

1 Samuel Notes

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Introduction:

1 Samuel serves to bridge the gap in the history of Israel between the time under the Judges when Israel failed to take and possess much of the land given to them under Joshua and the time when the kings will rule and David will increase the strength and influence of the nation. We are leaving the time when “there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in their own eyes” (Judges 21:25).

Samuel is a man of nearly unequalled character in the Bible. He was a man who served Israel without taking the best to himself (1 Sam. 12:3-4). Psalm 99:6 says “Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon His name; They called upon the Lord, and He answered them.” Jeremiah 15:1 says “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people...’” Acts 3:24 says “Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.” And Acts 13:20 and Hebrews 11:32 speak of “Samuel the prophet.”

- There is no record that Samuel wrote these books. There is no record of Samuel working powerful miracles. There is not even much written of his work. But his reputation seems to rest on his superior character which may have been a result of serious heartaches at a young age.

Chapter 1:

1:1 – “Ramathaim Zophim” – This is the area of Ramah located about 5 miles north of Jerusalem in the hill country near the border of Ephraim and Benjamin. It was about 15 miles from Ramah to Shiloh.

- In modern-day Israel, Ramah is called Ramalia.
- “Ephraimite” – Elkanah was a Levite living in Ephraim. (Josh. 21:20-21; 1 Chron. 6:22-26; 34-35)

1:2 – “two wives” – This is a Levite violating the law of Moses and is indicative of the age of the Judges where everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes.

- “Hannah” – means “grace, or favored.”
- “Peninnah” – means “pearl, or ruby.”
- “had no children” – This may be the reason for the two wives. Barrenness was grounds for divorce in Israel, but it could be that Elkanah simply took a second wife when the first was found to be barren.
- There was a stigma attached to being barren. Sometimes it was claimed that the woman could not bear children because of sin in her life.

1:3 – “to worship and sacrifice” – “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” (Heb. 13:15)

- “Lord of hosts” – This is the first use of this phrase in the Bible (used 282 times in total).
 - Biblically, the hosts were military or spiritual armies or heavenly bodies. Elkanah and Hannah are turning to the God of power and dominion.
 - This is at a time when most others are doing what is right in their own eyes.
- “Hophni and Phinehas” – These men were corrupt priests at this time having illicit relationships with women and stealing from the sacrifices. Much of Israel was holding the sacrifices in contempt because of the hypocrisy of these men. (1 Sam. 2:17,24)

- 1:4 – “portions” – They would often eat their sacrifices with the tabernacle in sight, putting the manifest presence of God in view.
- 1:5 – “the Lord had closed her womb” – That is His prerogative. He is waiting for Hannah to be ready to do what He desires to be done with this baby.
- 1:6 – “her rival also provoked her” – This describes a marriage with two wives. The husband ends up loving one wife above the other and that creates a rivalry.
- “miserable” – Lit. “to thunder.”
 - The barrenness is obviously Hannah’s fault, as Peninnah was able to conceive by Elkanah.
- 1:7 – “year by year” – This is an on-going trial.
- “she wept” – Instead of rejoicing, Hannah is sorrowful and begins to seek the Lord.
- 1:8 – “Am I not better to you” – Hannah needs sympathy from Elkanah, instead she gets logic. That is just like a man – insensitive.
- 1:10 – “bitterness of soul” – She is not bitter against God, her husband, Peninnah, or even her barrenness, but she is simply bitter within herself. This speaks some of her character.
- “prayed to the Lord” – Her husband can’t solve the problem; she must go to God.
 - Hannah is hurting and she runs to the Lord.
 - God has a plan for Hannah in this. She has no idea how big the plan of God is for her and this child who will be born of her.
 - Your husband is not Jesus Christ. There are some pains in our lives that cannot be met by another human. God knows and He loves us far more than any parent loves their children and more than any person loves their spouse.
- 1:11 – “she made a vow” – Hannah’s heart is where it needs to be so that she can give birth to the prophet God wants to use. Many times God delays in answering our prayers until we come into harmony with the purposes of God.
- “You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.” (James 4:2)
 - She desired a son for the family; God desired a prophet for the nation.
 - “Lord of hosts” – This is the first time in the Bible that this name is spoken by human lips.
 - “Your maidservant” – Hannah takes the place of God’s servant three times in this verse. And this is after years of hardship, barrenness, and bitterness. She is humbled before the Lord.
 - She seems more concerned with God’s approval than with His answered prayer. She seeks Him and not just what He can do for her.
 - “remember me” – To remember is more than simply to recall that Hannah existed. It is to go into action on her behalf.
 - “I will give him to the Lord” – A Levite would typically begin his public service at 25 years old. Hannah is willing to give him over immediately.
 - “no razor” – The Nazirite vow; much like Samson.
 - Hannah seems to be praying along the same lines as the Lord communicated with Manoah’s wife about 20 years previous (Judges 13).

- 1:13 – “Hannah spoke in her heart” – Does this follow our preconceived notions of prayer?
- “Eli thought she was drunk” – This must have happened often at this time.
 - This is another insensitive man in her life. Now she is being misjudged by the religious authority in her life.
- 1:14 – “you be drunk” – The very imputation that Peter and the apostles fell under when the Holy Ghost gave them utterance at Pentecost. (Acts 2:13)
- 1:17 – “the God of Israel grant your petition” – Eli answered not knowing what she was praying for.
- 1:18 – “her face was no longer sad” – Hannah took hold of the Word of the Lord in faith and it brought her genuine peace.
- One of the earmarks of true faith is a change in heart-attitude before the promise is actually received.
- 1:19 – “they rose early in the morning and worshiped the Lord” – This was not a mandatory part of the feast. This is in addition to the feast they had just observed.
- 1:20 – “Samuel” – means “heard by God, or asked of God.”
- “I have asked for him” – She remembers her prayer before the Lord. It is a great encouragement in prayer to remember former prayers so we can see how God is answering those prayers.
- 1:23 – “let the Lord establish His word” – Elkanah is in agreement with Hannah’s vow as was required by the law. (Num. 30)
- 1:25 – “brought the child to Eli” – This is likely around 3 years old (possibly as old as 5 years old).
- What would it be like to hand your firstborn son over to God forever?
 - Eli doesn’t have a great track record in raising sons. Hannah must trust God.
 - Samuel must learn to obey God in heartache by turning everything over to Him.
 - Samuel’s first memories will be serving the Lord and assisting in worship.
 - “Eli” – He seems to be 90-92 years old at this time.
- 1:26 – “I am the woman who stood by you here” – Hannah is reminding Eli of their last meeting.
- 1:28 – “lent” – or “returned.” As God gave to her, so she will give back to Him.
- All children are God’s from their birth. They are on loan and parents are merely stewards for a season.
 - Whatever we give to God, it is what we have first asked and received from Him. All our gifts to Him were first His gifts to us.
 - This is the first baby dedication in the Bible. (Jesus was also dedicated.)
 - The Hebrew word for “lent” is “sha’al” which will be the name of the first king of Israel.
 - “as long as he lives” – This is speaking of Samuel.
 - Samuel must grow up with the sense of God’s purpose in his life starting with his very first memories.

Chapter 2:

2:1 – “Hannah prayed” – Hannah becomes a psalmist now.

- Hannah’s prayer is very similar to Mary’s Magnificat in Luke 1:46-55.
- “rejoices in the Lord” – She is rejoicing in God, not in Samuel. She overlooks the gift, and praises the giver.
- “rejoice in Your salvation” – There is some connection in her mind between Samuel and God’s redemptive plan. Samuel will anoint King David.

2:2 – “no one is holy” – That is defined later by the phrase “there is none besides You.” God is so unlike anyone else we have ever known.

2:3 – “by Him actions are weighed” – God knows our heart and our intentions. He judges based on attitudes and intentions as well as actions. (1 Sam. 16:7)

2:5 – “even the barren has borne seven” – She must recognize in a very real way that life comes from God alone.

2:6 – “down to the grave and brings up” – This is a picture or a prophecy of resurrection.

- This is an interesting insight for a Jewish woman living over 1,000 years before Christ.

2:7 – “the Lord makes poor and makes rich” – God is the one who gives the ability to produce wealth. (Deut. 8:18)

2:9 – “by strength no man shall prevail” – Success and victory does not depend on human ability.

- “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” (Zech. 4:6)

2:10 – “His king” – She is speaking of a particular King.

- “His anointed” – (Heb. “mashiyach”) Lit. “Messiah.”
- This is the first time in the Bible that the Messiah is spoken of as the Lord’s king. (See also Luke 1:46-55,69)

2:11 – “ministered to the Lord before Eli” – Samuel is serving God by assisting Eli.

2:12 – “the sons of Eli” – Hophni and Phinehas were grown men raised in a religious environment and serving in a religious position, yet they are still unbelievers.

- “did not know the Lord” – In OT usage, to “know” the Lord is not just intellectual or theoretical recognition. To know the Lord is to enter into fellowship with Him and acknowledge His claims on one’s life.

2:15 – “before they burned the fat” – The fat was the Lord’s portion which He was to receive first.

- It is likely that the raw meat was easier to sell and Hophni and Phinehas were making money off these sacrifices.
- “give meat for roasting to the Lord” – The priests like barbequed meat rather than boiled meat, but it wasn’t their prerogative. But they were to have the wave breast and the heave shoulder as their share. (Lev. 7:34) They were making a gain to themselves and a gratification of their flesh out of the offerings of the Lord.

- 2:17 – “men abhorred the offering of the Lord” – The hypocrisy of the people in leadership and the misrepresentation of God turns people away from the Lord. The people may have wanted to serve God, but they didn’t want to deal with Hophni and Phinehas.
- These men did what they wanted to the detriment of the sacrifice. They trampled the Word of God for their own selfish desires, taking to themselves what was only to be God’s.
 - When ministers trivialize the sacrifice, they trivialize God Himself. (Lev. 10)
 - “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.” (Matt. 23:130)
- 2:18 – “ministered before the Lord” – Samuel, undeterred by the sin of Hophni and Phinehas and the permissiveness of Eli, continues with the Lord. (2:11,18; 3:1)
- “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” (Acts 13:2)
- 2:19 – “year by year” – This implies they only see Samuel once a year.
- Hannah makes the 15 mile journey and a new coat every year.
- 2:21 – “the Lord visited Hannah” – All through the Bible, God is involved in conception.
- You cannot out-give God. Hannah gives Samuel to the Lord and gets 5 more children in return.
 - “Samuel grew before the Lord” – In an age of religious hypocrisy and national apostasy, Samuel grows up into maturity before the Lord. (1 Sam. 3:1,19-21)
- 2:22 – “they lay with the women” – They were having sexual relationships with the women who were coming to the tabernacle to worship. (Exod. 38:8)
- The Canaanites worshipped their gods sexually. Hophni and Phinehas as turning the worship of God into the way of the Canaanites.
- 2:23 – “Why do you do such things?” – This is not the time for reason, but for discipline.
- “I hear...from all the people” – If a father has to ask these questions, it has already gone too far.
 - Eli honored his children above God (v. 29). It is easy to kill our kids with kindness by refusing to deal with things early on.
 - Our kids are on loan from God. Therefore, we need to live by His standards and His Word.
 - Eli’s first ministry is to be to his family, but it seems he failed in this. Eli’s failure as a father has allowed his kids to rule the house and ruin the ministry.
- 2:25 – “who will intercede for him?” – Thankfully, we have Jesus as an Advocate and Intercessor on our behalf. (1 John 2:1; Heb. 7:25)
- “the Lord desire to kill them” – Eli’s warning was much too late.
- 2:26 – “Samuel grew in stature” – Samuel stands in contrast to Hophni and Phinehas.
- 2:28 – “Did I not choose him” – God is letting Eli know of His grace in appointing him to this privileged position.
- “did I not give” – God is wondering why what He has given isn’t good enough.
 - This seems to be many people’s opinion of the Bible nowadays; it is not good enough.

- 2:29 – “kick at My sacrifice” – This can also mean “scorn My sacrifice.”
- “honor your sons more than Me” – Eli taught his sons (v. 23-25), but wouldn’t restrain them (3:13). He will be punished for his failure. (John 5:44)
 - Eli is not punished for the sins of his sons, but for not doing anything about it. Eli is a nice guy, but is unwilling to stand up for truth.
 - A minister’s primary responsibility is to the Lord. It is not a question of “Does it work?” or “What will the people think?” but “Is God pleased?”
 - God is more interested in the servant than in the service.
 - “to make yourselves fat” – False teachers and false shepherds use to the people to benefit themselves. (2 Pet. 2:1-3; Matt. 7:15; Ezek. 34:8)
 - Eli had literally grown fat on the sacrifices of the people. (1 Sam. 4:18)
- 2:30 – “those who honor Me I will honor” – Spiritual privileges bring responsibilities and obligations.
- Someone gave this verse on a piece of paper to Eric Liddell before he ran the 400 meters race in the 1924 Olympics. Earlier in the competition, Liddell refused to run the 100 meters race (he best event), because the heats were run on a Sunday. But while running the 400 meters that year, Eric Liddell set the world record.
- 2:35 – “I will raise up” – God will see to it that the position of priest is filled by at least one righteous man.
- “a faithful priest” – Zadok is the near fulfillment of this prophecy, serving as the priest in through the millennium (1 Kings 2:26-35; Ezek. 40-48). But Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment, serving as a priest in the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7).
 - “faithful” – God defines what faithful is.
 - “priest” – Samuel is more prophet than priest. (1 Sam. 3:20)

Chapter 3:

- 3:1 – “Samuel ministered to the Lord” – Like Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:1-2.
- “the word of the Lord was rare in those days” – Because those days were times when everyone did what was right in their own eyes, it was rare when the Word of God was consulted and/or heard.
 - God will use a young boy to change that in the nation, without any true governmental, religious, or parental leadership to show him the way, but with a true relationship with God and a heart for the word of the Lord. (v. 21)
 - The Word of the Lord is still rare...“the hearing of the Word of the Lord” (Amos). Very few are listening.
- 3:2 – “at that time” – Eli is about 98 years old at this time.
- 3:4 – “the Lord called Samuel” – God speaks so tenderly to Samuel that he mistakes the voice of God for Eli’s.
- 3:7 – “Samuel did not yet know the Lord” – He heard about the Lord, but didn’t yet know Him for himself.
- Josephus said Samuel was 12 years old at this time.
 - It seems that Samuel is at the age of reason. (Deut. 1:39; 2 Sam. 12:23; Jonah 4:11; 1 Cor. 13:11) The principles and lessons invested in a young life must be accepted and walked in when that life matures. The lessons are important, but it cannot end there.

- 3:8 – “Eli perceived that the Lord had called the boy” – Eli has enough spiritual insight to direct Samuel to the Lord.
- Eli may have been a better father to Samuel than he was to his own sons.
- 3:10 – “the Lord came and stood and called as at other times” – Yahweh God is condescending to speak with a 12-year-old boy.
- “Speak, for Your servant hears” – We can expect God to speak to us when we set ourselves to obey whatever He says.
- 3:11 – “I will do something in Israel” – The ark of the covenant is going to be captured.
- 3:13 – “he did not restrain them” – That was Eli’s responsibility.
- Those that do not restrain the sins of others, when it is in the power of their hand to do it, make themselves partakers of the guilt.
- 3:15 – “Samuel lay until morning” – It seems that Samuel cannot go back to sleep.
- “opened the doors of the house of the Lord” – Samuel goes back to serving, even after audibly hearing from God.
- 3:17 – “please do not hide it from me” – Samuel loves Eli like a father and doesn’t want to hurt him.
- 3:18 – “Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him” – This is the secret and power of Samuel’s ministry. He is an instrument to clearly and completely convey the message of God to the people.
- “let Him do what seems good to Him” – Eli is either resigning himself to what he deems to be inevitable or he is exhibiting a measure of faith.
- 3:19 – “let none of his words fall to the ground” – God is upholding Samuel’s prophecies.
- 3:20 – “all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew” – Samuel stands alone in a very dark time.
- 3:21 – “by the word of the Lord” – This is still the main way God reveals Himself.
- God will make Himself known if we go to the Word of God to seek the God of the Word.

Chapter 4:

- 4:1 – “Ebenezer” – means “stone of help.” (1 Sam. 7:12)
- “Aphek” – means “strength.” It was a town about 12 miles northeast of the coastal city of Joppa. Philistine presence this far north suggests an attempt to spread their control over the Israelite tribes of central Canaan.

- 4:3 – “why has the Lord defeated us today” – There is no king in Israel and everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes.
- People will do anything other than confess their sin and seek the Lord.
 - “of the covenant” – It is that covenant that they have broken.
 - “it...it” – They have “it” without “Him.” They think they have God in a box. They have turned the presence of God into an empty religious trinket.
 - This is ritual without relationship, program without power. They are treating the Ark of the Covenant like a lucky charm, looking for it to bring them success rather than looking to the God of the Ark and submitting to His direction.
- 4:4 – “Hophni and Phinehas” – These carnal men are willing to dabble in religious ritual.
- 4:5 – “Israel shouted so loudly” – They have great energy and excitement, but without truth and a right standing before God. Noise, excitement, and emotion doesn’t necessarily mean that God is in it.
- 4:8 – “struck the Egyptians” – This happened 500 years ago and is still remembered.
- The Philistines are more fearful of God than are the Israelites.
- 4: 9 – “be strong” – God is actually encouraging the Philistines in this.
- 4:10 – “there fell of Israel thirty thousand” – There are 30,000 dead Israelites laying in the battlefield with the ark of the covenant set in the middle of the dead.
- We better not trust in mere religious activity.
- 4:11 – “the ark of God was captured” – This phrase or a variation of it is used 5 times in the chapter. (v. 11,17,19,21-22)
- Israel made an idol of the ark and God often deals with our idolatry by taking the idol away.
 - At this time, it seems Shiloh ceases to be the center of worship in Israel. Samuel will go back to Ramah, his hometown. (Ps. 78:60-61)
- 4:12 – “dirt upon his head” – That is a sign of mourning.
- 4:13 – “watching” – Eli is blind, so he is watching with his ears.
- 4:17 – “Hophni and Phinehas, are dead” – In fulfillment of the prophecy given in 1 Sam. 2:34.
- 4:18 – “when he made mention of the ark” – Eli is more shocked by the news of the capture of the ark than by the news of the death of his sons.
- 4:19 – “she bowed herself and gave birth” – This seems to be premature labor.
- 4:21 – “the glory has departed from Israel” – God is not only in the box. But the ark is a picture of what has already happened in Israel due to the sin of the people and priests.
- 4:22 – “the glory has departed from Israel” – She is more aware of the pain in the nation than the pain of her own childbirth and death.

Chapter 5:

5:1 – “the Philistines” – It may be about this time that Samson is burning the Philistine fields with the foxes. The Philistines would be looking for any victory over Samson’s people.

5:2 – “took the ark...into the house of Dagon” – They assume their god gave them victory.

- “Dagon” – The fish god, in the form of a mer-man, was also worshipped by the Assyrians. In the pantheon, he was considered the son of “El” (the chief god) and the father of “Baal.”
 - The lesson for the Philistines is that they got victory over the Israelites, not because of their might or their gods, but because of the sin of Israel.
 - Judgment begins at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17)...but it doesn’t end there.
- “fallen on its face” – Dagon is worshipping God.

5:4 – “the head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off” – God will break our gods too. It is painful for a time, but in the end it can restore us to righteousness.

5:5 – “nor any...tread on the threshold of Dagon” – They had to jump over Dagon broken pieces.

- This practice gets incorporated into the daily religious practice of these idol worshippers. (Zeph. 1:9)

5:6 – “the Lord was heavy on the people of Ashdod” – Because the Philistines were stubborn, but will have to use a heavier hand to release His ark back to the Israelites.

- “tumors” – Or hemorrhoids. It could even be the bubonic plague.
 - God does not desire to simply punish the Philistines, as He did to Sodom and Gomorrah. His desire to witness to the Philistines, therefore He gives them this testimony. (1 Sam. 6:16)

5:8 – “Gath” – The home of the giant, Goliath.

- As they send the ark around to the neighboring towns, they must keep the whole hemorrhoid thing a secret.

5:11 – “kill us and our people” – The tumors/hemorrhoids are the good news. Many are dying.

- God can defend Himself. He doesn’t need the Israelites to do that for Him.

Chapter 6:

6:1 – “country” – Lit. “fields.” They are getting the ark away from the people.

- God has defended His glory far better than the Israelites had ever done.

6:2 – “the priests and the diviners” – These Philistine priests are telling the Philistine people how to appease God.

- “send it to its place” – All they want to do now is get rid of the ark.

6:4 – “five golden tumors” – This offering is entirely pagan. The only acceptable offering to the Lord is blood sacrifice, not golden hemorrhoids. But they are recognizing and owning their guilt.

- “five” – One for each of the major Philistine cities.
- “rats” – Evidently, the rats were part of the plague too.

6:6 – “as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts” – The Philistines repeat this story again. (1 Sam. 4:8)

6:7 – “milk cows which have never been yoked” – They are stacking the deck against the Lord to test to see if it is really God doing these things. The cows would have never done this on their own.

6:9 – “Beth Shemesh” – means “the house of the sun(-god).”

- “by chance” – Could it be that everywhere this ark goes the people get deadly hemorrhoids by chance?

6:12 – “straight for the road to Beth Shemesh” – These cows had never been to Beth Shemesh before.

- “lowing as they went” – The cows are lowing for their calves, even as they are walking away from them.

6:13 – “wheat harvest” – This is May-June and 7 months after the ark had been lost in battle. (v. 1)

- Israel lost the ark in battle, but God brings it back to them by Himself.

6:14 – “offered the cows” – This is a Levitical sacrifice. Beth Shemesh is a Levitical town.

6:16 – “the Philistines had seen it” – They must have watched from a distance.

6:19 – “He struck the men” – God is acting in discipline again.

- “looked into the ark” – The Israelites didn’t respect God and His presence. The Philistines sinned in ignorance. Israel sinned against great light. (Num. 4:20)
 - Only the high priest was ever to come into the same room as the ark and that only once a year with blood sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippor).
 - They are standing before the Law without an atonement cover.
- “fifty thousand and seventy men” – The NIV says “70 men.” The Greek text is written strangely without a conjunction between the “fifty thousand” and the “seventy.” Therefore, there is a lot of debate over how many actually died on that day.
 - The Hebrew grammar can mean that out of the fifty thousand men, God struck seventy of them. “We cannot come to any other conclusion than that the number 50,000 is neither correct nor genuine, but a gloss which was crept into the text through some oversight.” (Keil and Delitzsch)
 - This is a precursor to the largest repentance in Israel since the days of Moses.

6:21 – “Kirjath Jearim” – means “the city of woods.”

Chapter 7:

7:1 – “the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark” – The Israelites are as bad as the Philistines. Instead of turning to the Lord in chastening, they send God away.

- The ark will remain in Kirjath Jearim until David comes to take it to Jerusalem. (2 Sam. 6)

7:2 – “twenty years” – All this time they are under Philistine bondage.

- 7:3 – “Then Samuel” – He is about 30 years old at this time.
- “if you do return...then put away” – For Samuel, repentance looked like something. It is the turning from sin and a turning to the Lord.
 - The sin of Israel was not primarily putting away the Lord but adding other gods to the Lord.
 - John the Baptist’s message was one of repentance; “bear fruits worthy of repentance.” (Matt. 3:8)
 - “He will deliver you” – Physical victory must be preceded by spiritual repentance. Freedom from bondage and oppression comes from a surrender to and a worship of the one true God.
 - The Church seems to be constantly looking for a shortcut to the victorious Christian life that avoids repentance and loving the Lord with all their heart.
- 7:4 – “put away” – No time period is given here. We don’t know how much times elapses between the repentance and the revival.
- “Baals” – This was the male god of fertility and nature and served as the male counterpart to the Ashtoreths.
 - “Ashtoreths” – This was the female goddess of fertility and sexuality. The worship of the Ashtoreths was filled with immortality, sexuality, and pornography.
- 7:5 – “gather all Israel to Mizpah” – This is a large-scale revival in Israel.
- 7:6 – “poured it out” – The pouring out of water is as the pouring out of the soul. It is a picture of total sacrifice to the Lord, never to be taken to oneself ever again.
- The may be the Feast of Tabernacles. (John 7:37-39)
 - “Mizpah” – They are near Ebenezer (v. 12), the place where they lost the ark over 20 years ago. (1 Sam. 4:1)
 - Along with 34,000 Israelite soldiers, they also bury their pride and self-sufficiency at Ebenezer.
- 7:7 – “the Philistines when up against Israel” – The Philistines think Israel is gathering for battle, but Israel has simply come for worship.
- The Philistines were left in the land to teach Israel to fight the wars of Canaan. (Judges 3:1-2)
- 7:9 – “Samuel cried out to the Lord” – Samuel was known as an intercessor. (Ps. 99:6; Jer. 15:1)
- More will be accomplished in this one sacrifice and prayer than was accomplished in Samson’s entire life.
 - A man or woman of prayer is more powerful than a whole army.
- 7:10 – “the Lord thundered” – And the Philistines thought Baal was the god of thunder.
- Josephus said that with the thunder was an accompanying earthquake breaking open the ground and bringing fire out of the fissures.
- 7:11 – “the men of Israel went out” – Now the men of Israel get brave.
- “Beth Car” – means “the house of the lamb.”

7:12 – “Ebenezer” – means “stone of help.”

- They had been defeated here before. Now they find victory at the same place. How many times in the very place of failure has God manifested His faithfulness and work in our lives?
- “Thus far” – The Hebrew implies “up to this point, and in the future it will be the same.”
 - Remembering God’s past faithfulness gives confidence in His future faithfulness. He will not waste His resources. He is faithful to complete what He started.

7:14 – “Amorites” – They had formerly been allies with the Philistines, but now they turn to side with Israel.

7:15 – “Samuel judged Israel” – Samuel was the judge and the prophet. We don’t hear anything of the High Priest at this time as Eli and his sons have passed off the scene.

7:16 – “a circuit” – This is a round trip of over 50 miles.

- “Bethel” – means “house of God.” This is the where God first appeared to Jacob as he was fleeing Esau and going to Haran.
- “Gilgal” – This is the where Israel first set up camp after crossing the Jordan under Joshua. It was the place of consecration before going to Jericho.
 - A school of the prophets located in Gilgal during the time of Elijah and Elisha. (2 Kings 2:1; 4:38)
- “Mizpah” – This is where God granted a supernatural victory over the Philistines and where they set up the Ebenezer stone.

7:17 – “Ramah” – means “heights.” This is Samuel’s hometown. Elkanah and Hannah were from Ramah. Now Samuel goes back, marries, and has children in Ramah. And he establishes the worship of God there.

- “he built an altar to the Lord” – Samuel’s ministry started at home with his own personal altar before the Lord.
 - There is no point in coming to the house of God, talking about consecration, or thinking about vigilance if we aren’t spending time with Him alone.

Chapter 8:

8:1 – “Samuel was old” – Samuel is about 65-70 years old.

- It seems that Samuel made the circuit from 7:16 for 35-40 years.
- “he made his sons judges over Israel” – This is a mistake by Samuel.
 - Gideon handled this situation differently by saying, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you.” (Judges 8:23)

8:2 – “Joel” – means “Jehovah is my God.”

- “Abijah” – means “Jehovah is my Father.”
 - The names of these sons are an interesting picture into the heart of Samuel.

8:3 – “his sons did not walk in his ways” – Samuel’s sons end up doing the same things Eli’s sons did.

- Samuel seems to have done his best in raising his children. They are walking away from his godly example.

- 8:5 – “you are old” – Samuel will live to anoint David. They are rushing this a bit.
- It may have been in the heart of God to make David the first king of Israel.
 - “your sons do not walk in your ways” – After the victory at Mizpah and the years of peace and relative prosperity, they see Samuel and godly leadership passing off the scene. This situation discouraged the heart of Israel, so they look for a king.
 - “make us a king” – God foresaw this and has already given instructions. (Deut. 17)
- 8:6 – “Samuel prayed to the Lord” – He goes to God rather than screaming at the people or going into a depression.
- 8:7 – “not rejected you” – That seems to be what Samuel is feeling.
- God stoops to encourage Samuel as the people are turning from Him.
 - “they have rejected Me” – This is good to remember for all involved in public ministry.
 - The greatness of Israel was that it was ruled as a Theocracy. It was to be led by God and governed through His representatives.
- 8:13-17 – “take” – Samuel warns the people and let’s them know what they’re asking. You have to defend, feed, and support a human government.
- Mankind is corrupt and cannot govern itself.
- 8:18 – “you have chosen for yourselves” – Self will is always a problem.
- 8:19 – “we will have a king over us” – Israel’s calling was to demonstrate the lordship of Jehovah to the world. Instead, they want to be like the heathen nations around them.
- 8:20 – “fight our battles” – The Lord has always done that for them. But they are asking for someone to stand between them and God.
- They missed God goodness to them because of spiritual insensitivity. They want something tangible and human. It is amazing that we would rather serve another human being than serve God.
- 8:22 – “make them a king” – “O Israel, you are destroyed, but your help is from Me. I will be your King; Where is any other, that he may save you in all your cities? And your judges to whom you said, ‘Give me a king and princes?’ I gave you a king in My anger, and took him away in My wrath.” (Hosea 13:9-11)

Chapter 9:

- 9:1 – “Benjamite” – The king of Israel was to come from Judah. In a way, a Benjamite could never fulfill the ideal role of a king.
- “mighty man of power” – The idea is that he was very wealthy.
- 9:2 – “choice and handsome” – Saul looks the part of a king.
- “choice” – That speaks of his physical frame. He is well built.
 - “handsome” – That speaks of his appearance. He is good looking.
 - “Saul” – means “asked of God.”
 - “taller than any of the people” – He may be somewhere near 7 feet tall.
 - When Samuel anoints the next king, God will have to remind him that “man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7)

- 9:3 – “look for the donkeys” – God uses donkeys to get this story started.
- 9:4 – “he passed through the land of the Benjamites” – Saul is being diligent.
 - Saul starts out well, but doesn’t end as well.
- 9:5 – “my father...become worried about us” – Saul is around 30 years old and is still close to his father.
- 9:7 – “what shall we bring the man?” – This is etiquette. It wasn’t required.
- 9:8 – “shekel of silver” – A shekel is currently worth about 33 cents.
- 9:9 – “seer” – They were called seers because they were granted visions to see.
 - “prophet” – This word comes from the root “to bubble up” and is a picture of how God’s Word comes to a prophet by bubbling up from their inmost being.
 - Samuel is called both a seer and a prophet. Samuel begins the line of the prophets in Israel and from here on the prophet takes on a national role in the nation.
- 9:11 – “women going out to draw water” – It was the woman’s job to draw water.
- 9:13 – “bless the sacrifice” – Samuel was pray over the sacrificial meal and the people respected Samuel enough to wait for him to arrive.
- 9:15 – “in his ear” – Samuel spoke “in the hearing (or ear) of the Lord” (1 Sam. 8:21); now God speaks in kind. There is beautiful intimacy in this relationship.
- 9:17 – “the Lord said to him” – Samuel hears the Lord in the midst of the crowd.
- 9:19 – “I am the seer” – God has arranged this.
- 9:20 – “on whom is all the desire of Israel?” – Israel is calling for a king. Samuel tells Saul he is the one they are calling for.
- 9:21 – “the least of all the families of the tribe” – Saul sounds a lot like Gideon at his calling. (Judges 6:15)
 - Saul’s beginnings were supernatural and beautiful. He has all the tools; physical build, looks, stature, position, authority, and esteem, yet his life is left to much failure. The moniker of Saul’s life at the end is that he “played the fool.” (1 Sam. 26:21) And the fool is the one who says in his heart that there is no God. (Ps. 14:1)
- 9:23 – “which I said to you” – Samuel was prepared because of hearing the Word of God.
 - The thigh was the priestly portion. (Exod. 29:22,27; Lev. 7:32-33; Num. 6:20; 18:18)
- 9:24 – “set is before Saul” – This is a ceremonial symbol of a transfer of authority.
- 9:27 – “tell the servant to go on ahead of us” – Samuel has something to tell Saul privately.

Chapter 10:

10:1 – “a flask of oil and poured it onto his head” – Saul is anointed as king of Israel.

- “and kissed him” – Samuel will grow to love Saul so much that God will have to tell Samuel to stop mourning for Saul after Saul’s demise. (1 Sam. 16:1)

10:2-7 – “these signs” – God is going to great lengths to affirm His calling on Saul’s life to Saul.

- The donkeys are okay. God takes care of our stuff.
- He is given bread. God will provide.
- He meets the prophets. God supplies the power.

10:5 – “a tambourine, a flute, and a harp” – Samuel even goes as far as prophesying which instruments these guys will be playing.

10:6 – “the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you” – Matthew Poole translates this, “the Spirit of the Lord will leap, or rush, upon you for a season.” This stands opposed to the Spirit’s “resting upon” a man, as in Num. 11:25 and Isa. 11:2.

- “turned into another man” – Saul didn’t turn himself into another man. And Saul wasn’t turned into a new man. This is not speaking of NT regeneration.

10:9 – “another heart” – That is a different attitude and outlook.

- “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issue of life.” (Prov. 4:23)

10:10 – “the Spirit of God came upon him” – This is the “epi” work of the Holy Spirit to equip for service.

- The three ministries of the Holy Spirit are the “para” ministry to draw men to Jesus (John 14:17), the “en” ministry to indwell all those choosing to believe in Jesus (John 14:17), and the “epi” ministry to overflow and empower people for service (Acts 1:8).
- God would later take the Spirit from him. (1 Sam. 16:14)
- “prophesied among them” – This implies that Saul prophesied in song or worship.
 - What God works in us by His Spirit serves much more for the confirming of faith than any thing wrought for us by His providence.

10:11 – “the son of Kish” – They recognize that Saul didn’t get this gift of prophecy from his father.

10:16 – “he did not tell him what Samuel had said” – Is this humility or unbelief? It may be that Saul is already shrinking away from the call of God on his life.

10:18 – “I brought” – God is speaking through Samuel.

- “I brought up Israel out of Egypt” – God is reminding them of their beginnings. A constant theme of Samuel is the reminder that it was the Lord who delivered Israel from Egypt.
 - “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” (Col. 2:6)

10:19 – “present yourselves before the Lord” – This is all to confirm God’s choice and make it manifest before the people.

- 10:20 – “the tribe of Benjamin” – It is evident that the throne will not continue through Saul and his lineage, because it has already been prophesied to be coming through Judah. (Gen. 49:10)
- “chosen” – Sometimes God will positively answer a request of ours, even if He knows that it not the best for us. We call this God’s permissive will.
- 10:22 – “hidden” – This is not humility; this is shrinking from the call of God. This is indicative of Saul’s life and of Samuel’s experience with Saul throughout his lifetime.
- Saul lived his life in the fear of man and the desire for their praise.
- 10:23 – “brought him from there” – It is bad when a nation has to fetch its king from hiding.
- 10:24 – “Long live the king!” – This is a far cry from having God as their king.
- 10:25 – “the behavior of royalty” – Samuel has already laid this out before the people once before. (1 Sam. 8:10-18; see also Deut. 17:14-20)
- 10:26 – “valiant men went with him” – God is raising up people to serve with and fight alongside of Saul. When going into battle, it is good to have an army.
- There is such great potential in this. God is raising up men to lead the nation.
 - Saul has many natural advantages; a good family, strong and big body, good looks, etc. But they mean nothing apart from the anointing of God.
 - “valiant” – A necessary ingredient for any soldier of God is bravery and boldness.
 - Jeremiah speaks of a curse on those who are “not valiant for the truth.” (Jer. 9:3)
 - Acts 4:29-31 records the disciples’ prayer for boldness and God’s answer.
 - “whose hearts God has touched” – God is motivating people to want to serve. This is important to any kingdom.
 - The kingdom is fought for by many different people brought together by an individual calling of God in their hearts.
- 10:27 – “brought him no presents” – They didn’t honor or respect Saul.

Chapter 11:

- 11:1 – “Nahash” – means “snake, serpent.”
- The Ammonites have a score to settle with Jabesh Gilead because Jephthah defeated them about 80 years earlier. (Judges 11)
 - “Jabesh” – The city of Jabesh Gilead must have been in a weakened state as a result of the slaughter of the men and married women of the city to provide wives to the men of Benjamin who fought for the Gibeahites in the matter of the murdered concubine. (Judges 19-21)
 - “we will serve you” – It is a sign of their weakness to compromise with the enemy in this way.
- 11:2 – “put out all your right eyes” – This would incapacitate them for battle for as they held their shields in their left hands and fought with swords in their right hands, they would need their right eyes to see from behind the shield.
- The serpent loves to take away our vision. (2 Cor. 4:4)
- 11:3 – “Hold off for seven days” – Nahash seems to have the upper hand and must be quite confident in his position to give in to this request.
- It may be that Nahash is simply an unreasonably cruel man looking for war.

- 11:4 – “the messengers came to Gibeah” – The cities of Gibeah and Jabesh Gilead were only about 50 miles apart and were closely connected through the events of Judges 19-21.
- Saul, being a Benjamite from Gibeah, would have also had Jabesh Gilead bloodlines.
- 11:6 – “his anger was greatly aroused” – This is the result of the Spirit of God coming upon a man of God when he sees the oppression of the people of God.
- Later in his life, Saul will hear Goliath blaspheme the people of God and the God of the people of God and not be moved. He will lose this Spirit.
- 11:7 – “cut them in pieces” – This hints at the actions of the Levite with his concubine in Judges 19:29.
- 11:8 – “he numbered them” – Saul is now in charge of 330,000 fighting men.
- 11:10 – “the men of Jabesh said” – They are making it appear to Nahash that they are going to surrender on the following day.
- 11:11 – “Saul put the people in three companies” – Saul is not a soldier; he is a farmer. The farmer is rightly ordering the army. The Spirit of God can make an expert out of one without experience.
- “the morning watch” – That is about 2:00am – 6:00am.
- 11:12 – “we may put them to death” – They are flush with battle and victory.
- 11:13 – “the Lord has accomplished salvation in Israel” – Saul will not mar this victory with an expression of his flesh. At this point in his life, he will not take victory to himself.
- Saul’s humility allows him to be gracious to those who opposed him. Saul’s humility will change later when he threatens to kill the one who ate anything during the conquest of the Philistines (1 Sam. 14:24,44) and when he gets upset that David is getting more credit for victory in war than he was getting and he then tried to kill David (1 Sam. 18:7-8).
- 11:15 – “all the people went to Gilgal” – The people rallied around Saul, not when he was anointed by Samuel, but when they saw the love and mercy he had for the people.
- “Gilgal” – They are going back to the place of consecration where upon entering the land they circumcised the next generation before taking the land. (Joshua 5)

Chapter 12:

- 12:2 – “my sons are with you” – It is generally agreed that this implies that Samuel had removed them from their public positions of ministry and reduced them to the common level.
- “from my childhood to this day” – Samuel has been faithful at a very difficult time in the history of the nation of Israel.
- 12:3 – “His anointed” – Samuel is referring to King Saul, the anointed king.
- 12:4 – “you have not cheated us or oppressed us” – Samuel didn’t use his position for personal gain. He served for the benefit of the people.

- 12:6 – “It is the Lord” – Samuel is rehashing the history of Israel and making the point that all these things were done without a king, yet God was sufficient for the nation.
- They aren’t adding anything of significance by taking a king.
 - “the Lord who raised up” – Samuel’s faithfulness and justice (v. 3-5) is only a reflection of God’s faithfulness and justice to the nation.
- 12:7 – “reason” – Lit. “to decide a case of litigation.”
- “the righteous acts of the Lord” – Israel’s greatness was directly connected with Jehovah.
- 12:9 – “He sold them” – God chastened them without a king, as He will also with a king.
- 12:11 – “And the Lord sent” – God also delivered them without a king.
- 12:12 – “when you saw that Nahash” – Fear motivated them to seek out a king.
- God delivered Israel from Nahash too; he simply used Saul as His instrument.
- 12:14 – “If you” – This phrase carries the idea of “still if, or yet.” This is God’s grace.
- “continue following the Lord your God” – God is still their king. He would go before them and they were to follow Him. If the king failed to follow God, they were to forsake the king to follow God alone.
 - Neither a monarchy nor a democracy can escape a theocracy.
- 12:15 – “the Lord will be against you” – They will not have any greater security now because they have a king. Samuel is showing them the insanity of their desire.
- 12:17 – “wheat harvest” – That is mid-May to late-June. It is a very dry season in Israel and scarcely ever rains.
- “wickedness” – Samuel doesn’t call this merely bad or not good, but wicked.
- 12:18 – “the people greatly feared the Lord” – The storm is so heavy that it causes them to reconsider their decision.
- 12:19 – “we have added to all our sins” – They are sorry, but unrepentant.
- 12:20 – “yet do not turn aside” – Samuel recognizes that they’ve made a mistake, but encourages them to continue on with the Lord anyway. God is not casting them off because of this mistake.
- 12:21 – “empty” – And all the things of the world are vanity and emptiness.
- 12:22 – “for His great name’s sake” – God’s faithfulness to us is not a result of some inherent goodness in us...but for His glory and His pleasure.
- “His great name” – God is the “I Am that I Am” so He can be and do whatever it is that we need Him to be and do.
 - Ultimately, His name is Jesus, “Jehovah has become our salvation.”
 - “pleased the Lord” – “For You created all things, and by Your will (or “for Your pleasure”) they exist and were created.” (Rev. 4:11)
 - God loves us as we are. He desires relationship with us. God really wants nothing more than to have us.

12:23 – “sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you” – Samuel is once again revealing his heart to the people by confessing his responsibility before the Lord to pray for these people.

- The priest represents the people to God. The prophet represents God to the people.

12:24 – “Only fear the Lord” – Samuel continues to point the people to the Lord.

12:25 – “and your king” – That is who they thought would save them.

Chapter 13:

13:1 – “Saul reigned” – Saul will reign over Israel for 40 years. (Acts 13:21)

13:3 – “Saul blew the trumpet” – Saul is taking credit for the victory.

- Saul is constantly threatened by powerful and gifted people around him. He is a proud man.

13:4 – “heard it said” – It is mere hearsay.

- “Saul had attacked” – Saul didn’t do it, Jonathan did.

13:5 – “thirty thousand chariots” – This is one of the largest gatherings of Philistines in the Bible.

- “Beth Aven” – means “house of vanity.”

13:6 – “the people were distressed” – A lot of good a king does. Saul is not protecting and delivering the people as they had expected.

- God is never troubled by the strength of the enemy, but He is troubled by the lack of faith of His people.

13:8 – “the time set by Samuel” – It seems from 1 Sam. 10:8 that Saul is fully aware that Samuel’s previous instructions had reference to this gathering at Gilgal.

- The last time Samuel prayed for the nation in the face of the forces of the Philistines, God miraculously delivered Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. (1 Sam. 7:9-14)
- “the people were scattered from him” – The army is going from 3,000 to 600 men.

13:9 – “he offered the burnt offering” – Saul turns to religion in a time of distress, but only to appease God rather than out of sincerity and a proper relationship with God.

- Saul is a political leader, not a spiritual leader. Only a prophet or priest was to offer sacrifices.

13:10 – “that Samuel came” – He is right on time.

13:11 – “when I saw that the people were scattered” – Saul hurried to act because the people were leaving...and it led to his downfall. He panics because it looks like time is running out.

- Saul assumes that he needs a large army to defeat the Philistines. Yet Jonathan will prevail with the attitude – “nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few.” (1 Sam. 14:6)

13:12 – “felt compelled” – This is not acting out of obedience.

- Saul is acting out of fear and unbelief.

- 13:13 – “done foolishly” – Saul’s foolishness is thinking that he could strengthen Israel’s chances against the Philistines while disregarding the instructions from the Lord as given through His prophet. (1 Sam. 15:22; 28:3)
- Disobedience is always foolishness because it declares that God doesn’t know what He is talking about. But God’s instructions always come for a reason.
 - Saul came up with 5 excuses: 1. it was the people’s fault, 2. it was Samuel’s fault, 3. it was the enemy’s fault, 4. he had to make the sacrifice, and 5. his hand was forced. He could have repented, but instead Saul becomes a man of excuses.
 - “the Lord would have established your kingdom” – It was God’s desire to bless Saul.
- 13:14 – “your kingdom shall not continue” – God hasn’t taken the kingdom away from Saul yet (1 Sam. 15). There is still grace toward Saul.
- “the Lord has sought for Himself a man” – David must be real young at this time, watching the sheep and writing worship music on the hillsides of Bethlehem.
 - God can minister to the heart of a junior high student.
 - “after His own heart” – It is not that David is perfect, but he pursues God’s heart.
- 13:15 – “about six hundred men” – That is down from 3,000. (v. 2)
- 13:19 – “no blacksmith” – Archeology has found that the Philistines were much stronger in metallurgy than were the Israelites. Israel had to go to the Philistines simply to sharpen their axes and plows.
- 13:22 – “neither sword nor spear” – The enemy has taken away the weapons from God’s people.
- “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God.” (2 Cor. 10:4)
 - “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” (Eph. 6:17)
- 13:23 – “the garrison of the Philistines went out” – Israel is greatly outnumbered and overmatched. It is 600 men with 2 swords against 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen of the Philistines.

Chapter 14:

- 14:1 – “did not tell his father” – Saul and Jonathan have very different characters. Jonathan doesn’t want to let Saul know so that Saul’s lack of faith won’t negatively affect Jonathan and what God has put on his heart.
- 14:2 – “pomegranate tree” – This tree was a common symbol of victory in that culture.
- 14:3 – “the people did not know” – Jonathan is doing this between him and the Lord. He didn’t have to let all the people know.
- Jesus warned against the attitude that causes us to do things “to be seen of men.” (Matt. 6:1-18)
- 14:4 – “Bozez” – means “glistening.”
- “Senh” – means “thorny.”

14:6 – “let us go over” – This is a venture in faith.

- Jonathan wasn’t afraid to face the giants.
- “these uncircumcised” – Jonathan sees the Philistines as standing outside the covenant of God.
- “the Lord will work for us” – They are putting themselves in a position that will allow God to do something miraculous through them.
 - D.L. Moody said, “The world has yet to see what God can do with a man or a woman whose heart is completely turned over to Him.”
 - F.B. Meyer said, “God is ever on the lookout for believing souls, who will receive His power and grace on the one hand, and transmit them on the other.”
- “nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few” – This victory will be accomplished by God in the heart of one man who serves the Lord.
 - 2 Chron. 14:11 – “Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power.”
 - 2 Chron. 16:8-9 – “Were the Egyptians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the Lord, He delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.”
 - Isa. 59:19 – “When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.”
 - Dan. 11:32 – “Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.”
 - 1 Cor. 1:27-28 – “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are.”

14:7 – “I am with you” – This is a true servant, willing to fight for and die with his leader.

- Armor-bearers in ancient times had to be unusually brave and loyal, since the lives of their masters often depended on them.

14:10 – “this will be a sign to us” – Jonathan is looking at getting called out.

- Jonathan hasn’t gotten stuck in the paralysis of analysis. God is looking for a heart, but too many times our head gets in the way.
- Jonathan assumes that God wants to do something and can use him to do it. So many times we want God to call us to something specifically, when all the while He has already called us to go. God will tell us to stop when it is not right...until then we go and tell.
- Jonathan moves ahead in God’s work without presuming by allowing God the right to shut it down.

14:11 – “the Hebrews are coming out of their holes” – The Philistines are making fun of them.

14:13 – “climbed up on his hands and knees” – Nothing is going to stop Jonathan now.

- The rock face is so steep that Jonathan and his armor-bearer must climb up on hands and knees. This would leave them in no condition to attack an army standing at the top of the hill.

14:14 – “twenty men within about half an acre” – This is 1 sword against 20 in close hand-to-hand combat.

- This is God’s victory, not Jonathan’s. (v. 23)

- 14:15 – “a very great trembling” – Lit. “a trembling of God.”
- 14:19 – “Withdraw your hand” – Saul changes his mind on bringing the ark into the battle.
 - Saul is slow in moving forward. He has no clue.
- 14:20 – “every man’s sword was against his neighbor” – The Philistines turn on one another. (Israel only had two swords, so God uses the Philistines swords.)
- 14:22 – “all the men of Israel who had hidden...followed hard after them” – The faith and courage of Jonathan has roused the courage of the rest of the men. (Deut. 20)
- 14:23 – “the Lord saved Israel” – God used two men to deliver the nation.
- 14:24 – “the men of Israel were distressed” – Saul ties the hands of the army of the Lord. He encumbers the work of God by making a foolish vow in the flesh.
 - It is typical of church history that when God begins to move someone puts human rules and structure to it and snuffs out the work of God.
 - “I have taken vengeance on my enemies” – Saul makes this all about himself.
 - Jonathan saw this battle from God’s perspective (v. 6); Saul only from his own.
- 14:26 – “there was the honey, dripping” – This is the land flowing with milk and honey.
- 14:27 – “countenance brightened” – Jonathan was refreshed and energized for the battle.
- 14:30 – “much greater slaughter” – They would’ve gotten a greater victory if not for Saul’s foolish vow.
- 14:32 – “people ate them with the blood” – They didn’t drain the blood properly (Lev. 17:14; Deut. 12:23-25). They are breaking the Law of God while following the rules of Saul.
 - “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?” (Matt. 15:3)
- 14:33 – “you have dealt treacherously” – Saul puts all the blame on the people.
- 14:35 – “Saul built an altar” – We do not hear that God is prompting the building of this altar. There is an altar and an ark already set up in Israel.
- 14:36 – “draw near to God here” – Saul is running ahead in the flesh without prayer.
- 14:37 – “He did not answer him that day” – They assume correctly that since God has not answered that there is sin in the camp.
 - “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.” (Ps. 66:18)
- 14:39 – “he shall surely die” – This is another stupid vow.
 - “not a man among all the people answered” – They know it was Jonathan’s fault.
- 14:43 – “Tell me what you have done” – Jonathan has scattered the entire Philistine army as a result of his venture in faith and Saul is ready to kill him for eating honey.

14:44 – “you shall surely die” – Saul is more severe on his son who has broken his vow than on all the men who had transgressed the Word of God by eating blood.
- Saul could have repented of his stupid vow. He is losing his mind.

14:45 – “the people rescued Jonathan” – The people talk sense into their king.
- “he has worked with God this day” – That is the greatest joy of a venture in faith.

14:46 – “the Philistines went to their own place” – The Philistines get away as Saul bumbles around with this unnecessary oath.

14:47 – “Wherever he turned, he harassed them” – God is graciously still granting victory to Israel.

14:50 – “Ahinoam” – Saul will later call her a perverse, wretched woman.

14:51 – “Abner” – means “my father is Ner.”

14:52 – “he took him for himself” – Saul continues to battle according to the flesh and takes to himself everything he sees that is of value.
- Jonathan’s spirit is different. He was willing to give of himself and step out in the Spirit.

Chapter 15:

15:1 – “the Lord sent me” – It is God’s grace to Saul to send the prophet to warn him and send him into another mission.

- “heed” – This means “to listen with the intent of obeying.”
 - Samuel may be sharing this with great emotion as we will find him mourning for Saul at the end of this chapter.
- “the voice of the words of the Lord” – There is a person behind the Word of God.

15:3 – “destroy all” – The Amalekites are called “sinners” in v. 18.

- After Israel came out of Egypt, the Amalekites attacked Israel rear flanks going after the slower, older, and weaker. Joshua then made war with Amalek and won as Moses’ arms were supported by Aaron and Hur. God said they would have war with Amalek “from generation to generation” (Exod. 17:8-16) and ordered them to “blot out the remembrance of Amalek” after getting into the promised land (Deut. 25:17-19).
- If you do not bring your flesh to the cross, it will come back later to attack you. Saul was killed by an Amalekite. Haman was also an Agagite (an Amalekite).

15:6 – “Kenites” – The descendants of Moses’ father-in-law Jethro had helped Israel through the wilderness and settled with Israel in the promised land. Yet it seems they were quick to make pacts with the enemies of Israel. (Num. 10:29; Judges 1:16; 4:11-12)

15:8 – “alive” – This is in direct disobedience.

15:9 – “Agag” – means “flame.” It seems to be the title of the Amalekite king.

- “all that was good” – These things were only good in their estimation. God had said they were worthy of total destruction.
- “unwilling” – It is not that they could not. It is a matter of the will.

- 15:11 – “greatly regret” – This comes from the root word that means “to sigh.”
- God doesn’t change. He always deals with obedience one way and disobedience another.
 - This is God’s view of partial obedience.
 - “it grieved Samuel” – Samuel shows great emotion and love toward Saul.
- 15:12 – “a monument for himself” – Saul is feeling very good about himself.
- Saul is a man driven by what other people think about him.
- 15:13 – “Blessed are you of the Lord” – Saul speaks in this spiritual language while at the same time walking in disobedience. He is self-deceived.
- 15:14 – “What then is this bleating” – You cannot keep sin quiet for long. It always comes to the surface.
- 15:15 – “the people spared” – Those that are quick to justify themselves are commonly quick to blame and condemn others. Saul always blames someone else.
- Saul is to be the king and lead others in doing the right thing. Instead under his leadership, they walk in disobedience.
 - “sacrifice to the Lord your God” – Saul turns this into something religious, rather than allow it to be a matter between him and God.
 - “your God” – Saul doesn’t own the Lord as his God.
 - “the rest we have utterly destroyed” – There were still Amalekites left alive, either escaping the battle or left alive by Saul. (1 Sam. 27:8; 30:1; 2 Sam. 1:8-10; 8:12; Esther 3:1)
- 15:16 – “last night” – God has already talked with Samuel.
- 15:17 – “little in your own eyes” – True humility is marked by complete obedience. The outflow of no longer being little in your own eyes is willful disobedience and excuses for sin.
- Saul now looks big in his own eyes.
 - “Pride arising from the consciousness of his own strength, led him astray to break the command of God.” (Keil and Delitzsch, p. 466)
 - “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” (Rom. 12:3)
- 15:18 – “the sinners” – The Amalekites are wicked and debased.
- 15:19 – “evil in the sight of the Lord” – This is God’s opinion of Saul’s partial obedience.
- Humans are very good at rationalizing and minimalizing their own sin.
 - God never asks of us something He doesn’t also give us the power to pull off. Where God guides, God provides.
- 15:20 – “brought back Agag...I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites” – This is complete inconsistency in logic and reason.
- 15:21 – “to sacrifice to the Lord your God” – We often want to bring to the altar the things that are to be put to death in the battlefield.
- It is very hard to convince religious people that their religious activity doesn’t mean anything in light of eternity.

15:22 – “to obey is better than sacrifice” – To sacrifice outside of obedience is mere appeasement and our God cannot be appeased. (Psalm 40; 51; Prov. 21:3; Jer. 7; Micah 6:8)

- “The kingdom of God is an invisible kingdom that is made visible when God’s people obey” – Damian Kyle.
- It doesn’t cost us anything to sacrifice.

15:23 – “rebellion” – This is because we have given place to another spiritual power in our lives.

- “witchcraft” – Saul will resort to witchcraft before he is through. (1 Sam. 28:3)
 - Saul is ruthless with the witches and other people’s sin, but he is very lenient with his own sin. (1 Sam. 28:3)
- “idolatry” – The core root of idolatry is imposing our will above the will of God.
 - “All conscious disobedience is actually idolatry, because it makes self-will, the human I, into a god.” (Keil and Delitzsch, p. 468)
 - The “I wills” of Satan in Isaiah 14:13-14.
- “you have rejected the word of the Lord” – He rejected it by not obeying it.

15:24 – “transgressed” – Lit. “to step across the line.”

- There is a cost to repentance and transparency, but that is the road to healing.
- “feared the people” – This was the reason for Saul’s sin. Saul cared more for people than he did for the Lord. This is nothing more than an excuse.
 - “The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.” (Prov. 29:25)

15:25 – “return with me” – Saul is admitting this to alleviate the consequences. He wants to avoid public scandal by taking Samuel with him to sacrifice so the people don’t suspect a problem.

15:26 – “the Lord has rejected you from being king” – It seems that God is still extending grace to Saul in allowing him to step down from the throne and concede it to the man of God’s choosing. But instead Saul tries to hold onto it for himself (v. 27).

15:28 – “the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today” – Years earlier, Saul had the kingdom taken from his lineage. Now the kingdom is taken from him personally.

- Saul had all the natural advantages, but he didn’t have the kingdom.
- “has given” – This is spoken in the past tense. David is now the new king.

15:29 – “nor relent” – God is relentless.

15:30 – “yet honor me now” – Saul wants Samuel to cover this over.

15:31 – “Samuel turned back after Saul” – Samuel is going back for Agag, not just for Saul.

15:32 – “cautiously” – Lit. “cheerfully.” Agag is expecting a reprieve.

15:33 – “Samuel hacked Agag in pieces” – Samuel shows Saul and the nation what true worship is all about. Worship begins with obedience.

- Samuel is somewhere around 75 years old at this time.
- This is a picture of how we are to handle the flesh with the Word of God, our two-edged sword. (Heb. 4:12)

15:34 – “Ramah” – means “heights.”

- “Gibeah” – means “hill.”

- Samuel hacks Agag to death and returns to the heights. Saul chooses partial obedience and returns to the hill to live the rest of his life in mediocrity.

15:35 – “Samuel no more went to see Saul” – Ramah and Gibeah were less than 10 miles apart, but they never saw each other again.

Chapter 16:

16:1 – “How long will you mourn for Saul” – Samuel is heart-broken over Saul.

- Samuel gave Eli a very similar prophecy concerning God taking away his position. He has been through this before.
- “horn with oil” – The oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit. The power and authority are not in the oil itself.
 - This is also true of the NT practice of laying hands on another to commission them for service. It is the public recognition of what God has already chosen.
- “I have provided Myself a king” – In contrast to Saul, who was chosen by God at the demand of the people.
 - Saul is a reflection of the heart of the people. David is a reflection of the heart of God.

16:2 – “he will kill me” – Samuel is mourning for Saul even though Saul would kill him.

- The road from Ramah (where Samuel was – 15:34) to Bethlehem passed through Gibeah of Saul.
- God told Samuel to anoint the next king of Israel. He can’t do that if he is dead.
- “take a heifer with you” – The sacrifice is God’s plan to hide this venture from Saul.

16:4 – “peaceably” – That is opposed to praying for earthquakes and fire or cutting people in half. And no doubt, they have heard of the split between Saul and Samuel.

16:6 – “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him” – Samuel has fallen into the error of judging on externals, even after having to deal with Saul. Even prophets make mistakes.

- Eliab must look a lot like Saul and Saul looked the part of a king, but his heart wasn’t right. (1 Sam. 17:17,28-30)

16:7 – “the Lord said to Samuel” – Samuel gets these instructions from God in the midst of a group of people.

- “the Lord looks at the heart” – God sees what is most true in and of us. This is a comfort and a cause for trembling.
 - This world appeals to us by outward appearance. Everything is pushed on us by attacking our eyes and our ears. God is willing to commune with us in our hearts.
 - “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” (Jer. 17:9)
 - “I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.” (1 Cor. 4:3-4)

16:11 – “the youngest” – Lit. “the least.”

- Josephus said that David was 10 years old at this time. Many believe David to be about 15 at this time. He is probably somewhere in that range.
- “keeping the sheep” – This was the lowest task in a household. David is so lightly esteemed that Jesse didn’t even call for him when Samuel arrived. But God is training David in the small things to prepare him for greater works.
- Samuel, Jesse, and the brothers have no idea that David is the one. They have no idea of what God is stirring in David’s heart.
- “we will not sit down till he comes” – Samuel will not eat until this task is done.

16:12 – “ruddy” – means “red.” Red hair was a sign of beauty in that culture.

- “bright eyes” – Lit. “light-colored, or weak eyes.” That would be an anomaly in that culture.

16:13 – “Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him” – David will be anointed and recognized as king in God’s eyes for years and yet still be hiding in caves, running through the desert, and fleeing for his life.

- Josephus says that the rabbis taught that as Samuel pours the oil on David’s head, Samuel leans over and whispers in David’s ear, “You are the next king of Israel.”
- This is the first of three anointings of David. The others are found in 2 Sam. 2:4 and 5:3.
- “David” – means “beloved.”
- “from that day forward” – David lived the rest of his life under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

16:14 – “the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul” – Saul loses the coming upon work of the Holy Spirit.

- Saul was not sealed with the Spirit as a NT believer is.
- “distressing spirit from the Lord” – God allows this evil spirit to get at Saul.
- When God’s covering is removed from our lives, we’re vulnerable to anything. Paul taught the Corinthian church to bind one over to Satan who was rebelliously sinning against God and authority. (1 Cor. 5:5)

16:16 – “skillful player on the harp” – Music is a very powerful force. Satan knows music (Ezek. 28) and its influence.

- Marx, Lenin, and Hitler all believed that if they controlled the nation’s music and poets, then they would control the nation.
- “you shall be well” – The recommendation will make Saul feel better while in disobedience. Saul needs to repent, not merely have his conscience superficially soothed.
- “The goodness of God leads you to repentance.” (Rom. 2:4)
- “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” (Prov. 27:6)

16:18 – “I have seen a son of Jesse” – David must have a remarkable reputation.

- This “distressing spirit” will bring David to the palace.

16:21 – “he became his armorbearer” – David is being trained as the next king of Israel. He will learn much from counter-example, by seeing the end of it in Saul’s life.

- David will not allow the negative example of Saul to be an excuse for him to abandon the call of God in his life.
- David will go from the palace to the desert and back to the palace again.

16:23 – “play it with his hand” – No doubt, he played the Psalms he had written on the hillside while watching the sheep.

- “refreshed and well” – The Word of God set to music is a powerful force.

Chapter 17:

17:1 – “the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle” – We are not told of the time elapsed since the last time Jonathan led the defeat the Philistines. (1 Sam. 14)

- “Ephes Dammim” – means “the border of blood.”
 - All giants are defeated at the border of blood, as it is Jesus Christ’s blood that has brought the victory.

17:4 – “six cubits and a span” – That is 9’ 9”. (Some say this is 9’ 2”).

- We read of the Anakim giants in Joshua 11.

17:5 – “five thousand shekels” – That is about 200lbs.

17:7 – “weaver’s beam” – The weight of the shaft would have to balance the spear head. This spear may have been nearly 50lbs in totality.

- “six hundred shekels” – That is about 25lbs.

17:8 – “he stood and cried” – Goliath, in brass, would glisten in the sun as he stands in the middle of the valley and yells at the army of the Israelites.

17:10 – “defy the armies of Israel” – The giants are real and stand in opposition to the people of God.

- “give me a man” – The idea is, “Isn’t there a man among you?”

17:11 – “Saul...greatly afraid” – Saul was the tallest man in Israel and as the king he should have been the one to take on Goliath. (1 Sam. 9:2)

- Saul’s fear rubs off on his army...as will David’s faith. (v. 52)

17:14 – “followed Saul” – David followed God, not Saul.

17:15 – “returned from Saul to feed his father’s sheep” – This is as the anointed king of Israel. He doesn’t consider this menial task below him even now.

- At the end of David’s life, he still only considered himself “the sweet psalmist of Israel.” (2 Sam. 23:1)

17:16 – “presented himself 40 days” – The enemy is relentless when he has us on the run. Goliath comes out twice a day for 40 continuous days just to taunt the people of God.

17:18 – “carry these ten cheeses” – David will only take on the giant after carrying sandwiches to his brothers.

17:21 – “in battle array” – They’d line up across from one another and yell at each other.

- The church is all lined up and making a lot of noise, but where is the one going out against the enemy.

17:22 – “greeted his brothers” – Typically, Judah (which is David’s family) was stationed at the front in any battle. David greeting his brothers takes him straight to the front of the battle.

- 17:25 – “the king will enrich with great riches” – Saul is trying to pay someone else to do what he should be doing.
- It is observable that Saul in his great distress does not encourage himself in God, nor seek His counsel or favor by prayers and sacrifices, but expects relief from men only. This was one effect and sign of the departure of God’s Spirit from him. (1 Sam. 16:14)
- 17:26 – “What shall be done for the man?” – David is astonished that they need a reward to fight Goliath, when Goliath is defying the God of Israel.
- 17:28 – “Eliab’s anger was...against David” – This is typical brother stuff going on here. Jesus said, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.”
- One has to fight the battle of faith within one’s own family before defeating any giant. Many times our families know us so well that they can never know us at all.
 - The natural always mocks the spiritual.
- 17:32 – “let no man’s heart fail” – David’s heart is amazing. He is now encouraging all the others as he decides to stand up to the giant.
- “your servant will go and fight” – David takes on the challenge without a plan.
 - He knows it is right to stand up for the glory of God and His people. (v. 36)
- 17:33 – “You are not able” – Of course David isn’t able. That was never in question.
- This shows Saul’s focus. He has taken his eyes off of God and is looking at this only in the natural.
 - This is David’s second battle before the battle. The first battle was with his family; the second battle is with the experts.
- 17:36 – “killed both lion and bear” – God has proven His faithfulness to David already.
- These battles were unwinnable without the Lord. The Living God will be the only thing separating David and death at the hands of Goliath.
- 17:37 – “the Lord be with you” – David’s faith may be rubbing off on Saul.
- 17:39 – “David took them off” – David, just a young man of about 17 years old, tries to get into the armor of the tallest man in all Israel.
- “I have not tested them” – You cannot fight your giant in someone else’s armor.
 - Everyone has to get their own anointing from God to do what He is calling them to do. You cannot win with someone else’s empowering of the Spirit.
 - The experts have gear and somehow believe that their things even the battle.
- 17:40 – “five smooth stones” – Goliath had 4 brothers. (1 Sam. 21:18-22)
- “the brook” – In the Valley of Elah, the stream is set in the middle of the valley. That means David was fully committed before he even had any ammunition.
- 17:42 – “he disdained him” – David wasn’t a worthy opponent for a proud giant.
- Goliath has waited 40 days for this little boy to step forward. This isn’t a fight, this is murder.

- 17:43 – “Am I a dog?” – Goliath felt insulted that they sent David to fight against him.
- 17:45 – “with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin” – David is aware of the danger.
- “But I come to you” – David turns Goliath’s threat back on him.
- 17:46 – “that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel” – David’s concern is not for himself, his people, or the enemy, but for the Lord and making Him known.
- This is what God is trying to convince His own people of.
 - David’s venture in faith to do something beyond his own personal resources gives God room to do something as a testimony of God Himself.
- 17:47 – “the Lord does not save with sword and spear” – David doesn’t go into this battle in the flesh. He is not going into this battle for victory; he is going into this battle from victory, and that victory is based on his relationship with God.
- David had already won this battle while on the hillside with the sheep.
- 17:48 – “David hurried” – David runs at Goliath.
- 17:49 – “he slung it and it struck the Philistine in his forehead” – There is nothing else that could’ve happened in this battle. This is God’s battle for God’s glory. The Holy Spirit was all over that stone.
- 17:51 – “stood over the Philistine” – It seems to imply that David stands on top of the fallen body of Goliath to cut off his head.
- “cut off his head” – At this point, the Philistines know Goliath isn’t going to be getting up.
- 17:52 – “the men of Israel and Judah arose” – The Israelites are real brave now.
- 17:54 – “put his armor in his tent” – Later, Goliath’s sword will show up with the Jewish priests in Nob (1 Sam. 21:1-9), so David must have dedicated it to the Lord by giving it to the priests.
- 17:55 – “whose son” – No doubt, Saul had many armor bearers in the king’s court. He may know David, but he doesn’t know who David’s father is so that he can reward him. (v. 25)
- This brings David into national recognition. He was already anointed by Samuel and serving in the king’s court. Yet, it will be 15 years until he ascends to the throne. In between that is persecution, heartbreak, and the making of a man of God. David will have everything stripped away and all that David will be left with is his own personal relationship with the Lord.
 - AW Tozer said, “I doubt if God can use a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply.”

Chapter 18:

- 18:1 – “the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David” – Because they were so much alike. (1 Sam. 14 & 17)
- “knit” – The word implies “oneness, or like-ness.”

- 18:4 – “Jonathan took off the robe” – Jonathan is recognizing David as the next king, a position that could’ve been his if his father had not failed.
- There is no ambition in Jonathan. He is ready to surrender to God’s order.
 - “the robe” – These were his royal garments and a sign of his position in the palace.
 - “his sword and his bow” – These were his weapons of warfare and a sign of his position in the army.
- 18:5 – “David went out wherever Saul sent him” – David has no ambition or impatience in him either. He knew that promotion comes only from the Lord. (Ps. 75:6)
- “behaved wisely” – This is repeated of David in vv. 14, 15, and 30. David is growing.
 - If we take care of our character, God will take care of our reputation. But if we attempt to put out the fires of gossip and slander to protect our reputation, Satan will be sure that all we ever do is run around to put out fires.
- 18:7 – “Saul...David” – Rather than praising the Lord, they are exalting the servants.
- 18:8 – “very angry” – The Hebrew carries the idea of “a slow burn.”
- “displeased him” – Lit. “it was evil in his eyes.”
 - This comes as a result of Saul’s pride and jealousy. And jealousy and paranoia are sure to destroy any kingdom and ministry.
 - “but the kingdom” – Saul knew his throne was to be given to another. (15:28)
 - This is an amazing picture of one man in decline and another man on the rise. The one in decline lives in comfort; the one on the rise lives in discomfort. The one in decline is shallow and cannot find rest; the one on the rise finds rest in a deepening relationship with God.
 - “Purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (James 4:8) Saul could have at any times repented and lived the rest of his days in God’s favor. But the heart of the problem is a problem of the heart.
- 18:10 – “the distressing spirit from God” – God has removed His Spirit from Saul and that leaves him open to the attack of other spirits.
- Satan always tried to thwart the Messianic line and now he is using Saul for those purposes.
 - “prophesied” – Lit. “babbled, raved, or raged.” (Keil and Delitzsch, p. 491)
- 18:11 – “Saul cast the spear” – Sometimes there are negative personal consequences to killing giants...and they often come from the camp.
- “twice” – Why would David go back a second time?
- 18:12 – “the Lord was with him” – This is true even while ducking and running from spears.
- This is repeated of David in vv. 14 and 28.
- 18:13 – “captain over a thousand” – Saul is trying to get David into a war that will kill him.
- 18:16 – “went out and came in” – This is speaking of David’s victory in war.
- 18:17 – “give her to you as a wife” – Saul, trying to look good, gives David a wife while secretly trying to have David killed in battle.
- David will do this same thing to Uriah years later.

- 18:19 – “should have been given to David” – David’s statement was made in true humility. He doesn’t react when Merab is given to another in marriage.
- 18:21 – “she may be a snare to him” – Michal may be why Saul didn’t give Merab to David.
- She will be a snare to him, but it will not be to his detriment. (2 Sam. 6:20-23)
- 18:22 – “Saul commanded his servants” – Saul gets them to lie to David.
- 18:25 – “foreskins” – Since Israelites were circumcised, this would force David to go to the enemy.
- 18:28 – “Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with Saul” – Saul is sinning against great light.
- 18:29 – “still more afraid” – Lit. “tortured.” Saul’s failure to stop God’s blessing is driving him crazy.
- This is the end of ambition and jealousy.
- 18:30 – “highly esteemed” – This can also be translated “precious.”

Chapter 19:

- 19:1 – “Jonathan” – Being Saul’s son and David’s friend puts him in a very tough situation.
- Jonathan may likely have been 25-28 years older than David and he seems to be the initiator in this relationship. 2 Sam. 1:26 says “Jonathan...your love to me... David may never have been the man that he became without the friendship and influence of Jonathan at this critical time of his life.
- 19:4 – “very good toward you” – Jonathan is showing how Saul has benefitted from David.
- 19:6 – “Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan” – Saul greatly vacillates in his opinions. He is a double-minded man. (James 1:8; 4:8)
- 19:8 – “struck them with a mighty blow” – This arouses Saul’s jealousy once again.
- 19:9 – “distressing spirit from the Lord” – Even Satan must get God’s permission before hassling people. At this point, Saul is vulnerable to evil attack because he has left the covering of God.
- 19:10 – “David fled” – David never returned to the palace until he was king of Israel, nearly 20 years later.
- 19:12 – “he went and fled” – God is stripping away everything that David could lean on except Himself. He is going to get us to know that He (and He alone) is enough.
- These challenges come even as David is under the anointing.
 - This is the making of a man of God.
- 19:13 – “an image” – Why would David allow this idol to be in his house?
- 19:15 – “in the bed, that I may kill him” – Saul is willing to kill David on his sick bed.
- 19:17 – “Why should I kill you?” – Michal betrays the character of David to save herself.

19:18 – “to Samuel” – David, in his pain, goes to a counselor.

- David must have a lot of questions for Samuel.

19:19 – “Naioth” – Where the school of the prophets was located.

19:23 – “the Spirit of God was upon him also” – This is God’s grace. He could’ve struck him down dead.

- God supernaturally intervenes to give David a head start into the wilderness.
- A person can be affected by the power of God resulting in amazing experiences, but not surrendered to the power of God which would result in a changed life.

19:24 – “his clothes” – These were his royal clothes.

- Stripping off ones clothes was typically a sign of deep humility and grieving.
- “naked” – Saul may have had a loincloth on.

Chapter 20:

20:1 – “Then David fled from Naioth” – David has lost his position, his friend, his wife, his home, and now his nearest counselor...for 10 years of exile.

- There are some things that God will not allow us to go through with help. God is enough.
- “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Cor. 12:9)
- “What have I done?” – David begins the questioning.
- This is David’s path and preparation for the throne.

20:2 – “by no means” – Jonathan is shocked to hear the truth. He has been taking the word of his untrustworthy father over that of his faithful friend.

20:3 – “a step between me and death” – There always is merely one step between us and death. “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” (Ps. 90:12)

20:6 – “If your father misses me at all, then say” – David is descending into deception.

- David is being stripped, so he is goes into self-preservation mode. And the decisions he makes in that place will have severe consequences for those he involves in the lies. (1 Sam. 20:33; 22:18)
- Later in his life, he is very different. As Absalom is taking the kingdom as one of the results of his sin with Bathsheba, he completely submits to whatever God allows. And eventually God restores David to the throne.

20:8 – “kill me yourself” – David does not ask for undiscerning and absolute loyalty. If he has done something wrong, he is willing to accept the necessary rebuke for it.

20:11 – “Jonathan said to David” – Jonathan comes up with this plan.

20:12 – “The Lord God of Israel is witness” – Jonathan is making himself accountable to the Lord.

20:15 – “not cut off your kindness from my house” – Typically, a new king would kill off all the heirs of the previous king to prevent a future uprising.

- Jonathan is reaffirming the covenant with David knowing that David is to be the next king.
- Jonathan seems to relinquish all the things the world values so that David can be successful. What are we willing to give up so that God’s plan can come to pass?
- David will keep this covenant with Jonathan even after Jonathan has died. (2 Sam. 9:1-8; 21:7)

20:17 – “David’s enemies” – This is an unknowing reference to his father, Saul.

20:19 – “Ezel” – means “the rock that shows the way.”

20:22 – “the Lord has sent you” – It is especially important for David to know that the Lord is sending him away.

20:26 – “he is unclean” – Saul believes that David is ceremonially unclean and will be ready to participate in the feast tomorrow.

20:28 – “David earnestly asked permission” – Could Jonathan lie to his father with a straight face?

20:30 – “Saul’s anger was aroused against Jonathan” – It doesn’t seem that Saul believes the story.

20:31 – “nor your kingdom” – Saul throws Jonathan’s lost position back at him.

- Samuel has already told Saul that Jonathan wouldn’t be the next king. (1 Sam. 15:28)

20:32 – “Jonathan answered Saul” – What Saul has done is so bad that he forces his son against him if his son wants to do what is right.

- Jonathan is willing to stand up against his father while Abner and many others are willing to overlook this evil to sit with the king.

20:33 – “by which Jonathan knew” – The spear is a good clue as to Saul’s intentions.

20:36 – “the lad ran” – We, like this young man, are often unknowingly used to communicate between two groups.

20:37 – “the arrow beyond you” – David is waiting at Ezel for an arrow shot by someone else to determine the rest of his life.

- All lives must go through this chapter. We too will spend some time by the rock Ezel waiting for direction is a situation that is completely out of our control. And it is there that we must realize that God is in control.
- David seems willing to take whatever comes to him here as if it came from God’s hand.

20:42 – “forever” – Jonathan is finally and completely yielding the kingdom to David.

Chapter 21:

21:1 – “David” – He is still under 20 years old.

- “Nob” – The ark isn’t in Nob. It is still in Kirjath Jearim. (2 Sam. 6) But the priests and the tabernacle are now set up there.
- “alone” – David was familiar with being alone while watching the sheep. But since, he has had time in the king’s court and leading over 1,000 men into battle. Yet now he finds himself alone again.
- It is so important to maintain our relationship with the Lord, even during times of busy service, because there will be a day again when that is all we have.

21:2 – “The king has ordered me” – Now David lies to the priest by acting as if he is on a secret mission.

- This is the same man who killed Goliath with a sling and a stone.
- David will regret this lie as it puts the priests’ lives at stake. (1 Sam. 22:22)

21:5 – “us” – David seems to be alone and may be lying again about having men with him.

21:6 – “the priest gave him holy bread” – Jesus commends the giving of the priestly bread to David as an OT example of the fact that human needs are more important than the legalistic aspects of the law. (Matt. 12:1-8; Luke 6:3-4)

- The showbread was only to be eaten by the priests. (Lev. 24:9)
- “the showbread” – Lit. “the bread of His presence.” (Exod. 25:30)

21:7 – “Doeg” – means “anxiety, or fearful.”

- This seems to speak of David’s current state of fear.

21:9 – “the sword of Goliath” – David is trusting in the sword of his fallen enemy.

- This sword will serve as a reminder and a rebuke to David’s faith at this time.

21:10 – “Gath” – David is running to Goliath’s hometown carrying Goliath’s sword.

21:11 – “David the king” – The people of the Philistines have more faith than David in God’s promises to David.

21:12 – “afraid” – David wasn’t afraid of Goliath, but he is now afraid of the king of Gath.

21:14 – “the man is insane” – David is now being rebuked by a pagan king. It is a mark of his fall.

- In that culture they believed there was a curse on those who would kill one who was insane.

21:15 – “Shall this fellow come into my house?” – Achish is in government. He doesn’t need any more madmen around him.

Chapter 22:

22:1 – “Adullam” – means “justice of the people, resting place, or refuge.”

- Adullam looks up the Valley of Elah, where David killed Goliath. It will be here that God will begin to put together the army that will defend the nation.
- David has had all of his earthly supports taken away. It will be in the cave that he will remember that God alone is his portion.
- Psalms 57 and 142 were written at this time.
- “his brothers” – David’s brothers must have defected from Saul’s army to side with David.
- David’s family is the first to come to him.

22:2 – “distress” – Lit. “stress, anguish, or pressure.”

- “in debt” – The Hebrew speaks of “usury.” They may’ve been sold as slaves to Saul.
- “discontented” – Translated “bitter” 34 of the 38 times this Hebrew word is used.
 - David is being trained to be the next king of Israel, as he listens to the stories of these people who have been mistreated by the king.
 - The discontents are being supported by David and not the other way around.
- “about four hundred men” – These men will stay with David his entire life.
 - These men came to David in distress, in debt, and discontented, but they didn’t stay that way. David made them into the kind of men described in 1 Chron. 12:8 – “Gadites joined David at the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for battle, who could handle shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as gazelles on the mountains.”

22:3 – “Mizpeh” – means “watchtower.”

- “Moab” – David’s great-grandmother, Ruth, was from Moab. He is finding someone to care for his parents. (Ruth 1:4; 4:18-22)

22:4 – “stronghold” – (Heb. “masada”) This may actually be the Masada by the Dead Sea.

22:5 – “Hareth” – means “to engrave.”

22:7 – “Benjamites” – Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. He is calling on family allegiance.

- “fields and vineyards” – Politics haven’t changed. The winner is often the one with the best promise of bread, money, and land.

22:8 – “not one of you who is sorry for me” – David was at the same place when he wrote Psalm 142:4 and said “No one cares for my soul.” But David turned to God, while Saul turned to the people.

22:9 – “Then answered Doeg” – Wicked men come to the fore under wicked leaders.

- “If a ruler pays attention to lies, all his servants become wicked.” (Prov. 29:12)
- When men of noble character like Jonathan and David are vilified while deceitful men like Doeg are promoted, the nation is headed for a downfall. And there are always these kinds of wicked men looking to promote themselves.

22:10 – “he inquired of the Lord for him” – That was a lie.

22:13 – “conspired against me” – Saul is going out of his mind, thinking that everyone is against him.

22:18 – “kill the priests” – Saul wouldn’t fight Goliath, but he will hack to death these men of God.

- The is the end of the family of Eli as was prophesied in 1 Sam. 3:11-14. The final descendants of Eli, Abiathar, will be removed in 1 Kings 2:26-27.

22:22 – “I have caused the death” – David takes the blame. His lie involved these people and led in some degree to this massacre.

- David wrote Psalm 52 at this time.

22:23 – “stay with me” – Abiathar will be faithful to David all his life.

- “you shall be safe” – This is a bold claim from a man in a forest. That strength was built in the cave of Adullam.

Chapter 23:

23:1 – “Keilah” – means “to carve and sling away” as a potter does with a vessel on the wheel. It could also mean “fortress.”

- Keilah is a city of Judah situated on the border between Israel and Philistia.
- “robbing the threshing floors” – The Philistines are waiting for the Israelites to harvest and then stealing it straight from the threshing floors.

23:2 – “David inquired of the Lord” – This is the key to David’s victory in battle.

- David is willing to serve the people of God even with his own life on the line.
- There is no hint of bitterness against God in this prayer.

23:4 – “David inquired of the Lord once again” – David double checks with God after hearing the people’s concern.

- Going against the Philistines will allow Saul to know where David and his men are.
- “deliver the Philistines” – David is learning who the Lord’s enemies are and who he is to fight.

23:6 – “with an ephod in his hand” – Many believe he brought the Urim and the Thummim to David as well.

23:7 – “God has delivered him” – Saul, though backslidden, still thinks God is helping him.

- Saul wouldn’t go to Keilah to save the people against the Philistines, but he would go there to try and save himself against David. Saul was totally motivated by self-interest.

23:10 – “destroy the city” – David is concerned with the city and all the innocent people.

- David doesn’t go back after those who have betrayed him.

23:11 – “the men of Keilah deliver me” – The people David delivered will betray him.

- There is a Judas in every group of people you will minister to. We must obey the Lord despite what the people will do to us.
- But David fought for Keilah because God told him to and not because he hoped they would stand up for him and/or join his team. David, to be God’s king, will be asked to deliver without anything being given back to him.
- We must learn to minister from, and not just minister to.

23:12 – “they will deliver you” – The people of Keilah have probably heard what Saul did to the priests at Nob.

23:13 – “about six hundred” – David’s army is growing, even while engaging in battles.

23:14 – “Wilderness of Ziph” – This is in the area of Judah, David’s tribe.

- “Ziph” – means “refining, or battlement.”
- “every day, but God did not deliver him” – God delivered David daily.
 - God allows and God delivers. He could have taken care of the Philistines and Keilah Himself. He could have killed Saul with a heart attack. But instead He chooses to use them to carve away at David who is spinning on the potter’s wheel.
 - Yet even in the process of forming the man, God has great care and concern for the man himself and not just what he will become and do.

23:16 – “strengthened his hand in God” – Jonathan encourages David’s faith. He doesn’t commiserate with David or encourage his fear by listening to his complaints. And he doesn’t try to encourage David in his 600 men, his anointing, or even in their friendship together.

- The next time David will see Jonathan, his body will be hanging on the wall of Beth Shan.
- God is still involved. He sent this encouragement at just the right time.

23:19 – “the Ziphites came up to Saul” – Those in Keilah were saving themselves; the Ziphites betray David for no apparent reason at all.

- They are kicking David when he is down, but God will turn this around shortly.
- “Ziphites” – These are men from David’s tribe. David’s own family is turning on him.

23:21 – “Blessed are you of the Lord” – They were not, but Saul has all the hypocritical spiritual jargon and a very distorted perspective.

23:26 – “David made haste to get away” – David has the height and the military advantage, but instead chooses to flee. In so doing, he ends up being surrounded by the armies of Saul.

23:27 – “come, for the Philistines have invaded the land” – God is using the Philistines against Saul to get David out of trouble.

23:28 – “the Rock of Escape” – God was the true rock standing between Saul and David.

- Jesus alone is what stands between us and eternal death.

23:29 – “En Gedi” – means “the fount of the kid (baby goat).” This is an oasis next to the Dead Sea. There are springs, waterfalls, and lush greens at En Gedi.

Chapter 24:

24:1 – “in the Wilderness of En Gedi” – There are huge caves from Qumran to En Gedi all along the Jordan Valley.

24:3 – “attend to his needs” – Either Saul is sleeping or going to the bathroom.

- “David and his men” – There are 600+ men hiding in this cave.
 - David and his men’s eyes have adjusted to the darkness of the cave and can see rather clearly. Saul, coming in from the daylight, cannot see anyone in the cave.

24:4 – “of which the Lord said to you” – We have no record of the Lord saying that, but they think that God has delivered Saul to David.

- Be careful of the counsel received from loved ones. They will often advise in a way to lift the pressure, even at times going against God’s instructions.
- “do to him as it seems good to you” – David is one stroke from taking the kingdom.
- “corner of Saul’s robe” – David, in cutting off the hem of Saul’s garment, is symbolically taking the authority of Saul.

24:5 – “David’s heart troubled him” – David is under conviction.

- It is a great man who is greatly convicted by a small sin.

24:6 – “the Lord’s anointed” – David recognizes God’s sovereignty in Saul’s reign in Israel.

- Dan. 4:17,25,32 – “the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”
- Rom. 13:1 – “the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”
- 1 Tim. 2:1-2 – “I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority.”

24:7 – “David restrained his servants” – This is a heated conversation.

- David is learning to obey God despite his own people (1 against 600) and his own emotions (when the other option is more time in the wilderness).
- David, in killing Saul, would have set a precedent that would one day put his own life in jeopardy.

24:8 – “my lord the king” – David will not touch the Lord’s anointed. This will confirm God’s work in David’s life once he becomes king. This will also confirm God’s work in David’s life to David’s servants and his enemies. (Shimei’s accusations don’t carry any weight because David allowed God to deliver him rather than doing it himself – 2 Sam. 16.)

24:9 – “Why do you listen to the words of men?” – David is asking Saul why he is taking advice from men that are under him and not trusting his own discernment or seeking it from God.

24:11 – “I cut off the corner of your robe” – As Saul tore Samuel’s robe years earlier (1 Sam. 15:27), now David is standing with a piece of Saul’s robe in his hand.

- How much are we willing to risk reconciling with someone who is deliberately attacking us?

24:13 – “Wickedness proceeds from the wicked” – That is the same as saying “We sin because we are sinners.” We aren’t sinners because we sin; our sin only proves that we are sinners. (And it is also true then that doing a righteous deed doesn’t make you righteous.)

- Jesus said you can tell a tree by its fruit. (Matt. 7:15-20)

24:14 – “a flea” – This is David’s view of himself.

24:16 – “my son David” – David is the king’s son-in-law.

- Saul is double-minded and repeatedly vacillates in his opinion of David.

- 24:20 – “I know indeed that you shall surely be king” – Is this encouragement to David?
- Saul is sinning against great light.
 - “Israel shall be established” – From Abraham to Saul, Israel had never been established as a kingdom before David.
- 24:21 – “not cut off my descendants” – It was typical in that culture for the new king to kill all the male descendants of the former king to prevent any coup or uprising.
- 24:22 – “to the stronghold” – David doesn’t go home. He still cannot trust Saul.
- David risked reconciliation with Saul despite knowing that he couldn’t trust him.

Chapter 25:

- 25:1 – “Then Samuel died” – Samuel, one of the greatest men of the Bible, had faithfully ministered God’s heart to the people to the end.
- He was rejected by the nation, but when he died they lost the greatest intercessor they ever had. (Ps. 99:6; Jer. 15:1)
 - “Paran” – Located 100 miles south of Masada.
- 25:2 – “Carmel” – This is the Carmel in the south of Judah and not the one to the north of Israel.
- 25:3 – “Nabal” – means “fool.”
- “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (Ps. 14:1)
 - Nabal is an Israelite that apparently has rejected God. David has protected him, and rightly so, but now expects a just response from an unjust man.
 - “Abigail” – means “the joy, or encouragement, of a father.”
 - “good understanding and beautiful appearance” – She is beautiful inside and out.
 - There is something about the countenance of a woman who knows her God.
 - “of Caleb” – He was a descendant of Caleb (Num. 14:24) who settled at Hebron (Josh. 14:13).
- 25:4 – “shearing his sheep” – The time of sheep shearing was a time of rejoicing and feasting for all who took care of the sheep.
- 25:8 – “we come on a feast day” – It was custom to extend the feast to all who were a part of caring for the sheep. This is a common courtesy of the day.
- 25:10 – “Who is David?” – The idea is “Who does David think that he is?”
- “break away each one from his master” – Nabal not only declines the requests, but also accuses David of rebellion.
- 25:11 – “I...my...” – Notice all the times Nabal says “I” and “my” in this discourse.
- 25:13 – “girded on his sword” – David’s setting out to kill all of the men of Nabal’s house. (v. 34)
- David can take being hounded by King Saul, but not by a fool named Nabal. He must learn that there is no battle too small to trust the Lord in.
 - David’s pride is on the line. He won’t touch Saul, but he goes after Nabal immediately.
 - “four hundred men went with David” – David is taking 400 specially trained soldiers to kill one old farmer.

- 25:14 – “one of the young men” – This innocent young man is one David is setting out to kill.
- Anger and revenge take out many innocent people.
 - “reviled them” – The Hebrew word describes the shrieking of a bird of prey as it swoops down to tear its victim.
- 25:17 – “a scoundrel” – This is the opinion Nabal’s wife and servants have of him. (v. 25)
- 25:18 – “Abigail made haste” – She isn’t a woman ruled by emotion or hopelessness.
- “two hundred loaves of bread” – What kind of household has this much bread sitting around? And how could she take all of it without Nabal noticing?
- 25:19 – “Go on before me” – She sends these gifts ahead of her, like Jacob did to Esau. (Gen. 32)
- 25:21-22 – “I...me...” – David has come down to the level of Nabal. (v. 11)
- 25:23 – “on me let this iniquity be” – Abigail takes the blame to protect her family. She is honoring her husband and her marriage, even though Nabal is a fool.
- This is an amazing picture of intercession.
- 25:24 – “my lord...your maidservant” – She repeats those phrases over and over again as a mark of her humility before David.
- 25:26 – “the Lord has held you back” – Abigail is asking David to refuse to avenge himself with his own hand upon Nabal. She is asking David to treat Nabal like he treated Saul.
- She tells David that he is right, but that there is more at stake than right and wrong. David’s kingdom, his reputation, and his position before God and the people are at stake.
 - Abigail is making the presumptive close. She is wisely eliciting a response from David.
- 25:29 – “a man has risen to pursue you” – She is referring to Saul. Nabal accused David from rebelling against Saul. She is setting the record straight.
- “sling out” – She seems to be making a reference to David’s victory over Goliath.
- 25:30 – “appointed you ruler over Israel” – She is repeating the promise to David. She knows.
- David as the anointed king of Israel is to protect Israelites like Nabal.
- 25:31 – “shed blood without cause” – David doesn’t need this on his conscience. He doesn’t need to defend himself.
- 25:33 – “blessed is your advice” – David drops his pride and receives correction from this woman in front of 400 of his men.
- Women didn’t typically have a high place or position in that society.
- 25:35 – “David received from her hand” – David accepts her gifts and her advice.
- David’s confession of wrong doing and repentance will not negatively affect his men’s opinion of him. What would be far worse would be for David’s men to see the folly in killing Nabal and yet have David insist on killing him anyway.

25:36 – “he was very drunk” – You don’t reason with a drunk.

- This is very much like the parable of the rich fool from Luke 12:13-21.
- “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come upon you unexpectedly... Watch therefore, and pray always...” (Luke 21:34,36).
- Nabal will lose everything he was selfishly holding onto.

25:37 – “like a stone” – Either a heart attack and a coma or a stroke.

- Abigail prophesied that God would sling out David’s enemies like a stone from a sling.
- God can, at any time, remove the pressures that He is using the form His people.

25:38 – “after about ten days” – This is a measure of grace for Nabal to repent.

- They can hear you when in a coma or stroke.

25:39 – “Blessed be the Lord” – God delivered David. It was real and evident to all. God took care of David’s problem; David didn’t have to do it himself.

- This deliverance is an encouragement of a future deliverance. It is an encouragement to David, and also to his men.

25:42 – “Abigail rose in haste” – She responds immediately.

25:43 – “Ahinoam” – means “of grace.”

- “both of them were his wives” – Polygamy was custom in those days, but it was not God’s plan from the beginning. “...be joined to his wife.” (Gen. 2:24)
- The kings of Israel were told not to multiply wives (Deut. 17:17).
- This taking of wives is a weakness of David. And his son, Solomon, will also take this to the extreme and it will be his downfall.

25:44 – “Phalti” – means “the deliverance of Jehovah.”

- Michal is in adultery with Phalti now due to Saul’s involvement.

Chapter 26:

26:1 – “the Ziphites came to Saul” – The Ziphites betray David again. (1 Sam. 23:19)

- They may be afraid that David will come after them for turning on him the first time.

26:2 – “to seek David” – Saul is kicking against conviction. Regarding David, he changes his opinion and position so quickly.

26:5 – “David saw the place” – David checks it out for himself.

- “Abner” – means “Ner is my father.”

26:6 – “Who will go down with me to Saul” – David is taking a great risk to communicate something to Saul. He is willing to take the chance to reconcile.

- This must be the Spirit’s leading in David’s heart.

26:7 – “sleeping within the camp” – This is a “deep sleep from the Lord.” (v. 12)

26:8 – “let me strike him at once” – Was the offer tempting to David? He had turned down this offer once before.

- 26:9 – “David said to Abishai, ‘Do not destroy him’” – Sometimes overzealous friends can be more dangerous than our unspiritual enemies.
- 26:10 – “the Lord shall strike him” – David has seen God deliver him from an enemy first hand when the Lord sovereignly took out Nabal. David seems to have been training in ignorance.
- “he shall go out to battle and perish” – That would be the way it would go for Saul. (1 Sam. 31)
- 26:12 – “deep sleep from the Lord” – God can do that to our enemies at any time.
- 26:14 – “David called out” – He is calling out of the darkness of night. There were no streetlights to see him by.
- 26:16 – “now see where” – David is calling them to check for Saul’s spear and water jug.
- David is challenging Saul and Abner by asking Abner who is more guilty, David who had the chance to kill Saul but didn’t or Abner who was to be guarding the king but didn’t.
- 26:19 – “if the Lord has stirred you up” – David is causing Saul to evaluate whether God is sending him after David or not.
- “an offering” – If David has wronged the Lord, he is ready to sacrifice to make it right.
 - “children of men” – It is Saul’s own men who are stirring him up against David.
- 26:20 – “as when one hunts a partridge” – Partridges, being chased up several times, soon become so weary as not to be able to fly. The Arabs in this manner hunt them upon the mountains, till at last they can knock them down with their clubs.
- 26:21 – “I have sinned” – Saul admits a wrong, but he will not repent from it.
- Saul has no personal convictions of his own. He seems to roll with whoever spoke to him last. Here he yields to David after first pursuing David because he was stirred up by his cabinet.
 - “played the fool” – This is the hallmark and epitaph of Saul’s life. Samuel’s first rebuke to Saul was, “You have done foolishly.” (1 Sam. 13:13)
 - A fool is one who has said in his heart that there is no God. (Ps. 14:1) If there is no god, then there is no truth and no accountability. Therefore, people set their own rules.
 - Saul has been in sin for almost 20 years now. He will go to the witch of Endor shortly after this.
 - “played” – Lit. “strummed” (as with a guitar). It is not that he played the fool simply by acting as a fool, but he was the fool that got played.
 - Saul measured out his life lyrically as a fool. His life was out of harmony with God.
 - “fool” – This is the first use of the noun form of “fool” in the Bible and Saul said it of himself.
- 26:24 – “the eyes of the Lord” – David is again calling Saul’s attention to God.
- 26:25 – “Saul returned to his place” – These are Saul’s final words to David.

Chapter 27:

27:1 – “David said in his heart” – This self-talk is not beneficial. He ought to go to prayer.

- We don’t get the time interval between chapters 26 and 27, but something happens and David snaps. Jonathan, Samuel, Abigail, and Saul have all recently told him that he was going to be the next king, but he is turning from all of that to seek protection among the Philistines.
- David is only about 1½ years from Saul’s death.
- “his heart” – “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” (Jer. 17:19) We cannot allow our heart and emotions to dictate our behavior. It is often the case that truth and emotions don’t go together.
- “speedily” – God is not in a hurry and He is not in a panic.
 - Victorious Christian living doesn’t mean that we won’t have struggles or that we will always feel like victorious believers. David is disheartened and discouraged. Discouragement is a part of our journey...sometimes God takes us there. We must be careful not to make disobedient decisions while discouraged.

27:3 – “Gath” – David is going back to enemy territory (1 Sam. 21:10-15). This is Goliath’s hometown.

27:4 – “he sought him no more” – It looks like David’s disobedience has worked.

- Sin and separation from God and His people can temporarily alleviate the pressure. But in the end, it will turn to our destruction.
- Satan works by giving us all the benefits and good stuff up front and then destroying us with the poison (Heb. 11:25). God is different; He saves the best stuff for last. (John 2:10)

27:6 – “Ziklag” – This was an Israelite city (Josh. 19:1-5; Judges 1:17-18) now under the control of the Philistines.

- Ziklag is a walled city with homes. There is a false sense of security in Ziklag. You cannot judge by your circumstances as to whether or not you are in God’s will. You must know the Word of God.
- David’s army was growing while in Ziklag too. (1 Chron. 12:1-12)

27:7 – “one full year and four months” – David is in for 16 months of backsliding.

27:8 – “Geshurites...Girzites...Amalekites” – These are Philistine and Canaanite tribes living in the south of Judah.

- “the inhabitants of the land from of old” – Is David following through on the instructions of God to the nation to annihilate the Canaanites or is he simply raiding and killing for the fun of it?
 - It seems like this is the backslider’s token religious duty.

27:10 – “against the southern area of Judah” – David is lying to keep the favor of Achish.

27:11 – “save neither man nor woman alive” – David is ruthless in his backsliding. He is not leaving anybody to rat him out.

- David, as a result of living among the Philistines, starts living like a Philistine.

27:12 – “Achish believed David” – Achish believes he has a good ally in David.

Chapter 28:

- 28:1 – “you assuredly know” – In the ancient Near East, to accept sanctuary in a country involved obligations of military service.
- “go out with me to battle” – David is going to go out with the Philistines against the Israelites. And he is the anointed king of Israel. David, who has been so careful not to kill the Lord’s anointed, is agreeing to fight with the enemy in the battle that will see the end of Saul.
 - One act of compromise can kill many years of faithful witness and service.
- 28:3 – “Samuel had died” – That information may be given to us again because it may well have been Samuel’s instruction that led to the removal of the witches and mediums.
- No doubt the Philistines are taking advantage of Samuel’s death as God had previously used Samuel to accomplish great victories over the Philistines.
 - “Saul had put the mediums...out” – Saul is tough on every sin, but his own.
 - “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.” (1 Sam. 15:23)
 - “mediums and spiritists” – These are those who did séances and communicated with the dead. The OT law commanded the removal of people practicing witchcraft. (Lev. 19:31; 20:6,27; Deut. 18:9-13)
- 28:4 – “Shunem” – Located 20 miles north of Aphek, the most northerly Philistine city. The Philistines have made significant inroads into Israelite territory.
- “Gilboa” – Located just south of the Sea of Galilee and standing 1,200 ft. above sea level above the Valley of Jezreel.
- 28:5 – “he was afraid” – Saul had 25 years to prepare for this battle. But because he has wasted his time on worthless things, he is not ready when the battle comes. He has been building his life on the sand and when the storm comes, he will fall.
- 28:6 – “inquired of the Lord” – In 1 Chron. 10:14, it says that Saul “inquired not of the Lord.” In 1 Sam. 28:6, “inquired” means “to ask, to request.” But in 1 Chron. 10:14, “inquired not” means “to seek with care.”
- “the Lord did not answer him” – God knows that Saul doesn’t care about Him or His word, so He doesn’t say anything at all. Saul is just running to God for last minute protection.
 - “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.” (Ps. 66:18)
 - God’s silence is harder to take than His open rebuke. What a treasure it is to have God’s Word and be able to understand it.
- 28:7 – “Find me a woman who is a medium” – Saul proves that God was right in not answering his prayers by quickly turning from God to demonic activity.
- God will often prove our hearts by waiting to answer our prayers.
- 28:8 – “disguised himself” – Saul plays the hypocrite once again.
- How is the woman to recognize Samuel, who is dead, if she cannot recognize Saul, who is only wearing a disguise?
- 28:10 – “the LORD” – This is the final time Saul speaks the name of Jehovah. And he is using the name of God to promise protection to a witch practicing in Israel who should have been executed. Saul is deluded and deceived.

- 28:12 – “she cried out” – She is as surprised as anyone at actually contacting Samuel. This is not the norm for her even in this line of work.
- When Samuel was alive, Saul didn’t listen to him, but now that he is dead Saul seems to care for his advice.
 - “you are Saul” – We are not told how she knows this is Saul now.
- 28:13 – “What did you see?” – Saul didn’t see it.
- “a spirit” – (Heb. “elohim”) Lit. “gods.”
- 28:14 – “a mantle” – The mantle of Samuel would carry some significance to Saul. (1 Sam. 15:27)
- “bowed down” – Saul is bowing even though he cannot see Samuel.
- 28:15 – “bringing me up” – This is either a rare occasion allowed by God, a demon posing as the prophet Samuel, or it is a dream.
- “God has departed from me” – God never departs from a man until the man has first departed from Him.
 - There is still no repentance from Saul.
- 28:19 – “tomorrow you and your sons will be with me” – Saul is one day from eternity and consulting a witch.
- “with me” – Is that heaven, hell, sheol, or paradise?

Chapter 29:

- 29:1 – “Aphék” – Located at the center of the nation, a victory here by the Philistines will essentially divide the land in half.
- This is a different Aphék than is referred to in 1 Sam. 4:1.
 - “Jezreel” – Jezreel is located in the Valley of Megiddo; Armageddon.
- 29:2 – “David and his men passed in review” – David is joining the Philistine army as they are going out against the Philistines.
- The thing he has most committed to do (not killing Saul) is what will happen if he goes out with the Philistines against the Israelites.
- 29:3 – “What are these Hebrews doing here?” – Even these uncircumcised Philistines know it is not right for David to be there.
- 29:4 – “reconcile himself to his master” – They see this as an opportunity for David to earn Saul’s favor again.
- 29:8 – “what have I done?” – It seems that David is acting in an attempt to keep Achish’s favor.
- “the enemies of my lord” – David speaks ambiguously here. Is he speaking of Achish or Yahweh as his lord?
- 29:11 – “David and his men rose early to depart” – God gets David out of this mess.

Chapter 30:

- 30:1 – “on the third day” – This indicates that David and his men covered about 25 miles a day on the march south from Aphek to Ziklag, where they would have arrived tired, hungry, and expecting the comforts of home.
- “Amalekites” – David has been making raids against some Amalekites. This is likely an act of revenge and they attack when they know David wouldn’t be there.
 - Years earlier, Saul left the Amalekites alive when he had the chance to destroy them. (1 Sam. 15)
 - “attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire” – It is God’s grace to burn our Ziklags.
 - God gets David out of the greater problem of fighting with the Philistines, but there are still consequences of his having run to the Philistines for protection.
 - This will be the most difficult and important test for David before he takes the throne.
- 30:2 – “taken captive the women” – David had apparently left all the women and children alone in Ziklag, trusting the walls of Ziklag to protect his most important possessions.
- “did not kill anyone” – For some reason, the cruel and wicked Amalekites let the captives live.
- 30:4 – “no more power to weep” – They are all cried out.
- 30:6 – “the people spoke of stoning him” – These men fled from Saul and came to David for protection and proper rule. And now David has done much the same thing to them that Saul had done. David has become like Saul; in his sin and rebellion, he has let these men down.
- David had to learn, before he took the throne, that he was as much a Saul as Saul was. David is no better.
 - “grieved” – Lit. “bitter.”
 - “David strengthened himself in the Lord” – Once before when David was on the run, Jonathan “strengthened his hand in God.” (1 Sam. 23:16)
 - Christian growth is a moving from dependence on others to independently walking with and relying upon the Lord. Every man of God has times in which he must stand alone.
 - Never elevate anything above your personal relationship with God. There will be a time when that is all we will have.
 - Everything David did – whether good, bad, or ugly – he did before the Lord. He saw it all in relationship to God.
- 30:8 – “David inquired of the Lord” – David turned to God and sought direction from Him.
- David seems to sincerely seek God’s guidance. That means if God told him not to go after his wives, he would have stayed.
 - This happens at the same time as Saul is inquiring of the Lord but running to a witch when the Lord doesn’t answer directly.
 - “He answered him” – God answers David immediately. He doesn’t hold anything over on David.
 - There is no working our way back into God’s grace. It only comes through confession and repentance.
 - God not only answers, but He also gives the strength for 400 men and David to cross the Brook Besor. If we choose to move forward, we’ll find the strength is sufficient.
- 30:10 – “so weary that they could not cross” – They travelled nearly 3 days from Aphek to Ziklag, saw their city burn and families taken, and are now pursuing the enemy. They are physically and emotionally drained.
- All had given all they had. It is just that some have more than others to give.

- 30:12 – “eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days” – This guy is almost dead. He was sick and left for dead before going without food and water for three days.
- 30:13 – “servant of an Amalekite” – David must immediately recognize God’s leading.
- 30:16 – “eating, drinking, and dancing” – This is a drunken victory celebration.
- 30:17 – “from twilight until the evening of the next day” – This is a 24-hour fight.
- 30:19 – “nothing of theirs was lacking” – The Amalekites were ruthless (see Exod. 17 for example). It is odd that they would have not killed any of their captives.
- Sometimes God has our things removed from our lives for a time to draw us closer to Him.
- 30:20 – “before those other livestock” – They go back with more than they lost.
- 30:22 – “wicked and worthless men” – Even David has some of these men in his army.
- Even in the best of fields, there are tares among the wheat.
- 30:23 – “what the Lord has given us” – David was willing to equally reward those who stayed with the stuff because he knew it all came from the Lord.
- “the Lord has given us...preserved us and delivered into our hand” – Each one’s energies and resources are given by the Lord.
 - David has regained his perspective.
- 30:24 – “they shall share alike” – The rewards are spread equal for those who go to the battle and for those who stay with the stuff.
- “And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.” (Matt. 10:42; Mark 9:41)
- 30:26 – “a present” – David is giving some of the spoils of war to those cities that hosted him while he was on the run.
- This is an act of diplomacy. Saul never gave, but only took, from these people. David will not be a king to take from his people.
 - David is a picture of God’s King, Jesus Christ, who fought, died, and won the victory and then gives us gifts and good works to walk in. And then, ultimately, He rewards us for the works He has given us to do.
- 30:31 – “Hebron” – This is where David will first take the throne in Israel.

Chapter 31:

- 31:1 – “on Mount Gilboa” – They are defending homeland, have the height and position, and have good manpower. There is no natural reason for Israel’s defeat.
- Deborah, Jephthah, Gideon, and Jonathan all won victories with much less.
- 31:2 – “the Philistines killed Jonathan” – Jonathan was a man of God who had remained loyal to his father and to Israel.
- It seems that Saul may have seen his sons die in front of him.

31:3 – “severely wounded” – The Latin Vulgate says “mortally wounded with arrows in his stomach.”

31:4 – “lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me” – These are Saul’s last words.

- There is no record of Saul praying, repenting, turning to, or committing his spirit to God.
- “Saul took a sword and fell on it” – He committed suicide. Saul’s life ends with a murder; self-murder.
- The lie of suicide is that you can cause the pain to cease. But you cannot because the soul and spirit continue and that is where the pain really lies.
- Suicide is the 9th leading cause of death among adults in the USA, the 3rd leading cause of death of those age 15-30, and the number 1 cause of death among teenagers. 60 people/hour attempt suicide and 3 people/hour succeed. The suicide rate in the USA is the highest of the world (at the time of these statistics).
- The truest form of suicide is rejecting Jesus. It condemns a person to eternal death.

31:5 – “Saul was dead” – It may be that an Amalekite finished the killing. (2 Sam. 1:9)

31:8 – “the next day” – It seems that the Philistines didn’t reach Saul until the next day. Would he have had time to repent and possibly escape if he hadn’t killed himself?

- “strip the slain” – The army is coming through to take the plunder.

31:9 – “in the temple of their idols” – They fasten his head in the temple of Dagon. (1 Chron. 10:10)

31:10 – “in the temple of the Ashtoreths” – The enemy makes conclusions about our God based on those called by His name.

- “Beth Shan” – This is located at the northern end of Mt. Gilboa.

31:11 – “Jabesh Gilead” – Saul’s first and greatest deliverance of the people of Israel was in delivering the people of Jabesh Gilead from the Ammonites. (1 Sam. 11:1-11; 2 Sam. 2:4-7)

- These men honor the authorities God has placed over them despite the character of those authorities.

31:12 – “burned them” – Cremation was not customary in ancient Israel and here appears to have been done to prevent any further abuse of the bodies of Saul and his sons by the Philistines or because of the extent of the abuse already given.