestly vest. If you want it, take it, because there are no other swords here." David said, "No sword is as good as that one! Give it to me!"

So David got up and continued running from Saul. He went to Achish, Gath's king. Achish's servants said to him, "Isn't that David, king of the land? He's the one people sing about in their dances, 'Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands!'" David took these words very seriously and became very frightened of Achish, Gath's king. So he changed the way he acted with them, pretending to be insane while he was with them. He scratched marks on the doors of the city gates and let spit run down his chin. "Can't you see he's crazy?" Achish asked his servants. "Why bring him to me? Am I short on insane people that you've brought this person to go crazy right in front of me? Do you really think I'm going to let this man enter my house?"

Psalms 34

A Psalm Of David- When he pretended to be insane before Achish and then was sent away

I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
I will glory in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.

Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.
This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.

Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.
Fear the LORD, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.
The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
Whoever of you loves life
and desires to see many good days,
keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from telling lies.
Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are attentive to their cry;
but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to blot out their name from the earth.

The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

The righteous person may have many troubles,
but the LORD delivers him from them all;
he protects all his bones,
not one of them will be broken.
Evil will slay the wicked;
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

The LORD will rescue his servants;
no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.

David left Gath and escaped to Adullam's fortress. When David's siblings and all his extended family learned of this, they went to join him there. Everyone who was in trouble, in debt, or in desperate circumstances gathered around David, and he became their leader. Approximately four hundred men joined him.

Psalm 57
A Psalm of David as he fled from Saul.

Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me,
for in you I take refuge.
I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings
until the disaster has passed.

I cry out to God Most High,
to God, who vindicates me.

He sends from heaven and saves me,
rebuking those who hotly pursue me—
God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.

I am in the midst of lions;
I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts—
men whose teeth are spears and arrows,
whose tongues are sharp swords.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.
They spread a net for my feet—
I was bowed down in distress.
They dug a pit in my path—
but they have fallen into it themselves.

My heart, O God, is steadfast,
my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and make music.
Awake, my soul!
Awake, harp and lyre!
I will awaken the dawn.

I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;
I will sing of you among the peoples.
For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.

Psalm 142
A Prayer of David as he fled from Saul.

I cry aloud to the LORD;
I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy.
I pour out before him my complaint;
before him I tell my trouble.
When my spirit grows faint within me,
it is you who watch over my way.
In the path where I walk
people have hidden a snare for me.

Look and see, there is no one at my right hand;
no one is concerned for me.
I have no refuge;
no one cares for my life.
I cry to you, LORD;
I say, “You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living.”

Listen to my cry,
for I am in desperate need;
rescue me from those who pursue me,
for they are too strong for me.
Set me free from my prison,
that I may praise your name.
Then the righteous will gather about me
because of your goodness to me.

Some left Gad to join David at the desert fortress, brave warriors trained for battle, armed with shield and spear, who looked like lions and who were swift as gazelles on the mountains: Ezer the leader, Obadiah second, Eliab third, Mishmannah fourth, Jeremiah fifth, Attai sixth, Eliel seventh, Johanan eighth, Elzabad ninth, Jeremiah tenth, Machbannai eleventh. These Gadites were military officers, the least of them ready to fight a hundred and the greatest a thousand. These are the ones who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it was overflowing all its banks, and chased away everyone living in the valleys to the east and the west. Some Benjaminites and Judahites also came to David at the fortress. David went out to meet them and said to them, "If you've come to me with good intentions in order to help me, then we will join forces. But if you've come to betray me to my enemies, though I've done no wrong, then may our ancestors' God see it and punish you." Then a spirit took hold of Amasai, the leader of the Thirty, and he said: "David, we are yours; and on your side, Jesse's son! May it go very well for you, and may it go well for whoever helps you! Yes, your God has helped you." Then David received them, and put them at the head of his troops. (1 Chronicles 12:8-18)

From there David went to Mizpeh in Moab. He said to the Moabite king, "Please let my father and mother stay with you until I know what God will do to me." So David left his parents with the Moabite king, and they stayed with him the whole time David was in the fortress. Then the prophet Gad told David, "Don't stay in the fortress any longer. Leave now and go to the land of Judah." So David left and went to Hereth forest.



Saul kills the priests of Nob: Saul learned that David and his soldiers had been located. Saul was sitting under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, spear in hand, with all his servants waiting on him. He said to them, "Listen up, Benjaminites! Will Jesse's son give fields and vineyards to each and every one of you? Will he make each one of you commanders of units of one thousand men or commanders of units of one hundred? Is that why all of you have conspired against me? No one informed me when my son made a covenant with Jesse's son! Not one of you is concerned about me or informs me when my own son sets my servant against me in an ambush—but that's what has happened today!"

Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's servants, responded, "I saw Jesse's son go to Ahimelech, Ahitub's son, at Nob. Ahimelech questioned the LORD for David, and gave him provisions as well as the sword of Goliath the Philistine." The king then sent for the priest Ahimelech, Ahitub's son, and all his extended family, who were the priests at Nob. All of them came to the king. "Listen here, son of Ahitub," Saul said. "Yes sir," he replied. Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me—you with Jesse's son—giving him food and a sword and questioning God for him so that he is now against me, waiting in ambush, which is what has happened today?" Ahimelech answered the king, "Out of all your servants, who is as trustworthy as David? He is the king's son-in-law, does whatever you ask, and is well respected in your house. Was that the first time I questioned God for him? Of course not! But please, the king shouldn't accuse me, his servant, or anyone in my father's household of any wrongdoing, because your servant knew nothing whatsoever about this matter." But the king said, "You will be executed, Ahimelech—you and all of your father's household!"

The king ordered the guards waiting on him: "Go ahead and kill the LORD's priests because they've joined up with David too. They knew he was on the run but didn't inform me." But the king's servants were unwilling to lift a hand to attack the LORD's priests. The king then ordered Doeg, "Doeg! You go attack the priests." So Doeg the Edomite went and attacked the priests, killing eighty-five men who wore the linen priestly vest that day. He put the whole priestly city of Nob to the sword: men and women, children and infants, even oxen, donkeys, and sheep.

But one of the sons of Ahimelech, Ahitub's son, escaped. His name was Abiathar, and he fled to David. Abiathar reported to David that Saul had slaughtered the LORD's priests. David told Abiathar, "That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew that he would tell Saul everything. I am to blame for the deaths in your father's family. Stay with me, and don't be afraid. The one who seeks my life now seeks yours too. But you'll be safe with me."

Psalm 52

A Writing of David- When Doeg the Edomite had killed the priests of Nob at Saul's orders

Why do you boast of evil, you mighty hero?
Why do you boast all day long,
you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?
You who practice deceit,
your tongue plots destruction;
it is like a sharpened razor.
You love evil rather than good,
falsehood rather than speaking the truth.
You love every harmful word,
you deceitful tongue!

Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin:
He will snatch you up and pluck you from your tent;
he will uproot you from the land of the living.
The righteous will see and fear;
they will laugh at you, saying,
"Here now is the man
who did not make God his stronghold
but trusted in his great wealth
and grew strong by destroying others!"

But I am like an olive tree
flourishing in the house of God;
I trust in God's unfailing love
for ever and ever.
For what You have done I will always praise You
in the presence of Your faithful people.
And I will hope in Your name,
for Your name is good.

Saul chases David: David was told, "The Philistines are now attacking Keilah and looting the threshing floors!" David asked the LORD, "Should I go and fight these Philistines?" "Go!" the LORD answered. "Fight the Philistines and save Keilah!" But David's men said to him, "Look how frightened we are here in Judah. It'll be worse if we go to Keilah against Philistine forces!" So David asked the LORD again, and the LORD reaffirmed, "Yes, go down to Keilah, because I will hand the Philistines over to you." Then David and his soldiers went to Keilah and fought the Philistines, driving off their cattle and defeating them decisively. And that's how David saved the residents of Keilah.

Now after Abiathar, Ahimelech's son, fled to David, he had accompanied David to Keilah, bringing a priestly vest with him. When Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, he said, "God has handed him over to me now because he has trapped himself by entering a town with gates and bars!" So Saul called up all his troops for war, to go down to Keilah and attack David and his soldiers. When David learned that Saul was planning to harm him, he told the priest Abiathar, "Bring the priestly vest now." Then David said, "LORD God of Israel, I, your servant, have heard that Saul plans on coming to Keilah and will destroy the town because of me. LORD God of Israel, will Saul come down as your servant has heard? Please tell your servant." "Yes, he will come down," the LORD answered. Next David asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah hand me and my soldiers over to Saul?" "Yes, they will hand you over," the LORD replied. So David and his troops—

approximately six hundred men—got up and left Keilah. They kept moving, going from one place to the next. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he didn't go there.

David lived in the fortresses in the wilderness and in the hills of the Ziph wilderness. Saul searched for him constantly, but God did not hand David over to Saul. While David was at Horesh in the Ziph wilderness he learned that Saul was looking to kill him. Saul's son Jonathan came to David at Horesh and encouraged him with God. Jonathan said to him, "Don't be afraid! My father Saul's hand won't touch you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be your second in command. Even my father Saul knows this." Then the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. David stayed at Horesh, but Jonathan went back home.

Some Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah. "David is hiding among us in the fortresses at Horesh on the hill of Hachilah, south of Jeshimon," they said. "So whenever you want to come down, Your Majesty, do it! Leave it to us to hand him over to the king." "The LORD bless you because you have shown this kindness to me!" Saul said. "Go now and get everything ready. Find out everything you can: where he stays, where he goes, who has seen him. I am told he is very shrewd. Find out every hiding place he uses there and come back to me when you know for certain. I will then go with you. If David is in the area, I will hunt him down among any of Judah's clans!" So they got up and left for Ziph ahead of Saul.

Meanwhile, David and his soldiers were in the Maon wilderness in the desert plain south of Jeshimon. When Saul and his troops went looking for him, David was told about it, so he went down to a certain rock there and stayed in the Maon wilderness. When Saul heard that, he went into the Maon wilderness after David. Saul was going around one side of a hill there while David and his soldiers were going around the other. David was hurrying to get away from Saul while Saul and his troops were trying to surround David and his soldiers in order to capture them. But a messenger suddenly came to Saul. "Come quick!" he said. "The Philistines have invaded the land!" So Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to fight the Philistines. That's why that place is called Escape Rock. Then David went from there and lived at the En-gedi fortresses.

Psalm 54

A Prayer of David- When the Ziphites had gone to Saul and told him where David was.

Save me, O God, by your name;
vindicate me by your might.
Hear my prayer, O God;
listen to the words of my mouth.

Arrogant foes are attacking me;
ruthless people are trying to kill me—
people without regard for God.

Surely God is my help;
the Lord is the one who sustains me.

Let evil recoil on those who slander me;
in your faithfulness destroy them.
I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you;
I will praise your name, LORD, for it is good.
You have delivered me from all my troubles,
and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes.



David spares Saul's life: Even as Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was informed that David was in the En-gedi wilderness. So Saul took three thousand men selected from all Israel and went to look for David and his soldiers near the rocks of the wild goats. He came to the sheep pens beside the road where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to use the restroom. Meanwhile, David and his soldiers were sitting in the very back of the cave. David's soldiers said to him, "This is the day the LORD spoke of when he promised you, 'I will hand your enemy over to you, and you can do to him whatever you think best.'" So David snuck up and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. But immediately

David felt horrible that he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. "The LORD forbid," he told his men, "that I should do something like that to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lift my hand against him, because he's the LORD's anointed!" So David held his soldiers in check by what he said, and he wouldn't allow them to attack Saul. Saul then left the cave and went on his way.

Then David also went out of the cave and yelled after Saul, "My master the king!" Saul looked back, and David bowed low out of respect, nose to the ground. David said to Saul, "Why do you listen when people say, 'David wants to ruin you'? Look! Today your own eyes have seen that the LORD handed you over to me in the cave. But I refused to kill you. I spared you, saying, 'I won't lift a hand against my master because he is the LORD's anointed.' Look here, my protector! See the corner of your robe in my hand? I cut off the corner of your robe but didn't kill you. So know now that I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I haven't wronged you, but you are hunting me down, trying to kill me. May the LORD judge between me and you! May the LORD take vengeance on you for me, but I won't lift a hand against you. As the old proverb goes, 'Evil deeds come from evildoers!' but I won't lift a hand against you. So who is Israel's king coming after? Who are you chasing? A dead dog? A single flea? May the LORD be the judge and decide between you and me. May he see what has happened, argue my case, and vindicate me against you!"

As soon as David finished saying all this to Saul, Saul said, "David, my son, is that your voice?" Then he broke down in tears, telling David, "You are more righteous than I am because you have treated me generously, but I have treated you terribly. Today you've told me the good you have done for me—how the LORD handed me over to you, but how you didn't kill me. When someone finds an enemy, do they send the enemy away in peace? May the LORD repay you with good for what you have done for me today. Now even I know that you will definitely become king, and Israel's kingdom will flourish in your hands. Because of that, make a solemn pledge to me by the LORD that you won't kill off my descendants after I'm gone and that you won't destroy my name from my family lineage." David made a solemn pledge to Saul. Then Saul went back home, but David and his soldiers went up to the fortress.



Abigail saves David: Now Samuel died, and all Israel gathered to mourn for him. They buried him at his home in Ramah. David then left and went down to the Maon wilderness. There was a man in Maon who did business in Carmel. He was a very important man and owned three thousand sheep and one thousand goats. At that time, he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and attractive woman, but her husband was a hard man who did evil things. He was a Calebite.

While in the wilderness, David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep. So David sent ten servants, telling them, "Go up to Carmel. When you get to Nabal, greet him for me. Say this to him: 'Peace to you, your household, and all that is yours! I've heard that you are now shearing sheep. As you know, your shepherds were with us in the wilderness. We didn't mistreat them. Moreover, the whole time they were at Carmel, nothing of theirs went missing. Ask your servants; they will tell you the same. So please receive these young men favorably, because we've come on a special day. Please give whatever you have on hand to your servants and to your son David.'"

When David's young men arrived, they said all this to Nabal on David's behalf. Then they waited. But Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is David? Who is Jesse's son? There are all sorts of slaves running away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread, my water, and the meat I've butchered for my shearers and give it to people who came here from who knows where?" So David's young servants turned around and went back the way they came. When they arrived, they reported every word of this to David. Then David said to his soldiers, "All of you, strap on your

swords!" So each of them strapped on their swords, and David did the same. Nearly four hundred men went up with David. Two hundred men remained back with the supplies.

One of Nabal's servants told his wife Abigail, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he just yelled at them. But the men were very good to us and didn't mistreat us. Nothing of ours went missing the whole time we were out with them in the fields. In fact, the whole time we were with them, watching our sheep, they were a protective wall around us both night and day. Think about that and see what you can do, because trouble is coming for our master and his whole household. But he's such a despicable person no one can speak to him." Abigail quickly took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep ready for cooking, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred raisin cakes, and two hundred fig cakes. She loaded all this on donkeys and told her servants, "Go on ahead of me. I'll be right behind you." But she didn't tell her husband Nabal.

As she was riding her donkey, going down a trail on the hillside, David and his soldiers appeared, descending toward her, and she met up with them. David had just been saying, "What a waste of time—guarding all this man's stuff in the wilderness so that nothing of his went missing! He has repaid me evil instead of good! May God deal harshly with me, David, and worse still if I leave alive even one single one who urinates on a wall belonging to him come morning!"

When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and fell facedown before him, bowing low to the ground. She fell at his feet and said, "Put the blame on me, my master! But please let me, your servant, speak to you directly. Please listen to what your servant has to say. Please, my master, pay no attention to this despicable man Nabal. He's exactly what his name says he is! His name means fool, and he is foolish! But I myself, your servant, didn't see the young men that you, my master, sent. I pledge, my master, as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, that the LORD has held you back from bloodshed and taking vengeance into your own hands! But now let your enemies and those who seek to harm my master be exactly like Nabal! Here is a gift, which your servant has brought to my master. Please let it be given to the young men who follow you, my master. Please forgive any offense by your servant. The LORD will definitely make an enduring dynasty for my master because my master fights the LORD's battles, and nothing evil will be found in you throughout your lifetime. If someone chases after you and tries to kill you, my master, then your life will be bound up securely in the bundle of life by the LORD your God, but he will fling away your enemies' lives as from the pouch of a sling. When the LORD has done for my master all the good things he has promised you, and has installed you as Israel's leader, don't let this be a blot or burden on my master's conscience, that you shed blood needlessly or that my master took vengeance into his own hands. When the LORD has done good things for my master, please remember your servant."

David said to Abigail, "Bless the LORD God of Israel, who sent you to meet me today! And bless you and your good judgment for preventing me from shedding blood and taking vengeance into my own hands today! Otherwise, as surely as the LORD God of Israel lives—the one who kept me from hurting you—if you hadn't come quickly and met up with me, there wouldn't be one single one who urinates on a wall left come morning." Then David accepted everything she had brought for him. "Return home in peace," he told her. "Be assured that I've heard your request and have agreed to it."

When Abigail got back home to Nabal, he was throwing a party fit for a king in his house. Nabal was in a great mood and very drunk, so Abigail didn't tell him anything until daybreak. In the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him everything. Nabal's heart failed inside him, and he became like a stone. About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal, and he died. When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Bless the LORD, who has rendered a verdict regarding Nabal's insult to me and who kept me, his servant, from doing something evil! The LORD has brought Nabal's evil down on his own head." Then David sent word to Abigail, saying that he would take her as his wife.

When David's servants reached Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, "David has sent us to you so you can become his wife." She bowed low to the ground and said, "I am your servant, ready to serve and wash the feet of my master's helpers." Then Abigail got up quickly and rode on her donkey, with five of her young women going with her. She followed David's messengers and became his wife. David also married Ahinoam from Jezreel, so both of them were his wives. But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Palti, Laish's son, from Gallim.



David spares Saul's life a second time: The Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah. "David is hiding on Hachilah's hill, which faces Jeshimon," they said. So Saul got up and went down to the Ziph wilderness to look for David there. He had three thousand handpicked soldiers from Israel with him. Saul camped on Hachilah's hill opposite Jeshimon beside the road, but David stayed in the wilderness. When David learned that Saul had come after him into the wilderness, he sent spies and discovered that Saul had definitely arrived. So David got up and went to the place where Saul camped, and saw the place where Saul and Abner, Ner's son and Saul's general, were sleeping. Saul was sleeping inside the camp with the troops camped all around him. David asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Joab's brother Abishai, Zeruiah's son, "Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?" "I'll go down with you," Abishai answered.

So David and Abishai approached the troops at night and found Saul lying there, asleep in the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. Abner and the army were sleeping all around him. Abishai said to David, "God has handed your enemy over to you today! Let me pin him to the ground with my spear. One stroke is all I need! I won't need a second." But David said to Abishai, "Don't kill him! No one can lift a hand against the LORD's anointed and go unpunished. As surely as the LORD lives," David continued, "it will be the LORD who will strike him down, or his day will come and he will die, or he'll fall in battle and be destroyed. The LORD forbid that I lift my hand against the LORD's anointed! But go ahead and take the spear by Saul's head and the water jug and let's go!" So David took the spear and the water jug that were by Saul's head, and he and Abishai left. No one saw them, no one knew they were there, and no one woke up. All of them remained asleep because a deep sleep from the LORD had come over them.

David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of a hill with considerable distance between them. Then David shouted to the army and to Abner, Ner's son, "Abner! Aren't you going to answer me?" "Who are you to shout to the king?" Abner asked. David answered Abner, "You are a man, aren't you? And you have no equal in Israel, right? Then why haven't you kept watch over your master the king? One of the soldiers came to kill your master the king. What you've done is terrible! As surely as the LORD lives, all of you are dead men because you didn't keep close watch over your master, the LORD's anointed. Have a look around! Where are the king's spear and the water jug that were by his head?"

Saul recognized David's voice and said, "David, my son, is that your voice?" David said, "Yes it is, my master the king. Why," David continued, "is my master chasing me, his servant? What have I done and what wrong am I guilty of? My master the king, please listen to what your servant has to say. If it is the LORD who has incited you against me, then let him accept an offering! But if human beings have done it, then let them be cursed before the LORD because they have now driven me off, keeping me from sharing in the LORD's inheritance. 'Go!' they tell me. 'Worship other gods!' Don't let my blood spill on the ground apart from the LORD's presence, because the king of Israel has come out looking for a single flea like someone hunting a partridge in the mountains."

Then Saul said, "I have sinned! David, my son, come back! Because you considered my life precious today, I won't harm you again. I have acted foolishly and have made a huge mistake." "Here is the king's spear," David answered. "Allow one of your servants to come over and get it. Remember: The LORD rewards every person for their righteousness and loyalty, and I wasn't willing to lift a hand against the LORD's anointed, even though the LORD handed you over to me today. And just as I considered your life valuable today, may the LORD consider my life valuable, and may he deliver me from all trouble." Then Saul said to David, "Bless you, David, my son! You will accomplish much and will certainly succeed." Then David went on his way, but Saul went back home.

David serves the Philistine Achish: David thought, One day I will be destroyed by Saul's power. The best thing for me to do is to escape to Philistine territory. Then Saul will give up looking for me in Israelite territory, and I will escape his power. So David set out with his six hundred soldiers and went to Achish, Maach's son and Gath's king. David and his soldiers stayed there at Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, Nabal's widow from Carmel. When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he didn't pursue him anymore. Then David said to Achish, "If you approve of me, please give me a place in one of the towns in the country so I can live there. Why should I, your servant, live in the capital city with you?" So Achish gave the town of Ziklag to David at that time. That's why Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah until now. David lived in the Philistine countryside for a total of one year and four months.

The following persons came to David at Ziklag while he was banished from the presence of Saul, Kish's son. They were some of the warriors who helped him in battle, armed with bows, and they could use either hand to shoot arrows or sling stones. They were Saul's relatives from Benjamin: Ahiezer was the leader, then Joash, both Shemaah's sons from Gibeah; Jeziel and Pelet, Azmaveth's sons; Beracah; Jehu of Anathoth; Ishmaiah from Gibeon, a warrior in the Thirty and a leader over the Thirty; Jeremiah; Jahaziel; Johanan; Jozabad from Gederah; Eluzai; Jerimoth; Bealiah; Shemariah; Shephatiah the Haruphite; Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam the Korahites; Joelah; and Zebadiah, Jeroham's son from Gedor. (1 Chronicles 12:1-7)

David and his soldiers went out on raids against the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites. They were the people who lived in the land from Telam to Shur all the way to the land of Egypt. When David attacked an area, he wouldn't leave anyone alive, man or woman. He would take the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothes and would then go back to Achish. When Achish asked, "Where did you raid today?" David would say, "The southern plain of Judah," or "The southern plain of the Jerahmeelites," or "The southern plain of the Kenites." David never spared a man or woman so they could be brought back alive to Gath. "Otherwise," he said, "they might talk about us, and say, 'David did this or that.'" So this was David's practice during the entire time he lived in the Philistine countryside. Achish trusted David, thinking, David has alienated himself so badly from his own people in Israel that he'll serve me forever. At that time, the Philistines gathered their troops for war to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, "Count on you and your soldiers marching out with me in the army." "Excellent," David answered Achish. "Now you'll see for yourself what your servant can do." "Excellent," Achish replied. "I will make you my permanent bodyguard."



Saul and the woman of En-dor: Now Samuel had died, and all Israel mourned him and buried him in Ramah, his hometown. And Saul had banned all mediums and diviners from the land. The Philistines gathered their forces and advanced to camp at Shunem. Saul gathered all Israel, and they camped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was so afraid that his heart beat wildly. When Saul questioned the LORD, the LORD didn't answer him—not by dreams, not by the Urim, and not by the prophets. So Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who communicates with ghosts! I'll then go to her and ask by using her techniques." "There is such a medium in

En-dor," his servants replied.

So Saul disguised himself, dressing in different clothes. Then he and two men set out, going to the woman at nighttime. "Please call up a ghost for me! Bring me the one I specify," Saul said. "Listen," the woman said to him, "you know what Saul has done, how he has banned all mediums and diviners from the land. What are you doing? Trying to get me killed?" But Saul promised to her by the LORD, "As surely as the LORD lives, you won't get into trouble for this." So the woman said, "Who do you want me to bring up for you?" "Bring up Samuel," he said.

When the woman saw Samuel, she screamed at Saul, "Why have you tricked me? You are Saul!" "Don't be afraid!" the king said to her. "What do you see?" The woman said to Saul, "I see a god coming up from the ground." "What does he look like?" Saul asked her. "An old man is coming up," she said. "He's wrapped in a robe." Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed low out of respect, nose to the ground. "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Samuel asked Saul. "I'm in deep trouble!" Saul replied. "The Philistines are at war with me, and God has turned away from me and no longer answers me by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what I should do." "Why do you ask me," Samuel said, "since the LORD has turned away from you and has become your enemy? The LORD has done to you exactly what he spoke through me: The LORD has ripped the kingdom out of your hands and has given it to your friend David. The LORD has done this very thing to you today because you didn't listen to the LORD's voice and didn't carry out his fierce anger against the Amalekites. The LORD will now hand over both you and Israel to the Philistines. And come tomorrow, you and your sons will be with me! The LORD will hand Israel's army over to the Philistines."

Saul immediately fell full length on the ground, utterly terrified at what Samuel had said. He was weak because he hadn't eaten anything all day or night. The woman approached Saul, and after seeing how scared he was, she said, "Listen, your servant has obeyed you. I risked my life and did what you told me to do. Now it's your turn to listen to me, your servant. Let me give you a bit of food. Eat it, then you'll have the strength to go on your way." But Saul refused. "I can't eat!" he said. But his servants and the woman urged him to do so, and so he did. He got up off the ground and sat

on a couch. The woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she quickly butchered it. She took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread. She served this to Saul and his servants, and they ate. They got up and left that very night.

David sent home from fighting Saul: The Philistines assembled all their forces at Aphek, and the Israelites camped by the spring in Jezreel. As the Philistine rulers went out marching in units of hundreds and thousands, David and his soldiers were in the rear with Achish. “Who are these Hebrews?” the Philistine commanders asked. “That’s David,” Achish told them, “the servant of Israel’s King Saul. He’s been with me a year or so now. I haven’t found anything wrong with him from the day he defected until now.” But the Philistine commanders were angry with Achish. “Send the man home!” they told Achish. “He can go back to the place you gave him, but he won’t go with us into battle. Couldn’t he turn against us in the middle of the fight? How better to please his former master than by taking the heads of our soldiers? After all, this is the same David people sing about in their dances, ‘Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands!’”

So Achish summoned David and told him, “As surely as the LORD lives, you are an upstanding individual. I would very much like you to serve with me in the army because I haven’t found anything wrong with you from the day you came to me until now. But the rulers don’t approve of you. So go back home now, and go in peace. Don’t do anything to upset the Philistine rulers.” “But what have I done?” David asked Achish. “What wrong have you found in me, your servant, from the day I came to you until now? Why shouldn’t I go and fight the enemies of my master the king?” “I agree,” Achish answered David. “I think you’re as good as one of God’s own messengers. Despite that, the Philistine commanders have ordered, ‘He can’t go into battle with us.’ So get up early in the morning, both you and your master’s servants who came with you, and return to the place I gave you. Don’t worry about this negative report, because you’ve done well before me. Now get up early in the morning and leave as soon as it is light.” So David and his soldiers got up early in the morning to go back to Philistine territory, but the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

Some of the Manassites also joined David when he came with the Philistines for the battle against Saul. But he didn’t help them, because after considering the matter, the Philistine rulers sent him away. “He’ll rejoin his master Saul,” they said, “and it will cost us our heads.” (1 Chronicles 12:19)

Psalm 56

A prayer of David- When the Philistines had seized him in Gath.

Be merciful to me, my God,
for my enemies are in hot pursuit;
all day long they press their attack.

My adversaries pursue me all day long;
in their pride many are attacking me.

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.
In God, whose word I praise—
in God I trust and am not afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?

All day long they twist my words;
all their schemes are for my ruin.
They conspire, they lurk,
they watch my steps,
hoping to take my life.
Because of their wickedness do not let them escape;
in your anger, God, bring the nations down.

Record my misery;
list my tears on your scroll—
are they not in your record?

Then my enemies will turn back
when I call for help.
By this I will know that God is for me.

In God, whose word I praise,
in the LORD, whose word I praise—
in God I trust and am not afraid.
What can man do to me?

I am under vows to you, my God;
I will present my thank offerings to you.
For you have delivered me from death
and my feet from stumbling,
that I may walk before God
in the light of life.