

English: Unlocked Literal Bible for 1 Samuel

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1 Samuel

¹ There was a certain man of Ramathaim of the Zuphites, of the hill country of Ephraim; his name was Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ² He had two wives; the name of the first was Hannah, and the name of the second was Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none. ³ This man went from his city year after year to worship and to sacrifice to Yahweh of hosts in Shiloh. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests to Yahweh, were there. ⁴ When the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice each year, he always gave portions of the meat to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters. ⁵ But to Hannah he always gave a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although Yahweh had closed her womb. ⁶ Her rival provoked her severely in order to irritate her, because Yahweh had closed her womb. ⁷ So year after year, when she went up to the house of Yahweh with her family, her rival always provoked her. Therefore she used to weep and eat nothing. ⁸ Elkanah her husband always said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

⁹ On one of these occasions, Hannah rose up after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting upon his seat by the doorway to the temple of Yahweh. ¹⁰ She was deeply distressed; she prayed to Yahweh and wept bitterly.

¹¹ She made a vow and said, "Yahweh of hosts, if you will look on the affliction of your servant and call me to mind, and do not forget your servant, but give your servant a son, then I will give him to Yahweh all the days of his life, and no razor will ever touch his head."

¹² As she continued praying before Yahweh, Eli watched her mouth. ¹³ Hannah spoke in her heart. Her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. ¹⁴ Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Get rid of your wine."

¹⁵ Hannah answered, "No, my master, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before Yahweh. ¹⁶ Do not consider your servant to be a worthless woman; I have been speaking out of the abundance of my great concern and provocation."

¹⁷ Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace; may the God of Israel grant the request that you have asked him for." ¹⁸ She said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate; her face was no longer sad.

¹⁹ They rose early in the morning and worshiped before Yahweh, and then they returned again to their house in Ramah. Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and Yahweh remembered her. ²⁰ When the time came, Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She called his name Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked for him from Yahweh."

²¹ Once again, Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to Yahweh the yearly sacrifice and pay his vow. ²² But Hannah did not go; she had said to her husband, "I will not go until the child is weaned; then I will bring him, so that he may appear before Yahweh and live there forever." ²³ Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems good to you. Wait until you have weaned him; only, may Yahweh confirm his word." So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she weaned him.

²⁴ When she had weaned him, she took him with her, along with a three-year-old bull, ² one ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him to the house of Yahweh in Shiloh. Now the child was still young. ²⁵ They killed the bull, and they brought the child to Eli.

²⁶ She said, "Oh, my master! As you live, my master, I am the woman who stood here next to you praying to Yahweh. ²⁷ For this child I prayed and Yahweh has given me my petition which I asked of him. ²⁸ I have given him to Yahweh, as long as he lives he is lent to Yahweh." Then he worshiped Yahweh there. ³

¹Some modern translations have Ramathaim Zophim, but it is understood that Zophim really refers to the region in which the clan descended from Zuph resided.

²Some translations of the copies of the ancient Hebrew text have three bulls instead of a three-year-old bull .

³Some modern translations have Then they worshiped Yahweh there .

² ¹ Hannah prayed and said,
"My heart rejoices in Yahweh.
My horn is exalted in Yahweh.
My mouth boasts over my enemies,
because I rejoice in your salvation.

² There is no one holy like Yahweh,
for there is none besides you;
there is no rock like our God.

³ Boast no more so very proudly;

let no arrogance come out of your mouth.
For Yahweh is a God of knowledge;
by him acts are weighed.

⁴ The bows of the mighty men are broken,
but those who stumble are girded with strength.

⁵ Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread;
those who were hungry have stopped being hungry.
Even the barren one gives birth to seven,
but the woman who has many children becomes weak.

⁶ Yahweh kills and brings to life.
He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

⁷ Yahweh makes some people poor and some rich.
He humbles, but he also lifts up.

⁸ He raises up the poor out of the dust.
He lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit the seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are Yahweh's
and he has set the world upon them.

⁹ He will guard the feet of his faithful people,
but the wicked will be put to silence in darkness,
for no one will prevail by strength.

¹⁰ Those who oppose Yahweh will be broken to pieces;
he will thunder against them from heaven.
Yahweh will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed."

¹¹Then Elkanah went to Ramah, to his house. The child served Yahweh in the presence of Eli the priest.

¹²Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know Yahweh. ¹³The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand, while the meat was boiling. ¹⁴He would stick it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. They did this in Shiloh with all of Israel that came there.

¹⁵Worse, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat to roast for the priest; for he will not accept boiled meat from you, but only raw." ¹⁶If the man said to him, "They must burn the fat first, and then take as much as you want." Then he would say, "No, you will give it me now; if not, I will take it by force." ¹⁷The sin of these young men was very great before Yahweh, for they despised Yahweh's offering.

¹⁸But Samuel served Yahweh as a child clothed with a linen ephod. ¹⁹His mother would make him a little robe and bring it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

²⁰Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "May Yahweh give you more children by this woman because of the request she made of Yahweh." Then they would return to their own home. ²¹Yahweh again helped Hannah, and again she conceived. She bore three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the child Samuel grew before Yahweh.

²²Now Eli was very old; he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they were lying with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ²³He said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil actions from all these people. ²⁴No, my sons; for it is not a good report that I hear. You make Yahweh's people disobey.

²⁵If one man sins against another, God will judge him; but if a man sins against Yahweh, who will speak for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, because Yahweh intended to kill them. ²⁶The child Samuel grew up, and increased in favor with Yahweh and also with men.

²⁷Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Yahweh says, 'Did I not reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in bondage to the house of Pharaoh?'²⁸I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, and to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me. I gave to the house of your father all the offerings of the people of Israel made with fire.

²⁹Why, then, do you scorn my sacrifices and offerings, which I commanded in the place where I live? Why do you honor your sons above me by making yourselves fat with the best of every offering of my people Israel?³⁰Therefore, Yahweh, the God of Israel, declares, 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should walk before me forever.' But now Yahweh declares, 'Far be it from me to do this, for I will honor those who honor me, but those who despise me will be lightly esteemed.

³¹See, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will no longer be any old man in your house.³²You will see distress in the place where I live. Although good will be given to Israel, there will no longer be any old man in your house.³³Any one of you that I do not cut off from my altar, I will cause your eyes to fail, and I will cause grief in your heart, then all the increase of your house will die while men.

³⁴This will be the sign for you that will come on your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: They will both die on the same day.³⁵I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who will do what is in my heart and in my soul. I will build him a sure house; and he will walk before my anointed king forever.

³⁶Everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him, asking for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread, and will say, "Please assign me to one of the priests' positions so I can eat a piece of bread.'""

3 ¹The child Samuel served Yahweh under Eli. Yahweh's word was rare in those days; there was no frequent prophetic vision.²At that time, Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see well, was lying down in his own bed.³The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of Yahweh, where the ark of God was.⁴Yahweh called to Samuel, who said, "Here I am."

⁵Samuel ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Eli said, "I did not call you; lie down again." So Samuel went and lay down.⁶Yahweh called again, "Samuel." Again Samuel rose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Eli answered, "I did not call you, my son; lie down again."

⁷Now Samuel did not yet have any experience of Yahweh, nor had any message from Yahweh ever been revealed to him.

⁸Yahweh called Samuel again the third time. Again Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli realized that Yahweh had called the boy.

⁹Then Eli said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again; if he calls you again, you must say, 'Speak, Yahweh, for your servant is listening.'"" So Samuel went and lay down in his own place once more.

¹⁰Yahweh came and stood; he called as at the other times, "Samuel, Samuel." Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."¹¹Yahweh said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel at which the ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.

¹²On that day I will carry out against Eli everything I have said about his house, from beginning to end.¹³I have told him that I am about to judge his house once for all for the iniquity that he knew about, because his sons brought a curse upon themselves and he did not stop them.¹⁴Because of this I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of his house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering."

¹⁵Samuel lay down until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of Yahweh. But Samuel was afraid to tell Eli about the vision.¹⁶Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." Samuel said, "Here I am."

¹⁷He said, "What was the word he spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. May God do so to you, and even more, if you hide anything from me of all the words that he spoke to you."¹⁸Samuel told him everything; he hid nothing from him. Eli said, "It is Yahweh. Let him do what seems good to him."

¹⁹Samuel grew up, and Yahweh was with him, and he let none of his prophetic words fall to the ground.²⁰All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was appointed to be a prophet of Yahweh.²¹Yahweh appeared again in Shiloh, for he revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by his word.

4 ¹The word of Samuel came to all of Israel.

Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. They set up camp at Ebenezer, and the Philistines set up camp at Aphek.

²The Philistines lined up for battle against Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle.

³When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has Yahweh defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of Yahweh here from Shiloh, that it may be here with us, that it might

keep us safe from the hands of our enemies."⁴ So the people sent men to Shiloh; from there they carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh of hosts, who sits above the cherubim. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

⁵When the ark of the covenant of Yahweh came into the camp, all of the people of Israel gave a great shout of joy, and the earth resounded.⁶When the Philistines heard the noise of the joyful shouting, they said, "What does this loud joyful shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" Then they realized that the ark of Yahweh had come into the camp.

⁷The Philistines were afraid; they said, "A god has come into the camp." They said, "Woe to us! Nothing like this has happened before!"⁸Woe to us! Who will protect us from the strength of these mighty gods? These are the gods who attacked the Egyptians with many different kinds of plagues in the wilderness.⁹Take courage, and be men, you Philistines, or you will become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you. Be men, and fight."

¹⁰The Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated. Every man fled to his tent, and the slaughter was very great; for thirty thousand footmen from Israel fell.¹¹The ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

¹²A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day, arriving with his clothes torn and earth on his head.¹³When he arrived, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching because his heart trembled with concern for the ark of God. When the man entered the city and told the news, the whole city cried out.

¹⁴When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What is the meaning of this uproar?" The man quickly came and told Eli.¹⁵Now Eli was ninety-eight years old; his eyes did not focus, and he could not see.

¹⁶The man said to Eli, "I am the one who came from the battle line. I fled from the battle today." Eli said, "How did it go, my son?"¹⁷The man who brought the news answered and said, "Israel fled from the Philistines. Also, there has been a great slaughter among the people. Also, your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken."

¹⁸When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate. His neck was broken, and he died, because he was old and heavy. He had judged Israel for forty years.

¹⁹Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and about to give birth. When she heard the news that the ark of God was captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she knelt down and gave birth, but her labor pains overwhelmed her.²⁰About the time of her death the women attending to her said, "Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer or take what they said to heart.

²¹She called the child Ichabod, saying, "The glory has gone away from Israel!" for the ark of God had been captured, and because of her father-in-law and her husband.²²She said, "The glory has gone away from Israel, because the ark of God has been captured."

5 ¹Now the Philistines had captured the ark of God, and they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.²The Philistines took the ark of God, brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it up beside Dagon.³When the people of Ashdod got up early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen facedown on the ground before the ark of Yahweh. So they took Dagon and set him up in his place again.

⁴But when they got up early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen facedown on the ground before the ark of Yahweh. The head of Dagon and both of his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon remained.

⁵This is why, even today, the priests of Dagon and anyone who comes into Dagon's house does not step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod.

⁶Yahweh's hand was heavy upon the people of Ashdod. He destroyed them and afflicted them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories.⁷When the men of Ashdod realized what was happening, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not stay with us, because his hand is hard against us and against Dagon our god."

⁸So they sent for and gathered together all of the rulers of the Philistines; they said to them, "What should we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" They answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." So they carried the ark of the God of Israel there.⁹But after they brought it around, Yahweh's hand was against the city, causing a very great tumult. He afflicted the men of the city, both small and great; and tumors broke out on them.

¹⁰So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But as soon as the ark of God came into Ekron, the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought to us the ark of the God of Israel to kill us and our people."

¹¹So they sent for and gathered together all of the rulers of the Philistines; they said to them, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people." For there was a deathly tumult throughout the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.¹²The men who did not die were afflicted with the tumors, and the cry of the city went up to the heavens.

¹Now the ark of Yahweh was in the country of the Philistines for seven months.²Then the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners; they said to them, "What should we do with the ark of Yahweh? Tell us how we should send it back to its own country."

³The priests and diviners said, "If you send back the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it without a gift; by all means send him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and you will know why his hand has not been lifted off of you until now."⁴Then they said, "What should the guilt offering be that we are returning to him?" They replied, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice, five being the number that is the same as the number of the rulers of the Philistines. For the same plague afflicted you and your rulers."

⁵So you must make models of your tumors, and models of your mice that are ruining the land, and give glory to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you, from your gods, and from your land.⁶Why should you harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? That was when the God of Israel dealt severely with them; did not the Egyptians send away the people, and they left?

⁷Now then, prepare a new cart with two nursing cows that have never been yoked. Tie the cows to the cart, but take their calves home, away from them.⁸Take the ark of Yahweh and place it on the cart, and put the figures of gold, which you are returning to him as a guilt offering, in a box beside it. Send it off and let it go its way,⁹but watch. If it goes up the road to its own land toward Beth Shemesh, then it is Yahweh who has caused us this great harm. But if not, then we will know that it is not his hand that afflicted us; it happened to us by chance."

¹⁰The men did as they were told; they took two nursing cows, tied them to the cart, and confined their calves at home.

¹¹They put the ark of Yahweh on the cart, together with a box containing the golden mice and the castings of their tumors.

¹²The cows went straight in the direction of Beth Shemesh. They went along one highway, lowing as they went, and they did not turn aside either to the right or to the left. The rulers of the Philistines followed after them to the border of Beth Shemesh.

¹³Now the people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley. When they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, they rejoiced.

¹⁴The cart came into the field of Joshua from the town of Beth Shemesh and stopped there. A great stone was there, and they split the wood from the cart, and offered the cows as a burnt offering to Yahweh.¹⁵The Levites took down the ark of Yahweh and the box that was with it, where the golden figures were, and put them on the great stone. The men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to Yahweh.

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

¹⁷These are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned for a guilt offering to Yahweh—one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, and one for Ekron.¹⁸The golden mice were the same in number as the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five rulers, both fortified cities and country villages. The great stone, beside which they set down the ark of Yahweh, remains a witness to this day in the field of Joshua the Bethshemite.

¹⁹Yahweh attacked some of the men of Beth Shemesh because they had looked into the ark of Yahweh. He killed 50,070 men. The people mourned, because Yahweh had given the people a great blow. ²⁰ⁱThe men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before Yahweh, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from us?"

²¹They sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of Yahweh; come down and take it back with you."

ⁱInstead of 50,070 men , some later copies and modern translations have, seventy men .

7 ¹The men of Kiriath Jearim came, took the ark of Yahweh, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill. They set apart his son Eleazar to keep the ark of Yahweh.²From the day the ark remained in Kiriath Jearim, a long time passed, twenty years. All the house of Israel lamented and wished to turn to Yahweh.

³Samuel said to the entire house of Israel, "If you return to Yahweh with your whole heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, turn your hearts to Yahweh, and worship him only, then he will rescue you from the hand of the Philistines."⁴Then the people of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and worshiped Yahweh only.

⁵Then Samuel said, "Bring together all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to Yahweh for you."⁶They gathered at Mizpah, drew water and poured it out before Yahweh. They fasted that day and said, "We have sinned against Yahweh." It was there that Samuel decided disputes for the people of Israel and led the people.

⁷Now when the Philistines heard the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines attacked Israel. When the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines.⁸Then the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not stop calling out to Yahweh our God for us, so he will save us from the hand of the Philistines."

⁹Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to Yahweh. Then Samuel cried out to Yahweh for Israel, and Yahweh answered him.

¹⁰As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines approached to attack Israel. But Yahweh thundered with a loud sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were routed before Israel.¹¹The men of Israel went from Mizpah, and they pursued the Philistines and killed them as far as below Beth Kar.

¹²Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far Yahweh has helped us."

¹³So the Philistines were subdued and they did not enter the border of Israel. The hand of Yahweh was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.¹⁴The towns that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; Israel brought back their territory from the Philistines. Then there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

¹⁵Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.¹⁶Each year he went on a circuit to Bethel, to Gilgal, and to Mizpah. He decided disputes for Israel in all these places.¹⁷Then he would return to Ramah, because his house was there; and there also he decided disputes for Israel. He also built an altar there to Yahweh.

8 ¹When Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel.²The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second son was Abijah. They were judges in Beersheba.³His sons did not walk in his ways, but chased after dishonest gain. They took bribes and perverted justice.

⁴Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.⁵They said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations."

⁶But it displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to Yahweh.⁷Yahweh said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in everything they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them."

⁸The same deeds they have done since the day I brought them out of Egypt—abandoning me and serving other gods—they are now doing also to you.⁹Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know by what ordinances the king will reign over them."

¹⁰So Samuel told all the words of Yahweh to the people who were asking for a king.¹¹He said, "These will be the ordinances of the king who will reign over you. He will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots.¹²He will appoint for himself captains of thousands and captains of fifties. He will make some plow his ground, some reap his harvest, and some make his weapons of war and the equipment for his chariots.

¹³He will also take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers.¹⁴He will take the very best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive orchards, and give them to his servants.¹⁵He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give to his officers and his servants.

¹⁶He will take your male servants and your female servants and the best of your cattle ¹and your donkeys; he will put them all to work for him.¹⁷He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you will be his slaves.¹⁸Then on that day you will cry out because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves; but Yahweh will not answer you on that day."

¹⁹But the people refused to listen to Samuel; they said, "No! There must be a king over us²⁰so that we might be like all the other nations, and so that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

²¹When Samuel heard all the words of the people he repeated them in the ears of Yahweh.²²Yahweh said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and cause a king to reign over them." So Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man must go to his own city."

¹The Hebrew text can be read as: young men instead of cattle.

9 ¹There was a man from Benjamin, a man of great wealth. His name was Kish son of Abiel son of Zeror son of Bekorath son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite.²He had a son named Saul, a handsome young man. There was no man among the people of Israel who was a more handsome person than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

³Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the servants with you; arise and go search for the donkeys."⁴So Saul passed through the hill country of Ephraim and went through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find them. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them.

⁵When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us go back, or my father may stop caring for the donkeys and become anxious about us."⁶But the servant said to him, "See now, there is a man of God in

this city. He is a man who is held in honor; everything that he says comes true. Let us go there; maybe he can tell us which way we should go on our journey."

⁷Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sack is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"⁸The servant answered Saul and said, "Here, I have with me one-fourth of a shekel of silver that I will give to the man of God, to tell us which way we should go."

⁹(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to seek the knowledge of God's will, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer." For today's prophet was formerly called a seer.)¹⁰Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said. Come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

¹¹As they went up the hill to the city, they found young women coming out to draw water; Saul and his servant said to them, "Is the seer here?"

¹²They answered, and said, "He is; see, he is just ahead of you. Hurry up, for he is coming to the city today, because the people are sacrificing today at the high place."¹³As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not eat until he comes, because he will bless the sacrifice; afterwards those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will find him immediately."

¹⁴So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them, to go up to the high place.

¹⁵Now the day before Saul came, Yahweh had revealed to Samuel:¹⁶"Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you will anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He will save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have looked on my people with pity because their cry for help has come to me."

¹⁷When Samuel saw Saul, Yahweh told him, "Here is the man I told you about! He is the one who will rule over my people."¹⁸Then Saul came close to Samuel in the gate and said, "Tell me where is the house of the seer?"¹⁹Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you will eat with me. In the morning I will let you go, and I will tell you everything that is on your mind."

²⁰As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not worry about them, for they have been found. Then on whom are all the desires of Israel set? Is it not on you and all your father's house?"²¹Saul answered and said, "Am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest of the tribes of Israel? Is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this manner?"

²²So Samuel took Saul and his servant, brought them into the hall, and seated them at the head place of those who had been invited, who were about thirty people.

²³Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion which I gave to you, of which I said to you, 'Put it aside.'"²⁴So the cook took up the thigh and what was on it and set it before Saul. Then Samuel said, "See what has been kept is set before you. Eat it, because it has been kept for you until the appointed time, from the time when I said, 'I have invited the people.'" So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

²⁵When they had come down from the high place into the city, Samuel spoke with Saul on the rooftop.²⁶Then at the break of dawn, Samuel called to Saul on the rooftop and said, "Get up, so I can send you on your way." So Saul got up, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

²⁷As they were going to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go ahead of us"—and he went ahead—"but you must stay here awhile, that I may announce the message of God to you."

10 ¹Then Samuel took a flask of oil, poured it on Saul's head, and kissed him. He said, "Has not Yahweh anointed you to be a ruler over his inheritance?"²When you leave me today, you will find two men near Rachel's tomb, in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah. They will say to you, "The donkeys that you were looking for have been found. Now your father has stopped caring about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, 'What should I do about my son?'"

³Then you will go on further from there, and you will come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine.⁴They will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you will take from their hands.

⁵After that, you will come to the hill of God, where the garrison of the Philistines is. When you arrive at the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a lute, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; they will be prophesying.⁶The Spirit of Yahweh will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them, and you will be changed into a different man.

⁷Now, when these signs come to you, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.⁸Go down before me to Gilgal. Then I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Wait seven days until I come to you and show you what you must do."

⁹When Saul turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. Then all these signs came to pass that day.

¹⁰When they came to the hill, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him so that he prophesied with them.

¹¹When everyone who knew him before saw him prophesying with the prophets, the people said to each other, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul one of the prophets now?"¹²A man who was from that same place answered, "Then who is their father?" Because of this, it became a saying, "Is Saul also one of the prophets?"¹³When he finished prophesying, he came to the high place.

¹⁴Then Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?" He replied, "To search for the donkeys. When we saw that we could not find them, we went to Samuel."¹⁵Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you."¹⁶Saul replied to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But he did not tell him about the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel had spoken.

¹⁷Now Samuel called the people together before Yahweh at Mizpah.¹⁸He said to the people of Israel, "This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel says: 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you.'¹⁹But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all of your calamities and your distresses; and you have said to him, 'Set a king over us.' Now present yourselves before Yahweh by your tribes and by your clans."

²⁰So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen.²¹Then he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their clans; and the clan of the Matrites was chosen; and Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when they went looking for him, he could not be found.

²²Then the people wanted to ask God more questions, "Is there still another man to come?" Yahweh answered, "He has hidden himself among the baggage."²³Then they ran and retrieved Saul from there. When he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward.

²⁴Then Samuel said to the people, "Do you see the man whom Yahweh has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people!" All the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

²⁵Then Samuel told the people the customs and rules of kingship, wrote them down in a book, and placed it before Yahweh. Samuel then sent all the people away, each man to his own house.

²⁶Saul also went to his home at Gibeah, and with him went some strong men, whose hearts God had touched.²⁷But some worthless men said, "How can this man save us?" These people despised Saul and did not bring him any gifts. But Saul kept silent. ¹

⁵Some modern translations add to this verse the following paragraph: Nahash king of the Ammonites had severely oppressed the Gadites and Reubenites. He dug out the right eye of each man and did not allow anyone to rescue Israel. Across the Jordan River was left no Israelites whose right eye Nahash king of the Ammonites had not dug out. But seven thousand men had escaped from the Ammonites and had gone into Jabesh Gilead.

11 ¹Then Nahash the Ammonite went and besieged Jabesh Gilead. All the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you."²Nahash the Ammonite replied, "On this condition will I make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all of your right eyes, and in this way bring disgrace on all Israel."

³Then the elders of Jabesh replied to him, "Leave us alone for seven days, so that we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will surrender to you."

⁴The messengers came to Gibeah, where Saul lived, and told the people what had happened. All the people wept loudly.

⁵Now Saul was following the oxen out of the field. Saul said, "What is wrong with the people that they are weeping?" They told Saul what the men of Jabesh had said.

⁶When Saul heard what they said, the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he was very angry.⁷He took a yoke of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel with the messengers. He said, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and after Samuel, this is what will be done to his oxen." Then the terror of Yahweh fell on the people, and they came out together as one man.⁸When he mustered them at Bezek, the people of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

⁹They said to the messengers that came, "You will tell the men of Jabesh Gilead, 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, deliverance will be yours.'"¹⁰So the messengers went and told the men of Jabesh, and they were glad.¹¹Then the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever seems good to you."

¹²The next day Saul put the people in three groups. They came into the middle of the camp during the morning watch, and they attacked and defeated the Ammonites until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

¹²Then the people said to Samuel, "Who was it who said, 'Will Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, so we can put them to

death."¹³But Saul said, "No one must be put to death this day, because today Yahweh has brought about deliverance in Israel."

¹⁴Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingship there."¹⁵So all the people went to Gilgal and made Saul king before Yahweh in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before Yahweh, and Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

12 ¹Samuel said to all Israel, "I have listened to everything you said to me, and I have set a king to reign over you.²Now, here is the king walking before you; and I am old and gray; and, my sons are with you. I have walked before you from my youth until today.

³Here I am; testify against me before Yahweh and before his anointed one. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with? Testify against me, and I will restore it to you."

⁴They said, "You have not defrauded us, oppressed us, or stolen anything from any man's hand."⁵He said to them, "Yahweh is witness against you, and his anointed one is witness today, that you have found nothing in my hand." They replied, "Yahweh is witness."

⁶Samuel said to the people, "It is Yahweh who appointed Moses and Aaron, and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt.⁷Now then, present yourself, so that I may plead with you before Yahweh about all of the righteous deeds of Yahweh, which he did for you and your fathers.

⁸When Jacob came to Egypt, and your ancestors cried out to Yahweh, then Yahweh sent Moses and Aaron, who led your ancestors out of Egypt and they settled in this place.⁹But they forgot Yahweh their God; he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the armies of Hazor, into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; these all fought against your ancestors.

¹⁰They cried out to Yahweh and said, 'We have sinned, because we have abandoned Yahweh and have served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve you.'¹¹So Yahweh sent Jerub-Baal, Bedan, Jephthah, and Samuel, and gave you victory over your enemies all around you, so that you lived in security.

¹²When you saw that Nahash the king of the people of Ammon came against you, you said to me, 'No, a king must rule over us'—even though Yahweh your God was your king.¹³Now here is the king whom you have chosen, whom you have asked for and whom Yahweh has now appointed as king over you.

¹⁴If you fear Yahweh, serve him, obey his voice, and not rebel against the command of Yahweh, then both you and the king who reigns over you will be followers of Yahweh your God.¹⁵If you do not obey the voice of Yahweh, but rebel against the commands of Yahweh, then Yahweh's hand will be against you, as it was against your ancestors.

¹⁶Even now present yourself and see this great thing which Yahweh will do before your eyes.¹⁷Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call upon Yahweh, that he may send thunder and rain. Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of Yahweh, in asking for yourselves a king."¹⁸So Samuel called to Yahweh; and that same day Yahweh sent thunder and rain. Then all the people greatly feared Yahweh and Samuel.

¹⁹Then all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to Yahweh your God, so that we do not die. For we have added to all our sins this evil in asking for a king for ourselves."²⁰Samuel replied, "Do not be afraid. You have done all this evil, but do not turn away from Yahweh, but serve Yahweh with all your heart."²¹Do not turn away after empty things that cannot profit or rescue you, because they are useless.

²²For the sake of his great name, Yahweh will not reject his people, because it has pleased Yahweh to make you a people for himself.²³As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against Yahweh by ceasing to pray for you. I will teach you the way that is good and right.

²⁴Only fear Yahweh and serve him in truth with all your heart. Consider the great things he has done for you.²⁵But if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be destroyed."

13 ¹Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign; when he had reigned forty years over Israel,²he chose three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with him in Mikdash and in the hill country of Bethel, while a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeath of Benjamin. The rest of the soldiers he sent home, each man to his tent.

³Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the ram's horn throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear."⁴All Israel heard that Saul had defeated the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become a rotten smell to the Philistines. Then the soldiers were summoned together to join Saul at Gilgal.

⁵The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand men to drive the

chariots, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They came up and encamped at Mikdash, east of Beth Aven.

⁶When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble—for the people were distressed, the people hid in caves, in the underbrush, in rocks, in wells, and in pits.⁷Some of the Hebrews went over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. But Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

⁸He waited seven days, the time Samuel had set. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from Saul.⁹Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." Then he offered the burnt offering.¹⁰As soon as he finished offering the burnt offering Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet him and to greet him.

¹¹Then Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul replied, "When I saw that the people were leaving me, and that you did not come within the set time, and that the Philistines had assembled at Mikdash,¹²I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of Yahweh.' So I forced myself to offer the burnt offering."

¹³Then Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly. You have not kept the command of Yahweh your God that he commanded you. For then Yahweh would have established your rule over Israel forever.¹⁴But now your rule will not continue. Yahweh has sought out a man after his own heart, and Yahweh has appointed him to be prince over his people, because you have not obeyed what he commanded you."

¹⁵Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. Then Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.

¹⁶Saul, his son Jonathan, and the people who were present with them, stayed in Geba of Benjamin. But the Philistines camped at Mikdash.

¹⁷Raiders came from the camp of the Philistines in three groups. One group turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual.

¹⁸Another group turned toward Beth Horon, and another group turned toward the border that overlooks the Valley of Zebayim toward the wilderness.

¹⁹No blacksmith could be found throughout all of Israel, because the Philistines said, "Otherwise the Hebrews would make swords or spears for themselves."²⁰But all the men of Israel used to go down to the Philistines, each to sharpen his plow points, his mattock, his ax, and his sickle.²¹The charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plow points, and the mattocks, and one-third of a shekel for sharpening axes and for straightening the goads.

²²So on the day of battle, there were no swords or spears found in the hands of any of the soldiers who were with Saul and Jonathan; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.²³The garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Mikdash.

14 ¹One day, Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man who was his armor bearer, "Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison on the other side." But he did not tell his father.

²Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree that is in Migron. About six hundred men were with him,³including Ahijah son of Ahitub (Ichabod's brother) son of Phinehas son of Eli, the priest of Yahweh at Shiloh, who wore an ephod. The people did not know that Jonathan was gone.

⁴On each side of the pass through which Jonathan wanted to go in order to get to the Philistines' garrison, there was a rocky cliff on one side and another rocky cliff on the other side. One rocky cliff was named Bozez and the other rocky cliff was named Seneh.⁵One rocky cliff stood on the north in front of Mikdash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

⁶Jonathan said to his young armor bearer, "Come, let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised fellows. It may be that Yahweh will work on our behalf, for nothing can stop Yahweh from saving by many or by few people."⁷His armor bearer replied, "Do everything that is in your heart. Go ahead, see, I am with you, to obey all your commands."

⁸Then Jonathan said, "We will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them."⁹If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come over to you'—then we will stay in our place and will not cross over to them.¹⁰But if they reply, 'Come over to us,' then we will cross over; because Yahweh has given them into our hand. This will be the sign to us."

¹¹So both of them revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. The Philistines said, "Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves."¹²Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armor bearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Follow after me, because Yahweh has given them into the hand of Israel."

¹³Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor bearer followed behind him. The Philistines were put to death before Jonathan, and his armor bearer put some to death behind him.¹⁴That first attack that Jonathan and his armor bearer made, killed about twenty men within an area of half an acre.

¹⁵There was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among the people. Even the garrison and the raiders panicked. The earth quaked, and there was a great panic.

¹⁶Then Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; the crowd of Philistine soldiers was dispersing, and they were

going here and there.¹⁷ Then Saul said to the people that were with him, "Count and see who is missing from us." When they had counted, Jonathan and his armor bearer were missing.

¹⁸Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here," for at that time it was with the people of Israel.¹⁹ While Saul was talking to the priest, the commotion in the camp of the Philistines was continuing and increasing. Then Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

²⁰Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into battle. Every Philistine's sword was against his fellow countrymen, and there was very great tumult.²¹ Now those Hebrews who previously had been with the Philistines, and who had gone with them into the camp, even they joined with Israel who were with Saul and Jonathan.

²²When all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hills near Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, even they chased after them in battle.²³ So Yahweh saved Israel that day, and the battle passed beyond Beth Aven.

²⁴That day the men of Israel were distressed because Saul had put the people under an oath and said, "Cursed be the man that eats any food until evening and I am avenged on my enemies." So none of the troops tasted food.²⁵ Then all the people entered the forest and there was honey upon the ground.²⁶ When the people entered into the forest, the honey flowed, but no one put his hand to his mouth for the people feared the curse.

²⁷But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with an oath. He reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.²⁸ Then one of the people, answered, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, by saying, 'Cursed be the man that eats food on this day,' even though the people are weak from hunger."

²⁹Then Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the land. See how my eyes have become brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.³⁰ How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the plunder from their enemies that they found? Because now the slaughter has not been great among the Philistines."

³¹They attacked the Philistines that day from Mikdash to Aijalon. The people were very weary.³² The people rushed greedily on the plunder and took sheep, cattle and calves, and killed them on the ground. The people ate them with the blood.

³³Then they told Saul, "Look, the people are sinning against Yahweh by eating with the blood." Saul said, "You have acted unfaithfully. Now, roll a big stone here to me."³⁴ Saul said, "Go out among the people, and tell them, 'Let every man bring his cattle and his sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against Yahweh by eating meat with the blood.'" So each of the people brought his own ox with him that night and killed it there.

³⁵Saul built an altar to Yahweh, which was the first altar that he built to Yahweh.

³⁶Then Saul said, "Let us pursue the Philistines by night and plunder them until the morning light; let us not leave one of them alive." They replied, "Do whatever seems good to you." But the priest said, "Let us approach God here."³⁷ Saul asked God, "Should I pursue the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel?" But God did not answer him that day.

³⁸Then Saul said, "Come here, all you leaders of the people; learn and see how this sin has happened today.³⁹ For, as Yahweh lives, who saves Israel, even if it is in Jonathan my son, he will surely die." But none of the men among all the people answered him.

⁴⁰Then he said to all Israel, "You must stand on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other." The people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."⁴¹ Saul said, "Yahweh, God of Israel! If this sin has been committed by me or by my son Jonathan, then, Yahweh, God of Israel, give the Urim. But if this sin has been committed by your people Israel, give the Thummim."⁴² Then Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, but the army was exonerated.⁴³ Then Saul said, "Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son." Then Jonathan was taken by lot.

⁴⁴Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand. Here I am; I will die."⁴⁵ Saul said, "God do so and more also to me, if you do not die, Jonathan."

⁴⁶Then the people said to Saul, "Should Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great salvation for Israel? Far from it! As Yahweh lives, not one hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he has worked with God today." So the people ransomed Jonathan so that he did not die.⁴⁷ Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

⁴⁸When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side. He fought against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment on them.⁴⁹ He acted with great courage and defeated the Amalekites. He rescued Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.

⁵⁰The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malki-Shua. The names of his two daughters were Merab, the firstborn, and Michal, the younger.⁵¹ The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam; she was the daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the captain of his army was Abner son of Ner, Saul's uncle.⁵² Kish was Saul's father; and Ner, the father of Abner, was the son of Abiel.

⁵²There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul. When Saul saw any mighty man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself.

¹The ULB is following the ancient Greek translation in the quotation. The Hebrew copies have: Give me the right answer.

15 ¹Samuel said to Saul, "Yahweh sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel. Now listen to the words of Yahweh. ²This is what Yahweh of hosts says, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way, when they came up from Egypt. ³Now go and attack Amalek and completely destroy all that they have. Do not spare them, but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, cattle and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

⁴Saul summoned the people and numbered them at the city of Telaim—two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. ⁵Then Saul came to the city of Amalek and waited in the valley.

⁶Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, come out from among the Amalekites, so I do not destroy you along with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel, when they came from Egypt." So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites. ⁷Then Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt.

⁸Then he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive; he completely destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

⁹But Saul and the people spared Agag, as well as the best of the sheep and cattle, fattened calves and the lambs.

Everything that was good, they did not destroy. But they completely destroyed anything that was despised and worthless.

¹⁰Then the word of Yahweh came to Samuel, saying, ¹¹"I regret that I have set Saul to reign as king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments." Samuel was angry; he cried out to Yahweh all night.

¹²Samuel got up early to meet Saul in the morning. Samuel was told, "Saul came to Carmel and he set up a monument to himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal."¹³Then Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you by Yahweh! I have fulfilled the command of Yahweh."

¹⁴Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the cattle that I hear?"¹⁵Saul replied, "They have brought them from the Amalekites. For the people spared the best of the sheep and cattle, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God. The rest we have completely destroyed."¹⁶Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait, and I will tell you what Yahweh has said to me tonight." Saul said to him, "Speak!"

¹⁷Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own sight, were you not made the head of the tribes of Israel? Then Yahweh anointed you king over Israel,¹⁸ and Yahweh sent you on your way and said, 'Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are destroyed.'¹⁹Why did you not obey the voice of Yahweh? Why did you rush to the plunder and do what was evil in the sight of Yahweh?"

²⁰Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have indeed obeyed the voice of Yahweh, and have gone on the way that Yahweh sent me. I have captured Agag, the king of Amalek, and have completely destroyed the Amalekites."²¹But the people took some of the booty—sheep and cattle, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God in Gilgal."

²²Samuel replied, "Has Yahweh as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to listen is better than the fat of rams."²³For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and stubbornness is like wickedness and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, he has also rejected you from being king."

²⁴Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; for I have broken Yahweh's commandment and your words, because I was afraid of the people and obeyed their voice."²⁵Now, please pardon my sin, and return with me so that I may worship Yahweh."

²⁶Samuel said to Saul, "I will not go back with you; for you have rejected the word of Yahweh, and Yahweh has rejected you from being king over Israel."²⁷As Samuel turned to leave, Saul took hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore.

²⁸Samuel said to him, "Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to a neighbor of yours, one who is better than you."²⁹Also, the Strength of Israel will not lie nor change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind."

³⁰Then Saul said, "I have sinned. But please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel. Turn again with me, that I may worship Yahweh your God."³¹So Samuel turned again after Saul, and Saul worshiped Yahweh.

³²Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag the king of the Amalekites here to me." Agag came to him confined with chains and said, "Surely death is bitter."³³Samuel replied, "As your sword has made women childless, so must your mother be childless among women." Then Samuel chopped Agag to pieces before Yahweh at Gilgal.

³⁴Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul.³⁵Samuel did not see Saul until the day of his death, for he mourned for Saul. Yahweh regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

16 ¹Yahweh said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I will send you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have selected for myself a king among his sons."

²Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." Yahweh said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh.'³Call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you will do. You will anoint for me the one whom I tell you."

⁴Samuel did as Yahweh said and went to Bethlehem. The elders of the city were trembling as they came to meet him and said, "Are you coming in peace?"⁵He said, "In peace; I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Prepare to set yourselves apart and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he set apart Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶When they came, he looked at Eliab and said to himself that Yahweh's anointed was certainly standing before him.⁷But Yahweh said to Samuel, "Do not look at his outward appearance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him. For Yahweh does not see as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks on the heart."

⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. Then Samuel said, "Neither has Yahweh chosen this one."⁹Jesse then made Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Neither has Yahweh chosen this one."¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Yahweh has not chosen any of these."

¹¹Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the boys?" He replied, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."¹²Jesse sent and brought him in. Now this son was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. Yahweh said, "Arise, anoint him; for he is the one."

¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the middle of his brothers. The Spirit of Yahweh rushed on David from that day forward. Then Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

¹⁴Now the Spirit of Yahweh left Saul, and a harmful spirit from Yahweh tormented him instead.¹⁵Saul's servants said to him, "See now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you."¹⁶Let our master now command your servants who are before you to search for a man who is a skillful player on the harp. Then when the harmful spirit from God is on you, he will play it and you will be well."

¹⁷Saul said to his servants, "Find me a man that can play well and bring him to me."¹⁸Then one of the young men answered, and said, "I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a strong, courageous man, a man of war, one prudent in speech, a handsome man; and Yahweh is with him."¹⁹So Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep."

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

²¹Then David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer.

²²Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my eyes."²³Whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the harp and played it. So Saul would be refreshed and well, and the harmful spirit would depart from him.

17 ¹Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. They were gathered at Sokoh, which belongs to Judah. They had encamped between Sokoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim.

²Saul and the men of Israel gathered and encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines.³The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side with a valley between them.

⁴A strong man came out of the Philistines' camp, a man named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

⁵He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was clothed in scale armor of bronze that weighed five thousand shekels.

⁶He had bronze armor on his legs and a javelin of bronze between his shoulders.⁷The staff of his spear was large, with a loop of cord for throwing it like the cord on a weaver's beam. His spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. His shield bearer went before him.

⁸He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me.⁹If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then will we be your servants. But if I defeat him and kill him, then you will be our servants and serve us."

¹⁰Again the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel today. Give me a man so we may fight together."¹¹When Saul and all Israel heard what the Philistine said, they were discouraged and greatly afraid.

¹²Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse. He had eight sons. Jesse was an

old man in the days of Saul, very old among men.¹³ The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, second to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.¹⁴ David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul.¹⁵ Now David went back and forth between Saul's army and his father's sheep at Bethlehem, in order to feed them.¹⁶ For forty days the Philistine strong man came near morning and evening to present himself for battle.

¹⁷Then Jesse said to his son David, "Take to your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp for your brothers."¹⁸ Also bring these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand. Look to the well-being of your brothers, and bring back some evidence that they are doing well.

¹⁹Your brothers are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting the Philistines."²⁰ David got up early in the morning and left the flock in the care of a shepherd. He took the supplies and left, as Jesse commanded him. He came to the camp as the army was going out to the battlefield shouting the war cry.²¹ Then Israel and the Philistines lined up for battle, army against army.

²²David left his belongings with the keeper of supplies, ran to the army, and greeted his brothers.²³ As he talked with them, the strong man, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came out of the ranks of the Philistines and said the same words as before, and David heard them.²⁴ When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were very afraid.

²⁵The men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? He has come to defy Israel. The king will give great riches to the man who kills him, and he will give his daughter to him in marriage, and will make his father's house free from taxation in Israel."

²⁶David said to the men who stood by him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"²⁷ Then the people repeated what they had been saying and told him, "So it will be done for the man who kills him."

²⁸Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride, and the mischief in your heart; for you have come down here so that you might see the battle."²⁹ David said, "What have I done now? Was it not just a question?"³⁰ He turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way. The people answered the same thing as before.

³¹When the words that David said were heard, soldiers repeated them to Saul, and he sent for David.³² Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of that Philistine; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."³³ Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are only a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

³⁴But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to shepherd his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock,³⁵ I chased after him and attacked him, and rescued it out of his mouth. When he rose up against me, I caught him by his beard, struck him, and put him to death.

³⁶Your servant has killed both a lion and a bear. This uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God."

³⁷David said, "Yahweh rescued me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear. He will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." Then Saul said to David, "Go, and may Yahweh be with you."³⁸ Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze upon his head, and he clothed him with a coat of chainmail.

³⁹David strapped his sword on his armor. But he was not able to walk, because he had not trained with them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go out to fight with these, for I have not trained with them." So David put them off.⁴⁰ He took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones out of the brook; he put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand as he approached the Philistine.

⁴¹The Philistine came and approached David, with his shield bearer in front of him.⁴² When the Philistine looked around and saw David, he despised him, for he was only a boy, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance.⁴³ Then the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?," and the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

⁴⁴The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the heavens and to the wild animals of the field."⁴⁵ David replied to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin. But I come to you in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

⁴⁶Today Yahweh will give me victory over you, and I will kill you and remove your head from your body. Today I will give the dead bodies of the Philistine army to the birds of the heavens and to the wild beasts of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,⁴⁷ and that all this gathering may know that Yahweh does not save with sword or spear. For the battle is Yahweh's, and he will give you into our hand."

⁴⁸When the Philistine rose and approached David, then David ran quickly toward the enemy army to meet him.⁴⁹ David put his hand in his bag, took a stone from it, slung it, and hit the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank into the Philistine's forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

⁵⁰David defeated the Philistine with a sling and with a stone. He hit the Philistine and put him to death. There was no sword in David's hand.⁵¹Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword, drew it out of the sheath, killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their mighty man was dead, they fled.

⁵²Then the men of Israel and of Judah rose with a shout, and chased after the Philistines as far as the valley and the gates of Ekron. The dead Philistines lay along the way to Shaaraim, all the way to Gath and Ekron.⁵³The people of Israel returned from hotly pursuing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp.⁵⁴David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.

⁵⁵When Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the captain of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" Abner said, "As you live, king, I do not know."⁵⁶The king said, "Ask those who might know, whose son the boy is."

⁵⁷When David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.⁵⁸Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

18¹When he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.²Saul took David into his service that day; he did not let him return to his father's house.

³Then Jonathan and David made a covenant of friendship because Jonathan loved him as his own soul.⁴Jonathan took off the robe that he was wearing and gave it to David with his armor, as well as his sword, bow, and belt.

⁵David went out wherever Saul sent him, and he succeeded. Saul set him over the men of war. This was pleasing in the eyes of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

⁶As they came home from defeating the Philistines, the women came from all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments.⁷The women sang one to another as they played. They sang:

"Saul has killed his thousands,
and David his ten thousands."

⁸Saul was very angry, and this song displeased him. He said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but they have ascribed only thousands to me. What more can he have but the kingship?"⁹Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on.

¹⁰The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul and he prophesied within the house. So David played his instrument, as he did each day. Saul had a spear in his hand.¹¹Saul threw the spear, for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David escaped from Saul's presence twice in this way.¹²Saul was afraid of David, because Yahweh was with him, but was no longer with Saul.

¹³So Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him a commander of a thousand. In this way David went out and came in before the people.¹⁴David was prospering in all his ways, for Yahweh was with him.

¹⁵When Saul saw that he prospered, he stood in awe of him.¹⁶But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them.

¹⁷Then Saul said to David, "Here is my oldest daughter Merab. I will give her to you as a wife. Only be courageous for me and fight Yahweh's battles." For Saul thought, "Let not my hand be on him, but let the hand of the Philistines be on him."¹⁸David said to Saul, "Who am I, and who are my relatives, or my father's clan in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?"

¹⁹But at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.

²⁰But Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. They told Saul, and this pleased him.²¹Then Saul thought, "I will give her to him, so that she can be a trap for him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So Saul said to David a second time, "You will be my son-in-law."

²²Saul commanded his servants, "Speak with David in private, and say, 'See, the king takes pleasure in you, and all his servants love you. Now then, become the king's son-in-law.'"

²³So Saul's servants spoke these words to David. Then David said, "Is it a small matter to you to be the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?"²⁴The servants of Saul reported to him the words which David spoke.

²⁵Then Saul said, "Say this to David, 'The king does not desire any price for the bride except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged from the king's enemies.'"

²⁶When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to be the king's son-in-law.

²⁷Before those days had expired, David went with his men and killed two hundred Philistines. David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, so that he might be the king's son-in-law. So Saul gave him Michal his daughter as his wife.²⁸When Saul saw, and he knew that Yahweh was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him,²⁹Saul was even more afraid of David. Saul was continually David's enemy.

³⁰Then the princes of the Philistines came out for battle, and as often as they came out, David behaved more prudently than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was highly regarded.

19 ¹Saul said to Jonathan his son and to all his servants that they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, took great pleasure in David.²So Jonathan told David, "Saul my father seeks to kill you. Therefore be on your guard in the morning and hide yourself in a secret place.³I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you. If I learn anything, I will tell you."

⁴Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David. For he has not sinned against you, and his deeds have brought you good.⁵For he took his life in his hand and killed the Philistine. Yahweh brought about great salvation for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why would you sin against innocent blood by killing David for no reason?"

⁶Saul listened to Jonathan. Saul swore, "As Yahweh lives, he will not be put to death."⁷Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before.

⁸There was war again, and David went out and fought with the Philistines and defeated them with a great slaughter. They fled before him.⁹A harmful spirit from Yahweh came on Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand, and as David was playing his instrument.

¹⁰Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence, so that Saul drove the spear into the wall. David fled and escaped that night.¹¹Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him that he might kill him in the morning. Michal, David's wife, told him, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed."

¹²So Michal let David down through the window. He went and fled, and escaped.¹³Michal took a household idol and laid it in the bed. Then she put a pillow of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with the clothes.

¹⁴When Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick."¹⁵Then Saul sent the messengers to see David; he said, "Bring him up to me in the bed, so that I may kill him."

¹⁶When the messengers came in, behold, the household idol was in the bed along with the pillow of goats' hair at its head.

¹⁷Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?" Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go. Why should I kill you?'"

¹⁸Now David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel in Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth.¹⁹It was told to Saul, saying, "See, David is at Naioth in Ramah."²⁰Then Saul sent messengers to capture David. When they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came on the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.

²¹When Saul was told this, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. So Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied.²²Then he also went to Ramah and came to the deep well that is in Seku. He asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" Someone said, "See, they are at Naioth in Ramah."

²³Saul went to Naioth in Ramah. Then the Spirit of God came upon him, and as he went he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah.²⁴He stripped off his clothes and also prophesied before Samuel. He lay naked all that day and all that night. This is why they ask, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

20 ¹Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity? What is my sin before your father, that he seeks to take my life?"²Jonathan said to David, "Far from it; you will not die. My father does nothing either great or small without telling it to me. Why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so."

³Yet David vowed again and said, "Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes. He has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, or he will be grieved.' But as truly as Yahweh lives, and as you live, there is but a step between me and death."

⁴Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."⁵David said to Jonathan, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and I ought to sit down to eat with the king. But let me go, so that I may hide myself in the field until the third day at evening.

⁶If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city, because it is the yearly sacrifice there for all the clan.'⁷If he says, 'It is well,' your servant will have peace. But if he is very angry, then know that he has decided on evil.

⁸Therefore deal kindly with your servant. For you have brought your servant into a covenant of Yahweh with you. But if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself; for why then should you bring me to your father?"⁹Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! If I learned my father decided harm to come upon you, would I not tell you?"

¹⁰Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if by chance your father should answer you roughly?"¹¹Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So they both went out into the field.

¹²Jonathan said to David, "May Yahweh, the God of Israel, be witness. When I have questioned my father around this time tomorrow, or the third day, see, if there is good will toward David, will I not then send to you and make it known to you?"

¹³If it pleases my father to do you harm, may Yahweh do to Jonathan and more also if I do not make it known to you and send you away, so that you may go in peace. May Yahweh be with you, as he has been with my father.

¹⁴If I am still alive, will you not show me the covenant faithfulness of Yahweh, that I may not die?"¹⁵Do not cut off your covenant faithfulness from my house forever—not even when Yahweh cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth."¹⁶So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David and said, "May Yahweh require an accounting from the hand of the enemies of David."

¹⁷Jonathan made David vow again because of the love that he had for him, because he loved him as he loved his own soul.

¹⁸Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon. You will be missed because your seat will be empty."¹⁹When you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to the place where you hid yourself when this matter began, and stay by the stone Ezel.

²⁰I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target."²¹Then I will send my young man and say to him, 'Go find the arrows.' If I say to the young boy, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you; get them,' then come; for there will be safety for you and not harm, as Yahweh lives.

²²"But if I say to the young man, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,' then go your way, for Yahweh has sent you away."²³As for the agreement of which you and I have spoken, see, Yahweh is between you and me forever."

²⁴So David hid himself in the field. When the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food."²⁵The king sat on his seat, as usual, on the seat by the wall. Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat by Saul's side. But David's place was empty.

²⁶Yet Saul did not say anything that day, because he thought, "Something has happened to him. He is not clean; surely he is not clean."²⁷But on the second day, the day after the new moon, David's place was empty. Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal either yesterday or today?"

²⁸Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked permission from me to go to Bethlehem."²⁹He said, 'Please let me go. For our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has ordered me to be there. Now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me go and see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table."

³⁰Then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?"³¹For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now then, send and bring him to me, for he must surely die."

³²Jonathan answered Saul his father, "For what reason should he be put to death? What has he done?"³³Then Saul threw his spear at him to kill him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death."³⁴Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved over David, because his father had dishonored him.

³⁵In the morning, Jonathan went out into the field to the appointment with David, and a young man was with him."³⁶He said to his young man, "Run and find the arrows that I shoot." As the young man ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

³⁷When the young man came to the place where the arrow that Jonathan shot had landed, Jonathan called after the young man, and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?"

³⁸Then Jonathan called after the young man, "Hurry, be quick, do not stay!" So Jonathan's young man gathered up the arrows and came to his master."³⁹But the young man did not know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

⁴⁰Jonathan gave his weapons to his young man and said to him, "Go, take them to the city."

⁴¹As soon as the young man was gone, David stood up from behind the mound, lay facedown on the ground, and bowed himself three times. They kissed one another and wept together, with David weeping the more."⁴²Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, because we have both sworn in the name of Yahweh and said, 'May Yahweh be between you and me, and between my descendants and your descendants, forever.'" Then David stood up and left, and Jonathan returned to the city.

¹The copies of the ancient Hebrew text read, David came out from beside the south . Modern translations interpret this passage in different ways because the text is difficult to understand.

21 ¹Then David came to Nob to see Ahimelek the priest. Ahimelek came to meet David trembling and said to him, "Why are you alone and have no one with you?" ²David said to Ahimelek the priest, "The king has sent me on a mission and has said to me, 'Let no one know anything about the business I am sending you, and what I have commanded you.' I have directed the young men to a certain place.

³Now then what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here." ⁴The priest answered David and said, "There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is holy bread—if the young men have kept themselves from women."

⁵David answered the priest, "Surely women have been kept from us for the past three days, as usual when I set out. The things belonging to the young men have been set apart even on ordinary missions. How much more today will what they have be set apart!" ⁶So the priest gave him the bread that was set apart. For there was no bread there except the bread of the presence, which was removed from before Yahweh, in order to put hot bread in its place on the day it was taken away.

⁷Now one of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before Yahweh. His name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds.

⁸David said to Ahimelek, "Now is there not here on hand any spear or sword? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business was urgent." ⁹The priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want to take that, take it, for there is no other weapon here." David said, "There is no other sword like that one; give it to me."

¹⁰David arose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish, the king of Gath. ¹¹Achish's servants said to him, "Is not this David, the king of the land? Did they not sing to one another about him in dances,

'Saul has killed his thousands,
and David his ten thousands?'"

¹²David took these words to heart and was very afraid of Achish, the king of Gath. ¹³He changed his behavior before them and pretended to be insane in their hands; he made marks on the doors of the gate and let his saliva run down his beard.

¹⁴Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is mad. Why have you brought him to me?" ¹⁵Do I lack madmen, so that you have brought this fellow to behave like one in my presence? Will this fellow really come into my house?"

22 ¹So David left there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. ²Everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented—they all gathered to him. David became captain over them. There were about four hundred men with him.

³Then David went from there to Mizpah in Moab. He said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother go out with you until I know what God will do for me." ⁴He left them with the king of Moab. His father and mother stayed with him the whole time that David was in his stronghold. ⁵Then the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in your stronghold. Leave and go into the land of Judah." So David left there and went into the forest of Hereth.

⁶Saul heard that David had been discovered, along with the men who were with him. Now Saul was sitting in Gibeah under the tamarisk tree on a hill, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing around him.

⁷Saul said to his servants who stood around him, "Listen now, people of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards? Will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, in exchange for all of you plotting against me? None of you informs me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is sorry for me. None of you informs me that my son has incited my servant David against me. Today he hides and waits for me so he may attack me."

⁹Then Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, answered, "I saw the son of Jesse come to Nob, to Ahimelek son of Ahitub. ¹⁰He prayed to Yahweh that he might help him, and he gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

¹¹Then the king sent someone to summon the priest Ahimelek son of Ahitub and all his father's house, the priests who were in Nob. All of them came to the king. ¹²Saul said, "Listen now, son of Ahitub." He answered, "Here I am, my master." ¹³Saul said to him, "Why have you plotted against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread, and a sword, and have prayed to God that he might help him, so that he might rise up against me, to hide in secret, as he does today?"

¹⁴Then Ahimelek answered the king and said, "Who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law and is over your bodyguard, and is honored in your house?" ¹⁵Is today the first time I have prayed to God to help him? Far be it from me! Do not let the king impute anything to his servant or to all the house of my father. For your servant knows nothing of this whole matter."

¹⁶The king replied, "You will surely die, Ahimelek, you and all your father's house."¹⁷The king said to the guard that stood around him, "Turn and kill the priests of Yahweh. Because their hand also is with David, and because they knew that he fled, but did not reveal it to me." But the servants of the king would not put out their hand to kill the priests of Yahweh.¹⁸Then the king said to Doeg, "Turn and kill the priests." So Doeg the Edomite turned and attacked the priests; he killed eighty-five persons who wore a linen ephod that day.¹⁹He also put to the sword Nob, the city of the priests, both men and women, children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep, he put to the sword.

²⁰But one of the sons of Ahimelek son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David.²¹Abiathar told David that Saul had killed Yahweh's priests.

²²David said to Abiathar, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I am responsible for every death in your father's family!"²³Stay with me and do not be afraid. For the one who seeks your life seeks mine as well. You will be safe with me."

¹Some ancient translations have, Please let my father and my mother stay with you, and some modern translations read this way.

23 ¹They told David, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors."²So David prayed to Yahweh for help and asked him, "Should I go and attack these Philistines?" Yahweh said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah."

³David's men said to him, "See, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?"⁴Then David prayed to Yahweh for help yet again. Yahweh answered him, "Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will give you victory over the Philistines."

⁵David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines. He led away their cattle and struck them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.⁶When Abiathar son of Ahimelek had fled to David at Keilah, he came down with an ephod in his hand.

⁷Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. Saul said, "God has given him into my hand. For he is shut in because he has entered a city that has gates and bars."⁸Saul summoned all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.⁹David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. He said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here."

¹⁰Then David said, "Yahweh, the God of Israel, your servant has indeed heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.¹¹Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? Yahweh, the God of Israel, I beg you, please tell your servant." Yahweh said, "He will come down."

¹²Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" Yahweh said, "They will surrender you."

¹³Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, got up and went away from Keilah, and they went from place to place. It was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, and he stopped the pursuit.¹⁴David stayed in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul looked for him every day, but God did not give him into his hand.

¹⁵David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life; now David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh.¹⁶Then Jonathan, Saul's son, got up and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God.

¹⁷He said to him, "Do not be afraid. For the hand of Saul my father will not find you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be next to you. Saul my father also knows this."¹⁸They made a covenant before Yahweh. David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home.

¹⁹Then Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, which is south of Jeshimon?"²⁰Now come down, king! According to your desire, come down! Our part will be to surrender him into the king's hand."

²¹Saul said, "May you be blessed by Yahweh. For you have had compassion on me."²²Go, make even more sure. Learn and find out where his hiding place is and who has seen him there. It is told to me that he is very crafty.²³So look, and learn all of the places where he hides himself. Come back to me with sure information, and then I will return with you. If he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah."

²⁴Then they rose up and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon.²⁵Saul and his men went to seek him. But David was told of it, so he went down to a rocky hill and lived in the wilderness of Maon. When Saul heard it, he chased David in the wilderness of Maon.

²⁶Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men were going on the other side of the mountain. David hurried to get away from Saul. As Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to take them,²⁷a messenger came to Saul and said, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land."

²⁸So Saul returned from pursuing David and went against the Philistines. Therefore that place was called Sela Hammahlekoth.²⁹David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.

24 ¹When Saul returned from chasing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the wilderness of En Gedi."²Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

³He came to sheep pens on the way, where there was a cave. Saul went inside to cover his feet. Now David and his men were sitting far back in the cave.⁴David's men said to him, "This is the day of which Yahweh spoke when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hand, for you to do with him as you wish.'" Then David arose and quietly crept forward and cut off the corner of Saul's robe.

⁵Afterward David's heart afflicted him because he had cut a corner off Saul's robe.⁶He said to his men, "May Yahweh forbid that I should do this thing to my master, Yahweh's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is Yahweh's anointed."⁷So David rebuked his men with these words, and did not permit them to attack Saul. Saul stood up, left the cave, and went on his way.

⁸Afterward, David also stood up, left the cave, and called out after Saul: "My master the king." When Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and showed him respect.⁹David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the men who say, 'See, David is seeking your harm?'"

¹⁰Today your eyes have seen how Yahweh put you into my hand when we were in the cave. Some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not put out my hand against my master; for he is Yahweh's anointed.'¹¹See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no evil or treason in my hand, and I have not sinned against you, even though you hunt my life to take it.

¹²May Yahweh judge between you and me, and may Yahweh avenge me against you, but my hand must not be against you.

¹³As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes wickedness.' But my hand will not be against you.

¹⁴After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea!¹⁵May Yahweh be judge and give judgment between you and me, and see to it, and plead my cause and permit me to escape from your hand."

¹⁶When David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

¹⁷He said to David, "You are more righteous than I am. For you have repaid me good, where I have repaid you evil."¹⁸You have declared today how you have done good to me, for you did not kill me when Yahweh had put me at your mercy.

¹⁹For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go safely? May Yahweh reward you with good for what you have done to me today.²⁰Now, I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand.

²¹Swear to me by Yahweh that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house."²²So David made an oath to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

25 ¹Now Samuel died. All Israel gathered together and mourned for him, and they buried him in his house at Ramah. Then David rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

²There was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel. The man was very wealthy. He had three thousand sheep and one thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel.³The man's name was Nabal, and the name of his wife was Abigail. The woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance. But the man was harsh and evil in his dealings. He was a descendant of the house of Caleb.

⁴David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep.⁵So David sent ten young men. David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name."⁶You will say to him, 'Live in prosperity. Peace to you and peace to your house, and peace be to all that you have.'

⁷I hear that you have shearers. Your shepherds have been with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing the whole time they were in Carmel.⁸Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Now let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a festive day. Please give whatever you have on hand to your servants and to your son David."

⁹When David's young men arrived, they said all of this to Nabal in David's name and then waited.¹⁰Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters."¹¹Should I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men who come from I do not know where?"

¹²So David's young men turned away and came back, and told him everything that was said.¹³David said to his men, "Every man strap on his sword." So every man strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword. About four hundred men followed after David, and two hundred stayed by the baggage.

¹⁴But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife; he said, "David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he screamed at them.¹⁵ Yet the men were very good to us. We were not harmed and did not miss anything as long as we went with them when we were in the fields.

¹⁶They were a wall to us both day and night, all the while we were with them tending the sheep.¹⁷ Therefore know this and consider what you will do, for evil is plotted against our master, and against his whole house. He is such a worthless fellow that one cannot reason with him."

¹⁸Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves, two bottles of wine, five sheep already prepared, five measures of parched grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys.¹⁹ She said to her young men, "Go on before me, and I will come after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

²⁰As she rode on her donkey and came down by the cover of the mountain, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them.

²¹Now David had said, "Surely in vain have I guarded all that this man has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good."²² May God do so to the enemies of David, and more also, if by the morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him."

²³When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from her donkey and lay before David facedown and bowed herself to the ground.²⁴ She lay at his feet and said, "On me alone, my master, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak to you, and listen to the words of your servant.

²⁵Let not my master regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I your servant did not see the young men of my master, whom you sent.²⁶ Now then, my master, as Yahweh lives, and as you live, since Yahweh has restrained you from bloodshed, and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now let your enemies, and those who seek to do evil to my master, be like Nabal.

²⁷Now let this present that your servant has brought to my master be given to the young men who follow my master.

²⁸Please forgive the trespass of your servant, for Yahweh will certainly make my master a sure house, because my master is fighting the battles of Yahweh; and evil will not be found in you so long as you live.

²⁹Though men rise up to pursue you to take your life, yet the life of my master will be bound in the bundle of the living by Yahweh your God; and he will sling away the lives of your enemies, as from the pocket of a sling.

³⁰Yahweh will have done for my master everything he promised you, and has appointed you leader over Israel.³¹ This will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my master—that you have poured out innocent blood, or because my master attempted to rescue himself. For when Yahweh will do good for my master, remember your servant."

³²David said to Abigail, "May Yahweh, the God of Israel, be blessed, he who sent you to meet me today.³³ Your wisdom is blessed and you are blessed, because you have kept me today from bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand!

³⁴For in truth, as Yahweh, the God of Israel, lives, he who has kept me from hurting you, unless you had hurried to come meet me, there would certainly have not been left to Nabal so much as one male baby by the morning light."³⁵ So David received from her hand what she had brought him; he said to her, "Go up in peace to your house; see, I have listened to your voice and have accepted you."

³⁶Abigail went back to Nabal; behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until the morning light.

³⁷It came about in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, that his wife told him these things; his heart died within him, and he became like a stone.³⁸ It came about ten days later that Yahweh attacked Nabal so that he died.

³⁹When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "May Yahweh be blessed, who has avenged the scorn I have received from the hand of Nabal and has kept back his servant from doing wrong. He has turned Nabal's evil action back on his own head." Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her to himself as wife.⁴⁰ When David's servants had come to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her and said, "David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife."

⁴¹She arose, bowed herself with her face to the ground, and said, "See, your female servant is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my master."⁴² Abigail hurried and arose, and rode on a donkey with five servant girls of hers who followed her; and she followed David's messengers and became his wife.

⁴³Now David had also taken Ahinoam of Jezreel as a wife; both of them became his wives.⁴⁴ Also, Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Paltiel son of Laish, who was of Gallim.

¹The Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding in the hill of Hakilah, which is before Jeshimon?"²Then Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

³Saul camped on the hill of Hakilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the road. But David was staying in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul was coming after him into the wilderness.⁴So David sent out spies and learned that Saul had indeed come.

⁵David arose and went to the place where Saul had camped; he saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner son of Ner, the general of his army; Saul lay in the camp, and the people were camped around him, all asleep.

⁶Then David said to Ahimelek the Hittite, and to Abishai son of Zeruiah, the brother of Joab, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?" Abishai said, "I! I will go down with you."⁷So David and Abishai went to the army by night. Saul was there sleeping inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground beside his head. Abner and his soldiers lay around him.

⁸Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has put your enemy into your hand. Now please let me pin him to the ground with the spear with just one blow. I will not strike him a second time."

⁹David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can extend his hand against Yahweh's anointed one and be guiltless?"¹⁰David said, "As Yahweh lives, Yahweh will kill him, or his day will come to die, or he will go into battle and perish.

¹¹May Yahweh forbid that I should extend my hand against his anointed one; but now, I beg you, take the spear that is at his head and the jar of water, and let us go."¹²So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head, and they got away. No one saw them or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from Yahweh had fallen on them.

¹³Then David went over to the other side and stood on the top of the mountain far off; a great distance was between them.

¹⁴David shouted out to the people and to Abner son of Ner; he said, "Do you not answer, Abner?" Then Abner answered and said, "Who are you who is shouting to the king?"

¹⁵David said to Abner, "Are not you a courageous man? Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your master the king? For someone came in to destroy the king your master."¹⁶This thing you have done is not good. As Yahweh lives, you deserve to die because you have not kept watch over your master, Yahweh's anointed one. Now see where the king's spear is and the jar of water that was near his head!"

¹⁷Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is that your voice, my son David?" David said, "It is my voice, my master, king."¹⁸He said, "Why does my master pursue his servant? What have I done? What evil is in my hand?"

¹⁹Now therefore, I beg you, let my master the king listen to the words of his servant. If it is Yahweh who has stirred you up against me, may he be pleased with an offering; but if it is human beings, may they be cursed in the sight of Yahweh, for they have today driven me out, that I should not cling to the inheritance of Yahweh; they have said to me, 'Go worship other gods.'²⁰Now therefore, do not let my blood fall to the earth away from Yahweh's presence; for the king of Israel has come out to search for the one flea as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

²¹Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, David, my son; for I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes today. See, I have played the fool and have made a very bad mistake."

²²David answered and said, "See, your spear is here, king! Let one of the young men come over and get it and bring it to you."²³May Yahweh pay each man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; because Yahweh put you into my hand today, but I would not strike his anointed.

²⁴See, as your life was precious in my eyes today, so may my life be much valued in the eyes of Yahweh, and may he rescue me out of all trouble."²⁵Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, David my son! You will certainly do great things and you will succeed in them." So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

27 ¹David said in his heart, "I will now perish one day by Saul's hand; there is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines; Saul will give up looking for me any more within all the borders of Israel; in this way I will escape out of his hand."

²David arose and passed over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish son of Maok, the king of Gath.

³David lived with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his own household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite woman, and Abigail the Carmelite woman, Nabal's wife.⁴Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, so he looked for him no longer.

⁵David said to Achish, "If I have found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?"⁶So that day Achish gave him Ziklag; that is why

Ziklag belongs to the kings of Judah to this very day.⁷ The number of days that David lived in the land of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

⁸David and his men attacked various places, making raids on the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites; for those nations were the inhabitants of the land, as you go to Shur, as far as the land of Egypt. They had been living there in the land from ancient times. ⁹David attacked the land and saved neither man nor woman alive. He took away the sheep and cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing. Then he returned and went back to Achish.

¹⁰Achish would say, "Against whom have you made a raid today?" David would answer, "Against the south of Judah," or "Against the south of the Jerahmeelites," or "Against the south of the Kenites."

¹¹David would keep neither man nor woman alive to bring them to Gath, saying, "So that they cannot say about us, 'David did such and such.'" This was what he did all the while he was living in the country of the Philistines.¹² Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him; he will therefore be my servant forever."

¹Instead of the Girzites which is found in some ancient copies of the Hebrew text, some modern translations have the Gizrites which is found in the margin of some Hebrew copies.

28 ¹It came about in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for battle to fight with Israel. Achish said to David, "Know for certain that you will go out with me in the army, you and your men."² David said to Achish, "That being the case, you will know what your servant can do." Achish said to David, "Then I will make you my bodyguard all your days."

³Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. Also, Saul had banned sorcerers and spiritists from the land.⁴ Then the Philistines gathered themselves together and came and camped at Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they camped at Gilboa.

⁵When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled very much.⁶ Saul prayed to Yahweh for help, but Yahweh did not answer him—neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.⁷ Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a sorceress, so that I may go to her and seek her advice." His servants said to him, "See, there is a woman in Endor who is a sorceress."

⁸So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothing and went, he and two men with him. They went to the woman by night. He said, "Divine for me by a spirit and bring up for me the one I name."⁹ The woman said to him, "See, you know what Saul has done, how he has banned sorcerers and spiritists from the land. So why are you setting a trap for my life, to make me die?"¹⁰ Saul swore to her by Yahweh and said, "As Yahweh lives, no punishment will happen to you for this thing."

¹¹Then the woman said, "Whom should I bring up to you?" Saul said, "Bring up Samuel for me."¹² When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice and spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul."

¹³The king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What do you see?" The woman said to Saul, "I see a god coming up out of the earth."¹⁴ He said to her, "What does he look like?" She said, "An old man is coming up; he is clothed with a robe." Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and showed him respect.

¹⁵Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me and brought me up?" Saul answered, "I am very distressed, for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has left me and does not answer me any more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I will do."

¹⁶Samuel said, "What then do you ask me, since Yahweh has left you, and he has become your enemy?"¹⁷ Yahweh has done to you what he said he would. Yahweh has torn the kingdom out of your hand and he has given it to someone else—to David.

¹⁸Because you did not obey the voice of Yahweh and did not carry out his fierce wrath on Amalek, he has therefore done this today to you.¹⁹ Yahweh will give Israel along with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Yahweh will also give the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

²⁰Then Saul immediately fell his full length on the ground and was very afraid because of the words of Samuel. There was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all that day, neither that whole night.²¹ The woman came to Saul and saw that he was very troubled. She said to him, "See, your woman servant has listened to your voice; I have put my life in my hand and have listened to the words that you said to me."

²²Now therefore, I beg you, listen also to the voice of your woman servant, and let me set a little food in front of you. Eat so that you may gain strength for when you go on your way."²³ But Saul refused and said, "I will not eat." But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him, and he listened to their voice. So he rose from the ground and sat on the bed.

²⁴The woman had a fatted calf in the house; she hurried and killed it; she took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread with it.²⁵ She brought it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they got up and left that night.

29 ¹Now the Philistines gathered together all their army at Aphek, and Israel camped by the spring that is in Jezreel. ²The princes of the Philistines passed on by hundreds and by thousands; David and his men passed on in the rear guard with Achish.

³Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" Achish said to the other princes of the Philistines, "Is not this David, the servant of Saul, the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or rather these years, and I have found no fault with him since he came away to me to this day?"

⁴But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him and said, "Send the man back, that he may return to the place you assigned him. He will not go down with us into battle, for he will become our adversary during the fighting. For how else could he make himself acceptable to his master than by taking the heads of our own men?"

⁵Is this not David of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying,
'Saul has killed his thousands,
and David his ten thousands'?"

⁶Then Achish called David and said to him, "As Yahweh lives, you have been good, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army is good in my view; for I have found nothing wrong with you since the day of your coming to me to this very day. Nevertheless, the princes are not favorable to you. ⁷So now return and go in peace, so that you do not displease the princes of the Philistines."

⁸David said to Achish, "But what have I done? What have you found in your servant as long as I have been before you to this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my master the king?" ⁹Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you are as blameless in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless, the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He must not go up with us to the battle.'"

¹⁰So now rise up early in the morning with the servants of your master who have come with you; as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, go away." ¹¹So David rose up early, he and his men, to leave in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. But the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

30 ¹It came about, when David and his men had come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid upon the Negev and on Ziklag. They attacked Ziklag, burned it, ²and captured the women and everyone who was in it, both small and great. They killed no one, but carried them off as they went on their way.

³When David and his men came to the city, it was burned, and their wives, their sons, and their daughters were taken captive. ⁴Then David and the people that were with him raised their voices and wept until they had no more power to weep.

⁵David's two wives were taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelite woman, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. ⁶David was greatly distressed, for the people were talking about stoning him, for all the people were bitter in spirit, each man for his sons and daughters; but David strengthened himself in Yahweh, his God.

⁷David said to Abiathar son of Ahimelek, the priest, "I beg you, bring the ephod here for me." Abiathar brought the ephod to David. ⁸David prayed to Yahweh for direction, saying, "If I pursue after this troop, will I overtake them?" Yahweh answered him, "Pursue, for you will certainly overtake them, and you will surely recover everything."

⁹So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him; they came to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind stayed. ¹⁰But David kept pursuing, he and four hundred men; for two hundred had stayed behind, who were so weak that they could not go over the brook Besor.

¹¹They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David; they gave him bread, and he ate; they gave him water to drink; ¹²and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. When he had eaten, he gained strength again, for he had eaten no bread nor drunk any water for three days and three nights.

¹³David said to him, "To whom do you belong? Where do you come from?" He said, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; my master left me because three days ago I fell sick. ¹⁴We made a raid on the Negev of the Kerethites, and what belongs to Judah, and the Negev of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag."

¹⁵David said to him, "Will you bring me down to this raiding party?" The Egyptian said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me or betray me up into the hands of my master, and I will bring you down to this raiding party."

¹⁶When the Egyptian had brought David down, the raiders were spread out over all the ground, eating and drinking and celebrating because of all the booty they had taken out of the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. ¹⁷David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. Not a man escaped except for four hundred young men, who rode on camels and fled.

¹⁸David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken; and David rescued his two wives. ¹⁹Nothing was missing, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither booty, nor anything that the raiders had taken for themselves. David

brought back everything.²⁰ David took all the flocks and the herds, which the men drove ahead of the other livestock. They said, "This is David's booty."

²¹David came to the two hundred men who had been too weak to follow him, the ones the others had made to stay at the brook Besor. These men went ahead to meet David and the people who were with him. When David came to these people, he greeted them.²² Then all the wicked men and worthless fellows among those who had gone with David said, "Because these men did not go with us, we will not give them any of the booty that we have recovered. However, each man may lead away his wife and children and go."

²³Then David said, "You must not act like this, my brothers, with what Yahweh has given to us. He has preserved us and given into our hand the marauding band that came against us.²⁴ Who will listen to you in this matter? For as the share is for anyone who goes into battle, so also will the share be for anyone who waits by the baggage; they will share and share alike."²⁵ It has been so from that day to this day, for David made it a statute and a decree for Israel.

²⁶When David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the booty to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "See, here is a present for you from the booty from Yahweh's enemies."²⁷ He also sent some to the elders who were in Bethel, and to those who were in Ramoth of the South, and to those who were in Jattir,²⁸ and to those who were in Aroer, and to those who were in Siphmoth, and to those who were in Eshtemoa.

²⁹He also sent some to the elders who were in Rakal, and to those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to those who were in the cities of the Kenites,³⁰ and to those who were in Hormah, and to those who were in Bor Ashan, and to those who were in Athak,³¹ and to those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men habitually went.

31 ¹Now the Philistines fought against Israel. The men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell down dead on Mount Gilboa.² The Philistines closely pursued Saul and his sons. The Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki-Shua, his sons.³ The battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers overtook him. He was in severe pain because of them.

⁴Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and thrust me through with it. Otherwise, these uncircumcised will come and abuse me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was very afraid. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it.⁵ When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell on his sword in the same way and died with him.⁶ So Saul died, his three sons, and his armor bearer—these men all died together that same day.

⁷When the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, and those beyond the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities and fled, and the Philistines came and lived in them.⁸ It came about on the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.

⁹They cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and sent messengers into the land of the Philistines throughout to carry the news to their idols' temples and to the people.¹⁰ They put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the city wall of Beth Shan.

¹¹When the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard of what the Philistines had done to Saul,¹² all the fighting men arose and went all night and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan. They went to Jabesh and burned them there.¹³ Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted for seven days.