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Three Rivers Fellowship

The Rise and Fall Of the House of Saul

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January 4, 2014
Revised: April 24, 2021**

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1. Abstract

In this outline we review the “life and times” of Saul, the first king of Israel. First, we examine the political and moral milieu of Israel at that time, which provides the fertile ground for the untimely desire for a king (just like the surrounding Gentile nations). Secondly, we look at the choice of Saul, the type of man he was, and how quickly he manifested himself as anything other than regal material. Thirdly, we will have the somewhat amusing look into Saul’s irrational quest to kill the “man after God’s Own heart – future king David and topic of our next session! Finally, the outline closes in looking at other elements within Saul’s reign and his eventual manifest-reprobation and death. If time permits we shall look at Saul as a type of AntiChrist and provide Third Generation’s Elect of Israel’s with a wonderful picture into why it is not a “good thing” for reprobate Israel to accept Antichrist as their Messiah.

2. Introduction

The main texts from which we shall focus are:

Main Historical Texts

1 Sam 8:1 – 1 Sam 31:13

1 Chron 10:1-11

With ancillary texts for your own study (David and Goliath, Saul pursuing David):

Ancillary Texts

Psm 8; 18:1; 52:1; 54:1; 57:1; 59:1

Israel’s history begins with the manifestation of the Gentile nations and their complete and utter failure to live godly lives and properly manage the affairs of the earth. Through the “the fall of the nations” God chose one man to bring about a nation which would provide the genetic line of Messiah and eventually intercede for the righteous Gentile nations. This man was Abram (later renamed to Abraham) and he is to be the father of many nations and indeed the father of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

Israel grew through the patriarchs of Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve sons of Jacob. While in Egypt for 400 years Israel grew to at least 3-6 million people and upon leaving Egypt eventually settled in part of the Promised Land under the Judges. During this time Israel was in a constant state of rebellion and showed little interest in the things of Jehovah, except when they got themselves into trouble. Finally, after 400 years of Judges ruling over Israel, the nation rejected God’s rule and demanded a king, just like the Gentile nations around them; like Nimrod of antiquity the political and economic models provided by the Gentile nations were tyrannical. The figure below illustrates where our study falls into the Biblical chronology.

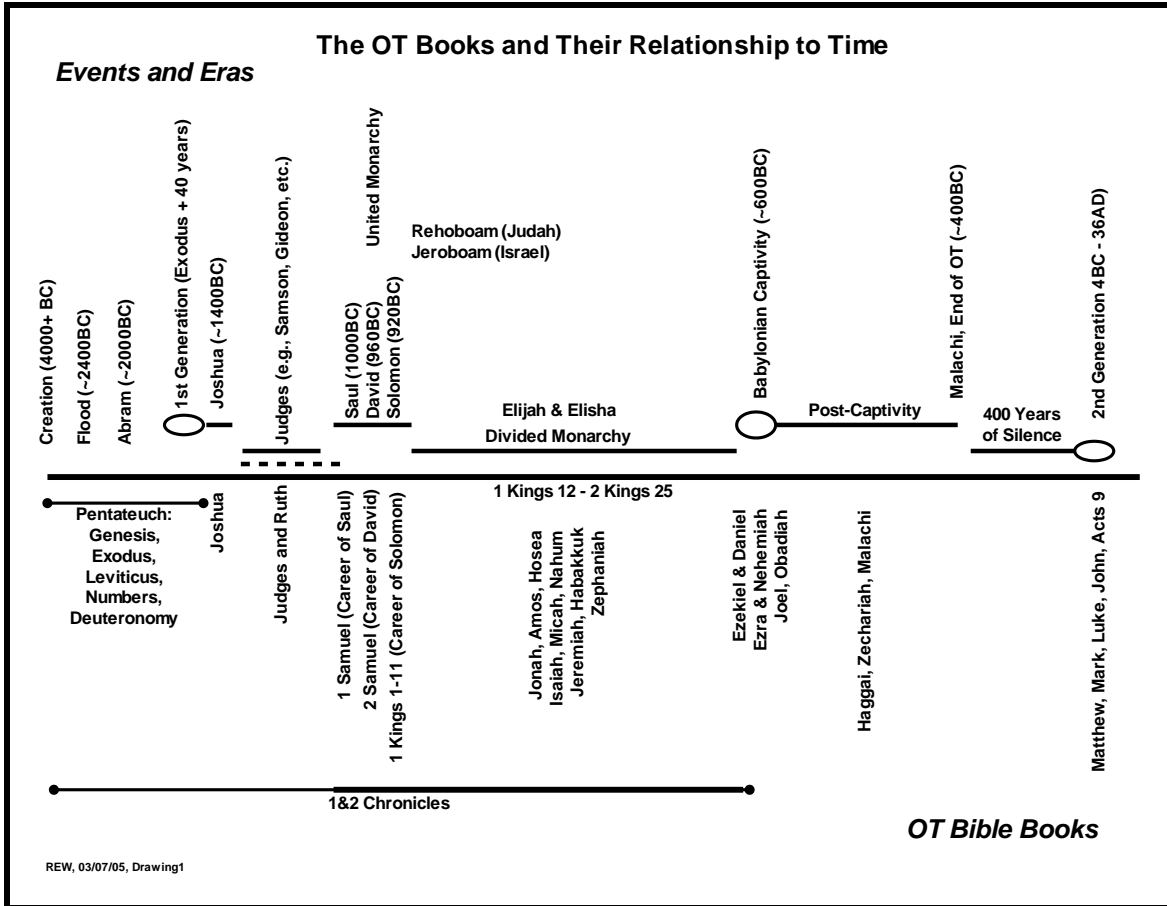


Figure 1. A Historical Look at the Old Testament Books and their Inter-Relationships

As indicated in the above figure, our study examines the nation of Israel when the monarchy had been united first under Saul. The time frame we are concerned with is approximately 1000 BC.

3. Give Us a King

Eli the priest-judge just prior to Samuel had two corrupt sons as we saw in our previous module. Hophni and Phineas were corrupting their office by at least two means:

- (1) Demanding more of the sacrifice than allowed by law
- (2) Demanding sexual favors for favorable judicial decisions

The people became “fed up” and wanted a new system of government. Instead of dealing with the sin of Hophni and Phineas, they wanted to “throw the baby out with the bath water” and do away with God’s ordained infrastructure for them at that time. In the case of Eli, he did nothing to discipline his evil sons and as a result, Eli and his family were judged (condemned).

Next was the righteous Samuel, who ruled justly and was well known in Israel for his fairness and impartiality. Yet, his sons were corrupted just like Eli’s sons, but in the case of Samuel he was not a lazy father. All of this brought Israel to a complete rejection of God’s infrastructure whereby they “demanded a king”.

1 Samuel 8:1 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.

2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were judges in Beersheba.*

3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

And so, Israel is about to get what they are asking: “a man after *their own* hearts”.¹

Furthermore, an examination of the reasoning behind Israel’s Elders for their “desire for a king” shows in fact that the majority of Israel’s problems stemmed from their own immorality (see emphasis below). Davis and Whitcomb well summarize:²

At least three reasons were given by the elders for their decision on this matter: (1) They wanted to prevent further military losses (cf. 1 Sam 8:20; 12:12). In previous battles with the Philistines over 34,000 men lost their lives (4:2, 10). In addition to this two sons of the high priest were slain and the Ark had been taken by the Philistines and kept for seven months. (2) There was corruption among Israel’s leaders (2:2-17; 8:3, 5). The sons of Eli and the sons of Samuel were complete failures and merely compounded the frustration of Israel rather than giving hope for the future. The leaders perhaps felt that a tribal confederacy under the leadership of divinely appointed judges was not the best answer to their immediate problems. They perhaps looked back on the three hundred years that had gone by with various degrees of success and failure. **In all probability, they looked at the failures during the times of the judges and attributed those failures to the political organization rather than to national apostasy.** (3) They wanted to be like the other nations (8:5, 20). This viewpoint reflected a serious problem in the spiritual and moral consciousness of the nation. It completely reversed God’s design for His people who were chosen to be holy and separate (Lev 20:26). Through a series of miracles in Egypt, God intended to make a clear difference between Israel and Egypt (cf. Ex 11:7). Because Israel had failed in the total conquest of Canaan, she now took the direction of political compatibility and assumed that this would solve the problems of oppression and military failure. **[Emphasis mine]**

Indeed, the overwhelming numbers of problems facing Israel during these times were essentially self-inflicted because they did not live within the framework God had provided for them through His law. Moreover, by not routing out the pagans from the land which they had inherited from God Himself through Abraham, they were constantly being tempted and attacked by their “live in” Gentiles. The surrounding Gentiles were a constant source of temptation, evil, and sin. Now the Nation even wants to emulate the Gentile political systems. Instead of God and His government, they reject it for a tyrannical state. Statism becomes the new national religion of Israel and Saul becomes its leader. It is not until the complete failure of Saul does God give to Israel *a man after His Own heart*.

Now let’s take a look at the man himself: Saul the Benjamite!

¹ An intention play on words, comparing Saul with David.

² John D. Davis and John C. Whitcomb, *Israel: From Conquest to Exile*, BMH Books, Winona Lake, IN, 2006, pp.200-201.

4. Saul the Man

Saul was a “man’s man”. He had the pedigree, was tall, good looking, and spoke well; everything that a nation would want in a leader. Indeed, from the outside he appeared to be a “complete package”.³

As to Saul’s Pedigree

Saul was the son of a rich and powerful man. No doubt Saul received the best of everything; education, food, and clothing. Also, he was of the tribe of the patriarch Benjamin⁴, a son of Rachel, Jacob’s beloved wife. All of this *speaks volumes* as to his upbringing and breeding.

1 Sam 9:1 Now there was a *man of Benjamin*, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a *mighty man of power*.

Saul: Man’s “Complete Package”

“Tall, dark, and handsome” is what some might describe the proto-typical “complete package” to be.

1 Sam 9:2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and *there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.*

Nevertheless, we see in 1 Samuel 8 what kind of man Saul turns out to be.

5. Saul’s Early Ministry

In this section we shall look at the more salient ideas that occur in Saul’s early reign. It is amazing that almost no sooner does he receive the “πνευμα ἁγίου” (holy spirit [without the articles] = divine power) that he manifests himself to be a faithless reprobate, ultimately slandering the office of king.

5.1. Saul’s Kingly Anointing

Upon the rejection of the priest-judge government, Saul is identified to be the first king of Israel; Israel gets their wish and as stated above they get exactly what they are asking for “a man after their own hearts”. Saul’s anointing as king of Israel is seen primarily in chapters 10 through 12 and is divided into three sections:

- (1) His Private Anointing
- (2) His Public Anointing
- (3) His Public Vindication

5.1.1. His Private Anointing

In this subsection we shall deal with the private anointing of Saul, by Samuel and examine its parts.

1 Sam 9:27 *And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.*

1 Sam 10:1 Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?*

³ Some have said that on the American scene, Reagan was a “complete package”. Indeed, while no man is perfect an examination of Reagan’s reading material shows that he was light years ahead of Saul.

⁴ To the knowledgeable regenerated Jewish Saint, they would have known that Saul was not to be the proper King of Israel. The Zodiac shows that the Messiah-King is to come from “Leo the Lion” (of the tribe of Judah) and Gen 49:10 explicitly states that fact “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*”.

- 2 When thou art departed from me today, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?
- 3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:
- 4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two *loaves* of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands.
- 5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where *is* the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:
- 6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.
- 7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, *that* thou do as occasion serve thee; for God *is* with thee.
- 8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.
- 9 And it was *so*, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.
- 10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.
- 11 And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, *What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?*
- 12 And one of the same place answered and said, *But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?*
- 13 And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.
- 14 And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, *Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were no where, we came to Samuel.*
- 15 And Saul's uncle said, *Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you.*
- 16 And Saul said unto his uncle, *He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.*

It is important to note that until Saul receives the πνεῦμα ἁγίου,⁵ the fact that he is selected to be the first king of Israel is kept private. During this “private time” there are three events that need to take place confirmatory to Saul, which is why Saul does not tell his uncle “everything” that took place with Samuel (see verse 10:16).

- (1) First, in verse 10:2, Saul is told that he will meet two men by the grave of Rachel (his beloved g-g---g grandmother) and they will tell him that the missing asses are found.
- (2) Second, in verses 10:3-4, Saul is told that he will meet three men each having a specific item: One having three kids, one having three loaves, and one having a bottle of wine. Of these items the men would give Saul two of the loaves.

⁵ The author here is using terminology for the sake of the audience, who are more than likely familiar with the New Testament teaching on the phrase holy spirit when used without the articles. It is never a reference to the Third Person of the Trinity, but rather to an empowering of a person for a particular task: In this case, Saul is to be King over the Nation of Israel. It is not long that he ignores this “anointing” and slanders his office as king, by not obeying the voice of Samuel. A similar grammatical argument can be made from the Hebrew. See E.J. Young, *My Servants the Prophets*, Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI, 1955, p.80, and especially, E.W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible*, Appendix 9, IV, Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974.

- (3) Finally, in verses 10:5-7, Saul will come near to the camp of Philistines and encounter prophets descending from the high place. There the prophets will be singing and Saul will receive the anointing from the Lord, which we know today to be the πνευμα ἅγιον.

It is important to recognize that the receiving of the πνευμα ἅγιον is not a reference to the act of regeneration, but rather the act of God preparing Saul for the office of King. Indeed, upon the receiving of the πνευμα ἅγιον, the text states that Saul is a different man (see verses 10:6, 10).

5.1.2. His Public Anointing

So far, the anointing of Saul as king of Israel has been private. It is now time for the public announcement of Saul as Israel's first King (a man after their own hearts).

- 1 Sam 10:17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh;
 18 And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppressed you:
 19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.
 20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.
 21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.
 22 Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.
 23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.
 24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.
 25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.
 26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.
 27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

Samuel begins the public anointing of Saul with a severe criticism of the Nation and categorically states that they have rejected God and His government. Implicitly their failures are their own doing because they continually apostasized since the days of the Exodus (verses 10:17-19a) and now manifested themselves thoroughly by demanding a king after the order of the Gentile nations ("Give us a king").

Even here Saul manifests himself to be a "gutless wonder" hiding from the public ceremony specifically designed to make him King over Israel. Inside he is still a child, not relying on Jehovah and afraid of what might be in store. There is no faith within Saul; there is no trust in God for his kingly position.

Even now at the very last, Samuel continues to warn the people the type of government they are asking for themselves and goes as far as *writing it in a book* (vs. 25).

5.1.3. His Public Vindication

This is an interesting section of Saul's early ministry as king and one might think at first that "this is the man" to lead us out of tyranny. But just wait!

1 Sam 11:1 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* a reproach upon all Israel.

3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

The Ammonites, relatives of the Israelites through Lot and his youngest daughter (Gen 19:38) threatened the Jews living on the east side of the Jordan in the land of Gilead of the Ammonites. King Nahash suggested a rather severe form of dhimmitude, by requiring the right eye of every one of the Jewish inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead (see map below). This sort of brutality was so that the Israelites could not fight well against the Ammonites. The right eye of the soldier is the eye on the side of the sword and can see where he is "slashing" the enemy, whereas the left eye is often blocked by the shield making it difficult for a one-eyed soldier to fight effectively.

To Saul's credit he is infuriated when the messengers tell him of their plight. Note that it was the Spirit of God, through divine power⁶ that caused Saul to anger. Besides the obvious danger to Israel, there may be underlying historical reasons why Saul is so angry.

- (1) Recall from our study on the Book of Judges (Chapters 20 ad 21) that the Benjaminites were almost completely wiped out by the great Israel-Benjamin War; Thereafter the remaining male Benjaminites were given virgin wives from the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead, who did not participate in this great, but indeed sad war.
- (2) Furthermore, no doubt many of the future Benjaminites resulting from these 400 unions would be living in Jabesh Gilead by the time of Saul (See Jud 21:8-12).

Thus, Saul no doubt had tribal feelings for these people and felt it his duty to save these poor folk.

Returning from the good news of Saul, the Jabesh Gilead leaders communicate to Nahash that his answer will come in 24 hours (1 Sam 11:10). It is remarkable that Nahash was not angered to the point of taking out the Benjaminites at that time. This of course speaks of his arrogance and perhaps view of Israel's warring capabilities or rather lack thereof. Nevertheless, this 24 hour respite gave Saul the time to get his troops in order and ready to attack at the morning watch (11:10), which would have been the last watch of the day.⁷

From the map below one can see the relative closeness of Bezek to Jabesh Gilead and the resulting victory march to Gilgal. From our perspective today, it is interesting how small all these things are and how close everything seems to be. Saul garnered his troops at Bezek, crossed the Jordan River, and made it to the battle at Jabesh Gilead. This was a major victory since numerically the tribe of Benjamin was no doubt the smallest tribe and could have been easily wiped out by the Ammonites.

⁶ *Op cit*, Bullinger, Appendix 9, IV

⁷ The First Watch is the Evening Watch (Lam 2:19); the Second Watch is called the Middle Watch (Jud 7:19); and finally the Last Watch is called the Morning Watch (Ex 14:24-27), which we see here in 1 Samuel 11:11. *Op cit*, Davis and Whitcomb, p. 209.



Figure 2. Saul's Battle of Vindication

After the Battle of Saul's Vindication,⁸ Samuel orders Israel to congregate at Gilgal, where he challenges Israel one last time. In his discourse Samuel performs three items that are fundamental to his reign as judge and prophet and Israel's disobedience.

- (1) First, Samuel vindicates his priestly-judgeship as a fair and just one, to which Israel agrees. Note that during this discourse Samuel "distances himself" from the evils of his sons (12:1-5).
- (2) Secondly, he reiterates Israel's problems during the Period of the Judges and how that Jehovah through His judges had rescued Israel every time, including Samuel himself (12:6-11).
- (3) Thirdly, when challenged by Nahash the Ammonite, Israel turned to a king instead of Jehovah, showing their apostasy and in this context publically calls attention to Saul as THAT man of whom they have place their trust (vs.12:13).

⁸ Taken from http://www.bible-history.com/maps/images/1_samuel_kingdom_saul.jpg and modified as indicated by the blue solid line around the northern part of Moab. The author maintains that the northern part of Moab was probably under Saul's control at least indirectly.

- (4) Finally, because of the hardness of their hearts Jehovah through Samuel calls a blessing upon Israel that if they keep his commandments they shall be blessed, irrespective of having “a man after their own hearts” as their king (vss.12:14-15).

While a major victory was won at Jabesh Gilead, the compromise of Israel for desiring a king like the Gentile Nations is a rejection of God’s ordained government through the judges. This is one of the saddest moments in Israel’s history. As will be seen in short order Saul was exactly the kind of man that Jehovah warned the Nation about – a man after their own hearts!

5.2. His Rapid Loss of the Kingdom

It wasn’t long after Saul’s anointing as king that he goes ahead and loses the Kingdom! The Philistines had control of much of the land of Israel. They became more vitriolic as Saul was now king and a center piece to unify the Nation that had once defeated the mightiest of nations, Egypt, and brought about “unusual” victories during the Judges Period.

Saul began to consolidate his army and had the aid of his son Jonathon, who was an able soldier in his own right, but unlike his father was steadfast in his faith in Jehovah.

Jonathon saw that it was time to strike at the Philistines, whereupon Saul blew the trumpet announcing the news:

1 Sam 13:3 And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

4 And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines

The Philistine response was to muster up an incredible army numbering:

1 Sam 13:5 ... thirty thousand chariots (probably 4000), and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven.

6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

Jonathon’s victory was seen as a prelude to a Philistine Invasion and the Israelites went and hid themselves. As a result of this action Israel manifested themselves in a cowardly manner, demonstrating a lack of faith (note the Jewish apostasy and lack of trust in Jehovah) in Jehovah their God.

Seeing this seemingly desperate situation, Saul took it upon himself to offer sacrifices to Jehovah and seek Jehovah’s advice in this matter. This of course was expressly contrary to Samuel’s instructions articulated very plainly to Saul in 1 Sam 10:7c-9:

1 Sam 10:7 ... God is with thee.

8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

9 And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.

Of course at the time of 1 Sam 10, Saul had received divine power from God to act as king. However, as can now be seen, when the “kitchen got hot” Saul acted in a manner that was contrary to the instructions received from Samuel.

- (1) First, Saul did not wait for Samuel to arrive, despite the seven days being fulfilled.
- (2) Secondly, Saul took it upon himself to offer sacrifices contrary to Samuel's instructions – for Samuel was to offer the sacrifices.

Regrettably, instead of repenting, Saul tried to justify himself in taking upon himself the role of Samuel and the priesthood.

1 Sam 13:11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

It seems that Saul offers three reasons in justifying his actions:

- (1) First, Israel had abandoned him in a most desperate time.
- (2) Secondly, like Satan and Eve in the Garden, Saul tried to pass the buck onto Samuel for being late.
- (3) Finally, the Philistines were amassing their forces against Israel.

For this gross disobedience the kingdom is taken from Saul and the rest of Saul's history is merely the living out of a failed monarchy and the manifesting of Saul's reprobation.

5.3. Saul's Irrationality

Following Saul's loss of the kingdom, he continues with the battles at hand.

5.3.1. The Battle of Michmash

Jonathon his son had confounded the Philistines at Michmash (1 Sam 14:1-23), so much so that the Hebrew mercenaries fighting for the Philistines turned and fought with their Hebrew Brethren and those Israelites hiding in the caves and hills came down and joined the fray.

The figure below⁹ illustrates the military flow at the Battle of Michmash.

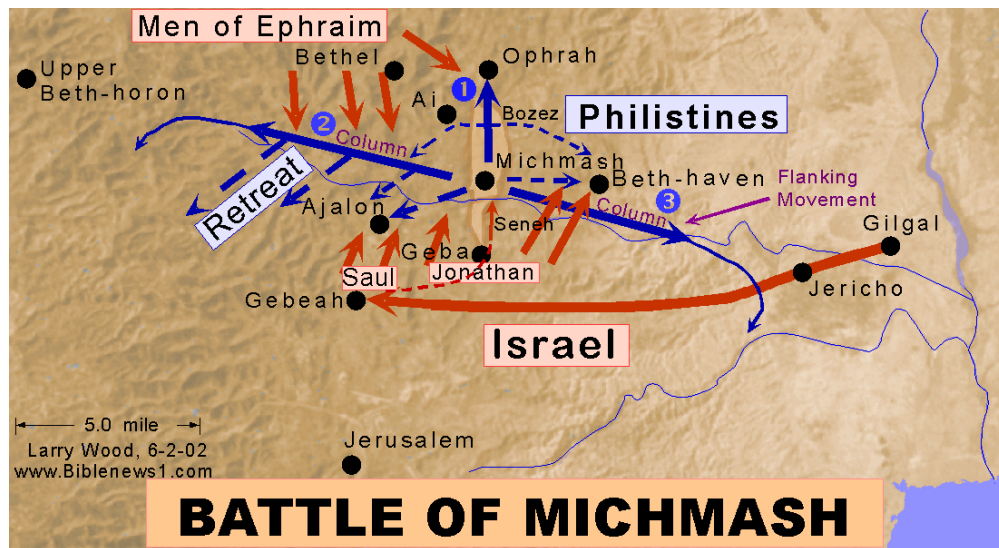


Figure 3. The Battle of Michmash

⁹ <http://www.commontruth.com/BattleMichmash.html>

Michmash and its surrounding area represented a large concentration of Philistine power, but it wasn't until David the Great that the Philistine Power was crushed.

5.3.2. Saul's Irrational Command

The next section (vss. 24-45) of chapter 14 of 1 Samuel records for us a very unique and weird oath made by Saul.

1 Sam 14:24 And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food.
 25 And all *they of* the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground.
 26 And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.
 27 But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.
 28 Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food this day. And the people were faint.
 29 Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey.
 30 How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?
 31 And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Ajalon: and the people were very faint.

This is an interesting and challenging set of verses. Why would Saul make such a stupid command? Was he trying to exercise his authority as king, rather than going after the Philistine enemies with all due haste, since they were to be given into his hand? Clearly, Saul had lost all sense of responsibility to his men and nation and seems to be exercising his authority as king for its own sake. He should be feeding his troops and going after the Philistines.

Another interesting and challenging note here is both the reaction and statement of Jonathon, Saul's warrior son. Upon eating the honey and finding out that his father the king had forbidden such action, Jonathon does not repent in sackcloth and ashes (so to speak). Rather, he expressly and openly states that his father has hurt the land and is wrong in his kingly oath and since he did not show sorrow for his action, even though it was done in ignorance (recall Paul's statement regarding his persecution of the Kingdom-Church) he justifies his action by the "ends". His eyes have been lightened; that is, he has regained his strength. An argument of the "ends justifies the means". Question: Is this a dishonoring of Saul his father?

Furthermore, as the Israelite army continued to pursue the Philistines to Ajalon they ate the cattle and animals without properly processing/cooking them according to Mosaic Law; eating them "with the blood". This of course is in violation of the Levitical Law:

Lev 19:26a Ye shall not eat *any thing* with the blood:

Thus, irrespective as to Jonathon's role in the latter Levitical violation, Saul's decree produced two things:

- (1) Caused Israel to sin, when they (Jonathon) in fact ate of the honey.
- (2) Caused Israel to sin, when they were so famished that they ate blood.

In short, stupid laws simply create criminals, which is precisely what Saul's irrational decree performed.

5.3.3. Saul Wanting the Death of His Own Son

The third section of this chapter (vss. 39-45) provides an astounding account of Saul's attitude toward his own son.

1 Sam 14:39 For, as the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But *there was* not a man among all the people *that answered him.*

40 Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee.

41 Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped.

42 And Saul said, Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.

43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and*, lo, I must die.

44 And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.

45 And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.

The foolishness of Saul's command brought about the decree to kill his own son. What kind of madman is this Saul? Within three years of ascertaining the crown of Israel, the guy has gone nutz! The people seem to realize that Saul has gone a bit off his rocker to allow and indeed order the death of his son. Israel understood that Jonathon was a fearless warrior and that he had been successful against the enemies of Israel, unlike his father (for the most part). The people of Israel disobeyed Saul and refused to kill Jonathon.

5.3.4. A Summary of Saul the King: A Man after the Nation's Own Heart

These final verses (46-52) in chapter 14 provide an unusual summary of Saul's reign:

1 Sam 14:46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

47 So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed *them*.

48 And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.

49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchishua: and the names of his two daughters *were these*; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal:

50 And the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host *was* Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

51 And Kish *was* the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of Abiel.

52 And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: *and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.*

These verses recount Saul's conquests on behalf of Israel. They include the vexing of Moab, Ammon, Edom, Zobah, Philistines, and the Amalekites. In all of this action Saul captured little of the land promised to Israel, for he spent much of his regal career chasing after "the man after God's Own heart" – future King David.

It is also interesting that Saul is exactly what Samuel told Israel they would be getting: A king who would conscript their sons.

6. Saul's Hatred of David ("A Man After God's Own Heart")

In this section we shall focus on the events that lead to Saul detesting the very sight of David. Beginning with Goliath to the many times that Saul pursued David's life, when he should have been capturing more of the land of Abraham's parcel.

6.1. David and Goliath

The story of David and Goliath is arguably one of the most beloved historical accounts in all of Scripture. The historical accounting of David's defeat of Goliath is found in 1 Sam 17.

1 Sam 17:1 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.

2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

3 And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and *there was* a valley between them.

4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span.

5 And *he had* an helmet of brass upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass.

6 And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.

7 And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

The figure below provides a look into the land of the ancient Philistines.¹⁰



Figure 4. The Land and Cities of the Philistines

¹⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philistia>

From the figure above, one can get a handle on where the land of the Philistines stood. The Philistines lived in the southern part of Canaan, due west and southwest of Jerusalem. Even today we talk about the "Gaza Strip", which is a southern coastal strip of land that includes the city of Gaza as indicated in the map above. Note also the relatively short distances between the cities: It is not much more than 30 miles between Jerusalem and Ekron and Gath.

Not all of the Philistines were Nephilimic like "the Gathite". Goliath is described as being as tall as six cubits and a span. If we assume a small cubit of 18 inches and the span being 6-9 inches, then we can determine the height of Goliath as 9' 6" (nine feet and six inches). Could you imagine a man of more than nine feet coming at you at full speed "armed to the teeth"?

Goliath's battle armor ought to be interesting to us. His armor is described in the form of a Polysyndeton as comprising six pieces:

- (1) Helmet of Brass
- (2) Coat of Mail, weighing approximately 125 lbs, comprising of scale like pieces of brass laid on top of each other like shingles on a roof or scales on a fish.
- (3) Shin Guards
- (4) Small Shield to protect his vital chest area
- (5) Spear of Iron weighing approximately 15 lbs.
- (6) Large Shield

Note how Goliath's armor can be compared to Paul's Ephesian Armor for the body saint (Eph 6:11-17).

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your **loins girt** about with truth, and having on the **breastplate of righteousness**;

15 And your **feet shod** with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the **shield of faith**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God

Note that our Body Armor is not for the battling of physical army personnel, but rather for the fighting of a spiritual battle. Whereas, today we are taking a defensive stand (because we are in basic training while here on the earth), we shall attack (withstand) on the day of evil, whereby the degree of our success is directly proportional to the degree to which we prepare (stand) today.

Back to the text!

No doubt the Philistines were related to the ancient Greeks. The fact that Goliath wore a "fish scale" like coat of armor would seem to indicate that fact. Furthermore, just to the north lie the Phoenician peoples, who were clearly intermeshed with the ancient Greeks, especially considering their related alphabets.

Upon coming from his father's house with refreshments and victuals for his brothers, David finally heard the defying words of Goliath, the uncircumcised Philistine. This infuriated David, since David's heart was with the God of Israel, the true and living God. As David enquired about this situation, Eliab his oldest brother less than gently cautioned David from being too haughty. Eliab did not have the faith of David. Nevertheless, when Saul heard of the words and speeches of David he called for the son of Jesse, whereupon David eventually was suited up with Saul's armor to go and be killed by the Philistine (as far as some within Israel were concerned). We need to keep in mind that David at this time was approximately 16-18 years of age, hardly a man yet of fighting strength and stature. But, in his defense David relayed the accounts of him defeating both a lion and a bear when protecting his father's sheep. The Good Shepherd always protects His flock!

Interestingly, when suited with Saul's armor, David did not like the fact that all that armor put such inhibitions on his movements. So, David rejected the armor, electing to go against Goliath without any earthy protection, save his slingshot and five stones.

1 Sam 17:40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him.

42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43 And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there* was no sword in the hand of David.

The fact that Israel sent this young lad to defeat the Gathite, infuriated Goliath. It is also interesting that Goliath was a "garbage mouth" as seen when cursing David by the names of his Philistine gods. Yet, David spoke to Goliath in the Name of the Lord and told Goliath precisely how he was about to die – at the hands of a youth, led by the LORD, with five little stones in his pouch.

David placed one of the stones in his slingshot and whirled the stone at Goliath and in one full shot embedded the stone deeply into the forehead of Goliath, knocking him out sufficiently to steal Goliath's sword and slice off the Gathite's head. So David defeated the great Gathite-Warrior without a sword in his hand.

An interesting question arises out of this great historical seen. Why did David bring five stones with him, after all, if David had real faith he only needed one stone for Goliath?

We see however, that David must have known a bit more about the family of Goliath, for we later read that Goliath had relatives that may have come out against David, when he had defeated Goliath.

2 Sam 21:15 Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.

16 And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant (**Rapha=>Raphaim**), the weight of whose spear *weighed* three hundred *shekels* of brass in weight, he being girded with a new *sword*, thought to have slain David.

17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel. {light: Heb. candle, or, lamp}

18 And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant (**Rapha=>Raphaim**).

19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew *the brother of Goliath* the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

20 And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of *great* stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant (**Rapha=>Raphaim**).

21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David slew him.

22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants. (Emphasis, that of the author)

Interestingly, note that there are four additional names of Giants here seemingly related to Goliath in some way. Perhaps, David knew of Goliath's brothers or relatives and thought that one stone each should "do the trick".

Now while David was perceived to be youth, Saul saw fit to like him. Note that in chapter 18 Saul conscripts David to fight for him, once again manifesting himself to be the very kind of king that Israel was asking for.

But, the success and glory of David had quite a different impact on Jonathon, Saul's regenerated son and next in line to the throne according to the original deal (which of course was no longer in place). Jonathon, gave his regal ensigns to David:

1 Sam 18:4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

Moreover, regeneration drove these two men to be unquestionably loyal to each other and indeed they loved each other more than a woman's love.

1 Sam 18:3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

2 Sam 1:25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places.

26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

27 How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

Some have perverted this love between David and Jonathon to be a homosexual love, accusing those who reject such a notion as being homophobic. Homosexuality is contrary to the very character and nature of God and as two regenerated Jewish men, it is absolutely impossible that David and Jonathon

were homosexuals. Ask two men who spent time in war, in personal battles with the enemy and see if they do not share a part of their being with each other that others do not, indeed cannot. Is this not the same as David and Jonathon. Moreover, both David and Jonathon had the same view of God's Law and the love thereof, which would naturally bring these two men into a state of undying friendship.

Nevertheless, the killing of Goliath sets David up to eventually take the throne of Israel and earn the hearts of all Israel.

6.2. Saul Killed His Thousands and David His Tens of Thousands

Upon the absolute defeat of Goliath, Saul conscripted (drafted) David into his army where David behaved himself in a most honorable way. David's exploits against the Philistines was so remarkable, that the people began to acknowledge David as the greatest warrior of Israel. Indeed, they even wrote a popular folks song about Saul and David.

1 Sam 18:6 And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick.
7 And the women answered *one another* as they played, and said,

“Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”

Apparently, this song became so popular that Saul became enraged at it.

1 Sam 18:8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom?
9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.
10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul,

The Beatles could not have done a better job. Indeed, the song was so popular that it even got into the ears of Israel's enemies the Philistines.

1 Sam 21:11 And the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is* not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

1 Sam 29:5 *Is* not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

Thus, the incredible success and popularity of David, was a curse to Saul and from that day forward Saul hated David and vowed to kill him.

6.3. Saul's Continuing Efforts Against David

Saul spent much of his regal career chasing after the life of David, God's anointed from the house of Judah as dictated from the Zodiac and Jacob himself. This section enumerates with little detail some of the occasions when Saul tried to pursue and kill David.

Saul the Olympian Javelin thrower (Chapters 18 and 19)

It is unclear as to the number of times that a javelin was used in an attempt to assassinate David, but here in chapter 18 resulting from the popular folk song exalting David, Saul tries his worth at the javelin. He misses each time of course, but he gets David's attention.

Further insult to injury, Saul asks David to collect 100 foreskins from the Philistines and if he is successful he shall receive his daughter Michal (who BTW loved David "in the beginning") to marry. David went beyond the call and gathered 200 foreskins and this no doubt further infuriated Saul.

1 Sam 18:25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired.

27 Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

28 And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and *that Michal Saul's daughter loved him.*

29 And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

Again in chapter 19, David is successful against the Philistines, but Saul only seeks David to kill him once again,

Ahimelech the Priest (Chapter 21)

Here we see David visiting Ahimelech the priest and eventually fleeing from Saul after being presented with Goliath's sword, who he had slain. What is interesting here is that after David takes the Gathite's sword with him, he flees to the land of Gath.

The Forest of Judah (Chapter 22)

David goes from the cave of Addulam to the forests of Judah and is seen there. Saul is told that Ahimelech helped David by refreshing him and giving him the sword of Goliath. For this Saul orders his men to kill all of the priests of the Lord, but they refuse. Doeg and Edomite is then ordered to kill the priests and he does - at least 25 of them. Is Saul a saint? Hardly! This guy is manifesting his reprobation by the nano-second!!!

The City of Keilah and the Philistines (Chapter 23a)

Here we see David coming to the rescue of fellow Israelites, who are preparing the grains for food on the threshing floors. These are important persons in the nation, since they supply part of the food stuffs to the nation. The Philistines attack the Keilahites, whereupon David enquires of the Lord whether he should come to their aid or not. The Lord says go, go, go! David prevails against them and appropriates their cattle and livestock.

Saul in his reprobate state thinks that God has delivered David into his hand because of the kind of urban design of Keilah:

1 Sam 23:7 And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

Saul truly is perverted and is an enemy of God.

The Ziphites (Chapter 23b)

David had fled Keilah upon saving them and came to the land of Ziph, whereupon the Ziphites tell Saul that David is hiding in their territory. Apparently, David had fled again to Maon, upon which Saul followed him there, only to be taken away from news of invading Philistines.

It is quite interesting that Saul is chasing after David, who is God's anointed king since the regal arm has been taken from Saul. Saul apparently knows this and wants to kill David for sure. Indeed, he eventually tells this to Jonathon, that if David is not killed the Israelite Dynasty will change to the house of Jesse. Jonathon, could not care less, indeed he no doubt knows that the king is to come from the tribe of Judah.

The Cave at Engedi (Chapter 24)

One of the most entertaining and earthy of accounts is the account of Saul in the cave at Engedi. Saul heard that David was hiding in Engedi and hurried down with 3000 of his men to assassinate David. While looking for David, Saul entered a cave to “cover his feet”¹¹, not knowing that David and his men were in the cave. While Saul was “indisposed” David came and cut off the skirt of Saul’s robe - obviously without Saul knowing it. Indeed, Saul did not even see it when recovered or even in the light outside the cave.

1 Sam 24:3 And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet; and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.
4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

David waited until Saul was out of the cave and declared unto Saul that he had opportunity to kill Saul, but did not because Saul was the anointed of the Lord and David would not harm the Lord’s anointed. Saul repented of his attitude toward David.

The significance of the cutting off of the robe’s skirt cannot go unnoticed. The symbol of authority and the regal house were placed around the skirt, the bottom of the robe of the king. David by taking the skirt was in fact, publically stating that the scepter had transferred from the house of Kish to the house of Jesse.

The Ziphites Again (Chapter 26)

The Ziphites manifest themselves again as the great tattletales. Once again they go out of their way to tell Saul the whereabouts of David.

1 Sam 26:1 And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon?
2 Then 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.

So of course Saul is quite eager and goes to Ziph with 3000 of his men.

1 Sam 26:6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.
7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.
8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him the second time.
9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?
10 David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.
11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is* at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.
12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

¹¹ This is the Figure of Euphemy, for going “number 2”, which in itself a Euphemy.

David and his associate Abishai go down to the camp of Saul, where all of his army is sleeping deeply, since the sleep was sent from the Lord, and David steals Saul's sword and water. This was the second time that David had the open opportunity to kill Saul.

Upon awaking, Saul sees David afar off taking to Saul's "Captain of the Guard". David shows Saul and his entire host that he had snuck into the camp and taken Saul's sword and water and could have killed Saul and everyone. As a result, Saul repents of his attitude toward David and never pursues him again.

Geography of these Events

It is always good to have a handle on the geography of the Old Testament accounts. It brings a richness to the topic, that otherwise might be missing if we are not familiar with the geographical setting. The graphic below provides a remarkable visual as to the amount of energy that Saul wasted trying to kill David.¹²

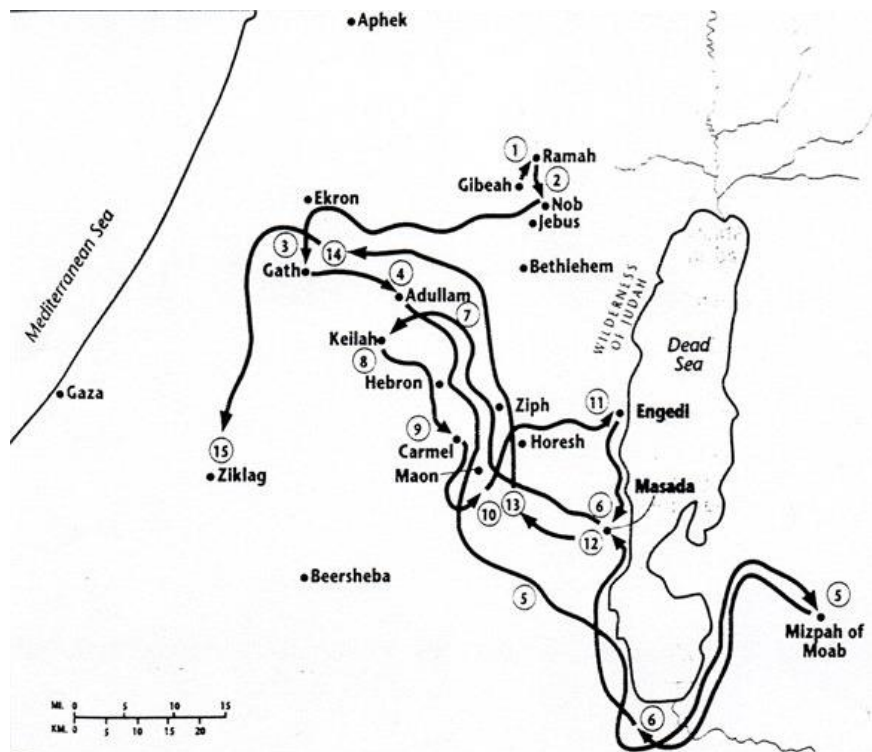


Figure 5. David's Flights from Saul

The number of times that David had to flee from Saul is remarkable. Consider the time and energy that Saul spent trying to pursue and assassinate David, when all of this time could have been put to legitimate use, such as regaining the land promised to Abraham.

7. When Saul Was Not Trying to Kill David

There seems to be little to recommend the Dynasty of Kish (Saul), but there are a few things we may consider to be positive of the reign of Saul. Below we shall consider just a few, though there may be others to consider, for sake of space and time (not spacetime) we shall consider two and only two.

7.1. The Cleansing of the Land of Witchcraft

Not referred to anywhere else, but after the fact, and at the end of Saul's reign is an obscure reference to Saul's cleansing of the land of witches.

¹² <https://bible.org/book/export/html/20188>

1 Sam 28:3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

So we see that sometime during Saul's reign he put away those practitioners of the occultic arts [to put it in a somewhat euphemistic, yet slanderous way], but we see later in this very chapter (28) that Saul did not do a very good job at "policing" the results of his policies, for we see a witch living within the city of Endor, which we shall discuss in more detail later. The policy of doing away with witchcraft was a good thing to rid them out of the land, but in fact, we could argue that it was a disastrous policy. Why, you might ask could this eve be bad policy? The answer is clearly articulated for us in the Mosaic Law regarding those who practice witchcraft and the occultic arts.

Lev 20:6 And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people

27 A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood *shall be* upon them

Deut 18:9 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

10 There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12 For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

While it was "good" for Saul to rid the land of occultists, it was not the "best" thing to do according to the Law of Moses. Indeed, the "good" is always the worst of enemies of the "best", for one does not always see the stark contrast between "good and evil". Indeed, the better the counterfeit, the more dangerous the currency is to the health of the economy.

So what Saul should have done through due process according to the Law of Moses was to kill all of the practitioners of the occult. He simply told them to "get out", and did little after that to insure that they stayed out!

Interestingly, what might have been something that we could say was most excellent in the annuals of Saul, is little better than "almost good"!¹³

7.2. The War with the Amalekites

When Moses and the children of Israel were making their way into the Promised Land, the Amalekites forbade them to enter the Sinai and fought against Israel.

Ex 17:8 Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

10 So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

¹³ An intentional "play on words".

12 But Moses' hands *were* heavy; and they took a stone, and put *it* under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this *for* a memorial in a book, and rehearse *it* in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

Here in 1 Sam 15 we see God remembering the dastardly way in which Amalek treat Israel and now his descendants are to pay at the hands of Saul.

1 Samuel 15:1 Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee *to be* king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.

5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

6 And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah *until* thou comest to Shur, that *is* over against Egypt.

8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

10 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments

Saul is commanded by God through Samuel to crush every Amalekite to the ground leaving no stone unturned and no Amalekite alive. However, Saul is disobedient and goes “part way”. It is this context that God repents that he placed Saul upon the throne. While Saul did somewhat “good”¹⁴ from a human perspective, he did not obey the Mosaic Law and God’s command.

Saul shows undue mercy to king Agag and keeps the best of the flocks. All of this should have been destroyed.

8. The End of a Poor Regal Career

Perhaps Saul did not see his reign in like manner, but little was accomplished under Saul, especially when compared to David or Solomon (though Saul would not have known what they were to accomplish). Indeed, when compared most importantly to the promises God made to Israel (if they were obedient) Saul accomplished very little.

Looking back over the regal career of Saul reminds the author of the words written by Jim Morrison and the DOORS.¹⁵

¹⁴ Proper grammar would require the usage of “well”, but to make the point of “good verses best” the author has chosen to use the word “good”.

¹⁵ Lyrics taken from, The End, DOORS, circa 1967.

“This is the end
 My only friend, the end
 Of our elaborate plans, the end
 Of everything that stands, the end
 No safety or surprise, the end...”

From an unregenerate human point of view, looking back over the career of Saul he accomplished very little. In 1 Sam 28 we come to the end of Saul's life, his chasing of David, and his regal career.

1 Sam 28:1 And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2 And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6 And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

Apparently, throughout his reign Saul was not very attentive to what was going on outside of his kingdom and indeed the watching of his borders. According to the text above apparently the Philistines had almost free reign to move about in Israel's (Saul's) Border country. Thus, the scene of Saul's last great struggle is setup by poor foreign policy, the chasing of David such that David is in the camp of the enemy, and the one good thing explicitly mentioned in this text, the removal of all those who practiced witchcraft. On top of all of this, it is reiterated by the textual scribes that Samuel is dead (and according to the text he had been dead for quite some time [1 Sam 25:1]).

8.1. Saul and the Witch of Endor

Because of the impending doom and apparent “odds stacked against him” Saul seeks the Lord's mind in the matter of this Philistine Battle. However, the Lord was totally silent with a silence so deafening that Saul could not find the Lord through any of the prescribed Mosaic means:

- (1) Dreams
- (2) Urim and Thummin
- (3) Prophets

Since each of these failed to capture the ear of Jehovah, Saul turned to the very thing he tried to wipe out!

1 Sam 28:7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee.

9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

10 And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing

Saul is a predictable record of unbelief and hopelessness. When the Mosaic avenues of communing with Jehovah fail, Saul turns to a necromancer. Indeed, this woman even warns Saul that the king has put out all of those with familiar spirits, whereupon Saul blasphemes by stating in the NAME OF THE LORD “that no harm will come” (paraphrase) to the woman. Now this in itself is a remarkable thing - to use the Lord’s Name to blaspheme – amazing! Is there any further evidence we need to conclude that Saul is hell bound?

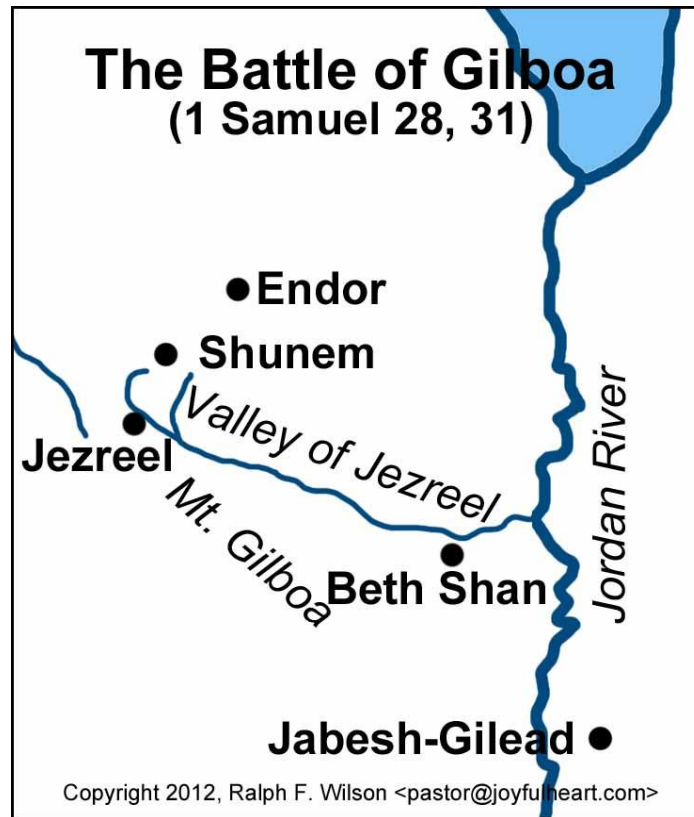


Figure 6. The Geographical Location of Endor

The figure¹⁶ above provides a view as to the geographical location of Endor. Look and see how close this territory is to the lands of the Phoenicians and Philistines. Indeed, the Philistines must have had essentially free travel even within Saul’s kingdom. Not to mention the very fact that a necromancer was living within the area that Saul thought he had cleaned out. It is reasonable to assume, given her reaction to Saul that she was no longer “practicing the art”.

What happens next is priceless.

The necromancer asks Saul for whom she is to bring up. The answer is quite remarkable, but not more remarkable than what actually happens!

1 Sam 28:11 Then said the woman, **Whom shall I bring up unto thee?** And he said, **Bring me up Samuel.**

12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul.

13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

¹⁶ <http://www.jesuswalk.com/david/maps/battle-of-gilboa-741x864x300.jpg>

14 And he said unto her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself.

15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

17 And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, *even* to David:

18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.

19 Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

As might be expected, Saul asks the necromancer to bring up the great Samuel.

When the woman actually brings up Samuel from Sheol (Gk: Hades) she is shocked, perhaps because this is the first time it “actually worked” or that the actual person came instead of a demon. Either way the necromancer is scared stiff and through this figures that her visitor is Saul himself. Saul provides a very wroth Samuel a reason for disturbing him out of paradise.¹⁷ Saul’s reason is because God has left him, to which Samuel replies essentially, “Yes He has!” Note too that Samuel asks of Saul why he has disquieted him? This would seem to indicate that Hades is a place of peace and contentment, while these dear Jewish and Gentile saints are awaiting their kingdom.

The real crushing blow however in Samuel’s discourse with Saul is that God has become Saul’s enemy! This is indeed a sad affair. Samuel however goes on to provide Saul the reasons for this change of relationship, which is all due to Saul’s unbelief and faithlessness.

Also note that when we compare verse 19 with Luke 16, we get a complete picture of what Samuel means when he says “you and thy sons will be with me tomorrow”. With the exception of Jonathon, Saul and his remaining sons [assuming they were unregenerate] will be in the fiery section of Hades, where the rich man of Luke 16 is to go, while Jonathon and Samuel will be located across the great gulf (Chasm and Abyss) where Lazarus is to be placed, also called Abraham’s bosom.

8.2. The Final Defeat and Death of Saul and His Dynasty

Recorded for us in 1 Sam 31 is the death of Saul and end of the Kish Dynasty. The Philistine Army of whom Saul enquired about with the necromancer was in fierce battle with Saul and the Israelite Army. The Philistines were winning the battle and eventually killed Saul and his two sons Abinadab, and Malchishua, and with great regret eventually killed Jonathon the beloved.

This entire chapter is a sad ending to the sad career of Saul’s faithlessness, jealousy, and sheer unbelief. While Saul was a “man’s man”, he was not a “Jehovah man” and in this context Israel got what they originally asked for - a king, just like their surrounding Gentile nations.

This final battle took place in the valley of Jezreel near Mt. Gilboa.

¹⁷ See Luke 16:19-31 for a detailed Biblical Accounting of Christ’s own description of the place from which Samuel ascended. See also, R.E. Walsh, *A Very Brief Survey on the Doctrine of Hell*, BSG, Pittsburgh, PA, 15015, 2001 (revised from 1979).

9. A Summary of Reign of Saul

In this closing section we shall lightly look at some of the more obvious items that come up when discussing Saul and this period in Israel's history.

9.1. The Extent of Saul's Kingdom

The figure below illustrates the extent of Saul's Kingdom.



Figure 7. Saul's Kingdom

As can be clearly seen from the figure above, the extent to which Saul conquered the land does not come close to the entire Land parcel promised to Abraham. Note also that Saul did not even have a seaport

under his direct control. This is a serious problem for trade of imports and exports, let alone providing for an Israelite Navy.

Furthermore, by Saul not taking the Amalekites he did not secure for Israel a proper southern border. Indeed, had Saul properly defeated and crushed the Amalekites not only would have secured a southern border, but would have no doubt appropriated the entire southern parcel of the Promised Land. Recall that Samuel told Saul to take the land from Shur (right next to the Nile Delta) to the land of Havilah, the eastern desert area up to the Tigris and Euphrates Delta region. This would have been a huge part of the Promised Land appropriated prior to David and Solomon. It will be up to the 144K to secure the entire Promised Land. Furthermore, as mentioned above, Saul does not seem to be that concerned about his borders. Gentile armies seem to be seen all over the land that has already been conquered.

9.2. A Chronology of Saul's Reign

The following chart is an approximate though unverified chronology of the reign of Saul.¹⁸

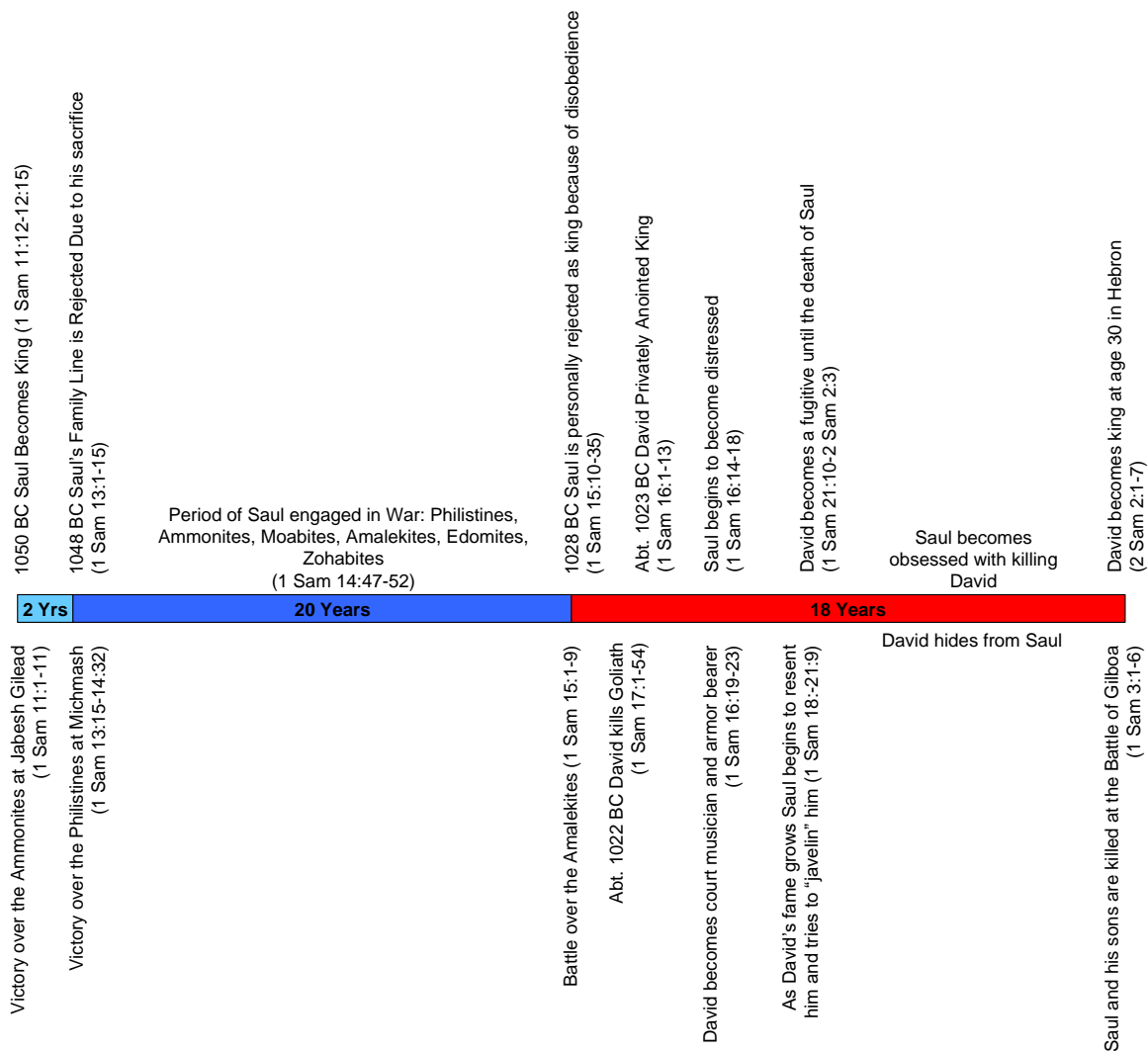


Figure 8. A Chronology of the Reign of Saul

The figure shows a period of approximately forty years for the reign of Saul.

¹⁸ Adapted from http://kettlemorainebiblechurch.weebly.com/uploads/8/2/0/1/8201618/sauls_reign.pdf