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1 Shmuel

Introduction

This document tells about the people of the nation of Yisrael (called 'Israel' in older Bibles) at the time when Shmuel (commonly, but wrongly known as 'Samuel') was still their teacher through to when Sha'ul (commonly, but wrongly known as 'Saul') led them as their first king. It also reveals the reasons why Sha'ul lost his position as king and why God promised to replace him with David.
Long ago before Yisrael had a king, the people regarded their god as their ruler, but eventually they came to the point of asking God to give them a king to lead them. Both the king and the people were subject to God's leading and expected to obey God's laws.
The main theme of this document is showing how peace and prosperity came when the people obeyed God, and if not, it could lead to destruction. And then sometimes God used his people to apply his discipline to other people groups. It pays to note what's written in 2:30 that goes, "I will honour those who honour me, but those who despise me will be side-lined."

Main components of this account

Shmuel as Yisrael's judge *1:1–7:17*
Sha'ul becomes king *8:1–10:27*
The first years of Sha'ul's reign *11:1–15:35*
David and Sha'ul *16:1–30:31*
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Lighter type marks additions. Underscores join parts of a single source word.
Struck words are untranslated. The ◘ sign marks a verse with no text.
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Elkanah and family at Shiloh

1:1 There was a man named Elkanah from Ramatayim-Tsofim who lived in the Efrati hill country. (He was an Efrati—the son of Yeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Tsuf.)[1] **2** He had two wives: Hannah (who had no children) and Peninah (who had several children).

3 Every year he would take his family to Shiloh to offer sacrifices to Commander-in-chief Yahweh. Eli was Yahweh's priest there, and his two sons Hofni and Pinhas also served there.

4 on the day that Elkanah made his sacrifice, he would give portions of the cooked meat to Peninah and to all her sons and daughters, **5** but he'd give a double portion to Hannah because he loved her, even though Yahweh had not enabled her to have children. **6** Then her rival would provoke her and try to make her angry, because Yahweh hadn't given her children. **7** And so it happened every year. Every time they went to Yahweh's tent, Peninah ridiculed him, and Hannah would weep and wouldn't eat. **8** Then Elkanah would ask her, "Hannah, why are you crying? And why aren't you eating? And why are you so upset? Isn't it better having me than having ten sons?"

Hannah and Eli

9 One time Hannah got up after eating and drinking at Shiloh. (Eli the priest was sitting on the seat near the entrance of Yahweh's tent.) **10** Hannah was very upset, and she prayed to Yahweh and wept uncontrollably. **11** Then she made a vow, saying, "Commander Yahweh, if you would only notice the misery of your female servant and remember me. Don't ignore me. Help your female servant to give birth to a son, then I'll give him to you for his entire life, and he'll never have his hair cut."[2]

12 As she continued praying to Yahweh, Eli was watching her mouth. **13** Now Hannah was praying from her heart, and her lips were moving but she wasn't speaking aloud. Eli thought she must be drunk, **14** and scolded her, "You shouldn't be getting drunk. Get rid of your wine."

15 "No, my master," Hannah replied, "I'm a woman who's suffering deep down. I haven't drunk any wine or intoxicating drink, but rather I've been sharing my inner issues with Yahweh. **16** Don't think that your female servant is just a worthless woman, because just now I was praying as a result of my terrible anguish and frustration."

17 "Then go in peace," Eli replied. "And may Yisrael's (Israel's) god grant your request that you presented to him."

18 "Please assume the best of your female servant," said Hannah, then she went on her way and had something to eat, and something had changed in her demeanor.

Shmuel's birth and dedication

19 They all gut up early the next morning and worshipped Yahweh again, then they returned to their home at Ramah. Then Elkanah slept with his wife Hannah, and Yahweh answered her prayer. **20** Hannah got pregnant, and in due course, she gave birth to a son. She named him 'Shmuel' (Samuel) (meaning 'heard by God', usually changed to 'Shmuel' in English) because she had requested him from Yahweh.

21 At the usual time, Elkanah and all his household went to Shiloh to offer their sacrifices and fulfill their vows to Yahweh. **22** But Hannah didn't accompany them because she'd told her husband, "I'll come and bring him when he's weaned. Then he can be taken in to Yahweh and permanently remain there." **23** "Do what you think's best," her husband replied. "Stay until you've weaned him. May Yahweh do whatever he said to you." So she stayed behind and breastfed her son until she eventually weaned him.

24 The next year, after she'd weaned him, she took the young boy with them, along with three bulls, a sack of flour, and a container of wine. Then she brought him to Yahweh's tent in Shiloh, **25** and after slaughtering the bull, they took the boy in to Eli. **26** "Please, my master," Hannah said. "As your spirit lives, my master, I'm the woman who was standing with you here to pray to Yahweh. **27** I prayed that Yahweh would give me a son, and he did, and this is him. **28** Also, I dedicated him to Yahweh all his life, so he's now given to Yahweh."

Then they worshipped Yahweh there.

Hannah's praise

2:1 Then Hannah prayed, saying,
"I'm so happy with Yahweh.
My strength comes from Yahweh.
I can loudly refute my enemies.
Because I'm so pleased that you rescued me.[3]
2 No one else is holy like Yahweh.
There's certainly no one else who's like you.
No one else is like a rock to me like our god is.
3 You all shouldn't speak so proudly.
Don't let arrogance come out of your mouths.
Because Yahweh is a god of knowledge,
and all actions are weighed by him.
4 Warriors have their bows shattered,
but those who stumbled are given extra strength.
5 Those who had been satisfied now hire themselves out for food,
but the hungry people no longer lack.
The woman who'd been childless, gives birth to seven,
but the woman with many sons is depressed.
6 Yahweh puts to death and he makes alive.
He sends down to the grave and brings up.
7 Yahweh makes poor and makes rich.
He humbles, and he also honours.

1 **RV 1:1 · Cross-ref.** 1Ch 6:27,34.

2 **RV 1:11 · Cross-ref.** Num 6:5.

3 **RV 2:1-10 · Cross-ref.** Luk 1:46-55.

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8 He lifts the poor up from the dust,
and lifts up the needy from the ash heap
so they can sit with influential people
and be given the seat of honour.
The earth's foundations belong to Yahweh—
he was the one who placed the world on top of them.
9 He watches over those who are loyal to him,
but wicked people will die in the darkness,
because we don't succeed through our own strength.
10 It's Yahweh who shatters our enemies.
He thunders against them from the heavens.
Yahweh will judge the entire earth,
and will give strength to the king,
and will give victory to his chosen one."

11 Then Elkanah and his family returned to their home in Ramah, but young Shmuel (Samuel) stayed to help Eli the priest serve Yahweh.

Eli's greedy sons

12 Now Eli's sons were worthless scoundrels who didn't obey Yahweh. 13 It was the custom of those priests that when anyone was offering a sacrifice and as soon as the meat was boiling, the priest's servant would come along holding a three-pronged fork 14 and stick it into the pot or pan. The priest would then claim whatever the fork brought up. That's what they did to all the Israelis who came to Shiloh to offer sacrifices. 15 Also, before the fat was removed to burn, the priest's servant would say to the person sacrificing, "Give some meat to the priest—he doesn't want just boiled meat all the time—he'll take some raw meat as well to roast."

16 But if the person tried to say, "Once the fat has all been burnt, then take whatever you want for yourself," then he'd assert, "No, you'd better give it right now or I'll take it by force." 17 And so the actions of those young men were very wicked in Yahweh's mind because they just treated sacrifices to Yahweh with contempt.

Young Shmuel starts serving at Shiloh

18 By now Shmuel (Samuel) was serving Yahweh, dressed in a priestly uniform made from linen. 19 Each year his mother would make a small robe for him and bring it when she came with her husband to offer their sacrifices. 20 Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "May Yahweh give more children for you through this woman in place of the boy dedicated to Yahweh." Then they'd return home.

21 So Yahweh visited Hannah and she went on to give birth to three other sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, young Shmuel grew up serving Yahweh.

Eli and his children

22 Now Eli was very old and he had heard all about what his sons were doing to the Israeli people, and also that they were sleeping around with the women who worked at the sacred tent entrance. 23 "Why are you two doing all these things that I keep hearing about—these evil things affecting all those people?" he asked them. 24 "No, my sons. The reports that I keep hearing Yahweh's people passing on aren't good! 25 If someone sins against a person, then God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against Yahweh, who will speak up for that person?" But they wouldn't listen to their father's advice because Yahweh wanted to put them to death.

26 Meanwhile the boy Shmuel (Samuel) was growing up, and his good behaviour pleased both Yahweh and the people.[4]

The prophecy against Eli's family

27 One day one of God's prophets came to Eli and told him, "This is what Yahweh says, 'Didn't I clearly reveal myself to your ancestors when they were Par'oh's (Pharaoh's) slaves in Mitsrayim (Egypt)? 28 And out of all the Israeli tribes, I chose your ancestor to be a priest to me, to go up on my altar, to burn incense, and to wear the sacred apron in front of me.[5] Plus I gave your ancestors the rights to all the burnt offerings made by the Israelis.[6] 29 Why do you disrespect sacrifices and offerings that I commanded the people to bring to me at my residence. And why do you honour your sons more than me by fattening yourselves from the best of every offering of my people Yisrael (Israel)?'

30 "Therefore, this is what Yahweh the god of Yisrael declares: 'I indeed said your ancestors and then your descendants would serve me forever.' But now I declare this instead: 'This cannot continue because I will honour those who honour me, but those who despise me will be side-lined. 31 Listen, the time is coming when I'll bring you and your relatives to an end—none of your men will die of old age 32 and you'll see distress in my residence. I'll do good for the rest of Yisrael, but there'll never be another old man in your home. 33 I won't finish them off near my altar. Your eyes will fail and you'll grieve inside, but your adult sons will die. 34 This will be the sign: it'll turn out that your two sons Hofni and Pinhas will both die on the same day.[7] 35 Then I'll select another man to be a faithful priest to me—he'll follow my desires and do what's in my mind. I'll make him and his faithful descendants to continue and to always serve me. 36 Any of your descendants who remain alive will have to go to him to request food and money and beg for some priestly work to earn something to eat.' "

Yahweh calls Shmuel

3:1 Meanwhile young Shmuel (Samuel) was serving Yahweh under Eli. In those days, Yahweh rarely spoke to the people or sent

4 **RV 2:26 · Cross-ref.** Luk 2:52.

5 **RV 2:28 · Cross-ref.** Exo 28:1-4.

6 **RV 2:28 · Cross-ref.** Lev 7:35-36.

7 **RV 2:34 · Cross-ref.** 1Sam 4:11.

visions.

2 By that time, Eli's sight was very poor—he could barely
see. One night when he was sleeping in his place,[8] 3 and
Shmuel was lying down in Yahweh's tent (where the box was
that contained the stone slabs), but God's lamp was still
burning. 4 Yahweh called out to Shmuel, and he called back,
"I'm here. Coming." 5 Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am,
because you called me."

"I didn't call," he said. "Go back and lie down." So he went
back and laid down.

6 Yahweh called again, "Shmuel."

Shmuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, because you called me."

"I didn't call, my son," he said, "Go back and lie down."

7 (At this point, Shmuel didn't really know Yahweh, because Yahweh hadn't revealed himself to him before.) 8 Then
Yahweh called Shmuel a third time. He got up and went to
Eli and said, "Here I am, because you called me."

Then Eli realised that it was Yahweh who was calling the
boy 9 and he told Shmuel, "Go and lie down. Then if he calls
to you again, just answer, 'Speak, Yahweh, because your servant is listening.' " So Shmuel went and laid down again in
his place.

10 Then Yahweh came and stood nearby and called like
he'd done the other times, "Shmuel, Shmuel."

"Speak," Shmuel said, "because your servant is listening."

11 "Listen," Yahweh told him, "I'm about to do something
in Yisrael (Israel) that will make everyone's ears tingle when
they hear it. 12 When it happens, I'll do everything that I've
said about Eli and his family, from the beginning to the end.
13 I've told him already that I'm about to eternally judge his
household because he knew about the evil that was being
done, because his sons were bringing curses on themselves
and he didn't scold them. 14 That's why I've promised Eli's
family that their disobedience can never be forgiven by
means of sacrifices or offerings.

Shmuel tells Eli what Yahweh said

15 Then Shmuel (Samuel) lay down
again until the morning when he
opened the doors of Yahweh's house as usual, but he was
scared to tell Eli about the vision. 16 But Eli called him,
"Shmuel, my son."

"Here I am," he answered.

17 "What did he tell you?" Eli asked. "Don't hide it from me.
May God punish you severely if you hide a single word from
everything he told you." 18 So Shmuel told him everything
without hiding anything. Then Eli answered, "It's Yahweh.
May he do whatever he thinks best."

19 As Shmuel grew up, Yahweh was with him and nothing
he said failed to happen, 20 so all Yisrael (Israel) from Dan in
the north and as far as Be'er-Sheva (Beersheba) in the south
knew that Shmuel was a faithful prophet of Yahweh. 21 Over
time, Yahweh continued to appear in Shiloh and to reveal his
plans through Shmuel

4:1 and Shmuel's messages went to all Yisrael.

The capture of the box with the agreement

At that time, Yisrael (Israel) went to
war against the Pelishtim. They
camped at Even-Ha'ezer (Ebenezer),
and the Pelishtim camped at Afek. 2 Then the Pelishtim lined
up to meet Yisrael and the battle spread. Yisrael was defeated by the Pelishtim and they killed about 4,000 warriors
in the battle line in the countryside. 3 As the people[9] came
into the camp, the Israeli elders asked themselves, "Why did
Yahweh allow the Pelishtim to slaughter us today? Let's get
the box from Shiloh that contains the stone slabs with Yahweh's agreement on them. Once it's amongst us, surely it'll
save us from defeat by our enemies." 4 So the people sent
men to Shiloh and from there they lifted the box containing
Yahweh's agreement and the sacred platform with the
winged creatures.[10][11] Eli's two sons, Hofni and Pinhas, were
there with the box containing God's agreement.

5 As the box with Yahweh's agreement was carried into the
camp, all the Israelis shouted so loud that the ground shook.
6 When the Pelishtim heard the noise, they said, "What's
that loud shout in the Ivrim' (Hebrews') camp?" Then they
realised that the box with Yahweh's covenant had come into
their camp 7 and they were afraid saying, "A god has come
into the Israeli camp." Then they said, "This means trouble,
because it wasn't like this yesterday or the previous days.
8 Oh dear! Who will rescue us from these mighty gods?
Those are the gods who struck the Mitsrim (Egyptians) with
every plague in the wilderness. 9 Now we Pelishtim really
need to fight with passion, because if we don't, we'll ending
up serving the Ivrim just like they've had to serve us. Now,
gather your courage and fight for your lives."

10 So the Pelishtim fought hard, and Yisrael (Israel) was defeated. Many warriors fled back to their tents and it was a
terrible slaughter—30,000 foot soldiers from Yisrael were
killed. 11 As well as that, the box with God's agreement was
taken, and Eli's two sons Hofni and Pinhas were killed.

The death of Eli

12 A Benyamite man ran from the
battle line back to Shiloh that day. His clothes were torn and
he was covered in dirt. 13 When he arrived there, Eli was sit-

8 **RV 3:2 · Note** Some translations use 'room' here instead of 'place', but it could easily be that he had a small bed in a corner somewhere.

9 **RV 4:3 · Note** It seems that most translations assume that this is referring to the remainder of the warriors staggering back into the camp (which is certainly a possibility), but we've interpreted it as the people coming together (with their elders as it says), to try to figure out why they were defeated. (Similarly for v4.)

10 **RV 4:4 · Note** And with Commander Yahweh sitting on, above, or between them.

11 **RV 4:4 · Cross-ref.** Exo 25:22.

ting on a roadside seat watching, because he was very concerned about the sacred chest. As the man entered the city with the news, all the people started wailing loudly. **14** As Eli heard the wailing, he asked, "What's that big commotion?" So the man ran over to Eli to tell him the news. **15** At that time, Eli was ninety-eight years old, and he stared straight ahead because he couldn't see. **16** The man told him, "I'm the one who's just come from the battle line. I had to fled from the battle line today."

"What was the issue, my son?" Eli asked.

17 "Yisrael (Israel) fled defeated from the Pelishtim," said the messenger. "And also, there has been a terrible slaughter of our people. What's more, your two sons, Hofni and Pinhas, were killed, and the sacred chest has been captured."

18 The moment he mentioned the capturing of God's box, Eli fell backwards off the seat beside the city gate. Because he was old and very heavy, his neck broke and he died. Eli had led Yisrael for forty years.

The death of Pinhas' widow

19 Now Pinhas' wife (Eli's daughter-in-law) was pregnant—about to give birth—when she heard the news about the sacred chest being taken, and that both her father-in-law and her husband had died. At that moment, she knelt down and gave birth because the birth pains suddenly started. **20** But she was dying, and the women who stood over her said, "Don't be afraid, because you've given birth to a son." But she didn't answer or pay any attention. **21** She named the boy 'I-Kavod' (which means 'no glory'), saying, "The glory has departed from Yisrael (Israel)," about the sacred chest being taken, and about the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. **22** Then she said, "The glory has departed from Yisrael, because the sacred chest has been taken."

The sacred chest gets carried to Ashdod

5:1 Now the Pelishtim had taken the sacred chest, and they took it from Even-Ha'ezer (Ebenezer) to Ashdod **2** where they carried it into the temple of their god Dagon and placed it beside a statue of Dagon. **3** Early the next day when the Ashdodim got up, to their horror Dagon had fallen to the ground on its face in front of Yahweh's box. So they stood it up and returned it to its place. **4** But then the next morning, more shock: Dagon had fallen to the ground on its face in front of Yahweh's box but now its hands and head were cut off, and were lying on the threshold. Only its body remained intact. **5** (Because of that, until this day Dagon's priests and everyone who enters Dagon's temple in Ashdod won't tread on the threshold.)

God punishes the Pelishti cities

6 Yahweh caused a lot of trouble for the people of Ashdod and he terrified them. He caused them and the people in the region to get lumpy growths on their skin. **7** When the leaders in Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The god of Yisrael's (Israel's) box mustn't stay with us because he's punishing both us and our god Dagon." **8** So they sent for all the Pelishti rulers, and when they'd assembled they asked, "What should we do with the god of Yisrael's box?"

"Let the god of Yisrael's box be taken around to Gat," they decided. So they moved it there. **9** After it arrived, Yahweh started punishing Gat and both young and old men in the city started getting growths on their skin, and it caused a huge panic. **10** So they sent God's box to Ekron, but as soon as it entered the city, the Ekronim cried out, "Hey! They've brought the god of Yisrael's box here to kill us and our people." **11** So they sent for the Pelishti rulers, and when they'd assembled they said, "Send the god of Yisrael's box away. Send it back to its place so it won't cause us and our people to die." Because there was a deadly panic all over the city as God's punishment there was severe **12** and the men who didn't die suffered with the growths. So the people's cry went up to the heavens.

Sending the chest back to Yisrael

6:1 So it was that Yahweh's box was held in Pelishti territory for seven months, **2** then the Pelishtim called their priests and diviners and asked, "What should we do with Yahweh's box? Show us how we can get it back away to its place."

3 "If you're going to send the god of Yisrael's (Israel's) box back," they responded, "don't send it back by itself, but definitely return it to him with a guilt offering. Then you'll all be healed, and you'll all understand why you've been suffering."

4 "What guilt offering should we send with it?" they asked.

"Five gold replicas of the tumours, and five gold mice," they said. "That's the number of our rulers, because the same plague affected both them and the people. **5** Make replicas of the tumours and replicas of the mice that have been destroying the land, and it will honour Yisrael's god. Then perhaps he will less his punishment that's been on you and on your gods and on your land. **6** Why have you all been so stubborn just like the Mitsrim (Egyptians) when Par'oh (Pharaoh) made them stubborn? When Yisrael's god dealt severely with them, didn't the Mitsrim send the Israelis away and they went? **7** So now, get a brand new cart with two nursing cows which have never had a yoke on their necks. Hitch the cows to the cart but take their calves back to their pen. **8** Then pick up Yahweh's box and put it into the cart along with the gold objects that you are sending with it as a guilt offering put in another container beside the box. Finally, send the cart away and off it will go. **9** Then watch it. If it heads towards Beyt-Shemesh (Heliopolis) in Israeli territory, then it's their god that caused this terrible calamity. But if not, then we'll know that it wasn't the Israeli god, and that it all happened to us by chance."

10 So they followed those instructions: they took two cows that had been feeding calves and hitched them to the new cart, but they shut their calves away in the stall. **11** Then they put Yahweh's box into the cart with the other container with the gold mice and the replicas of their tumours. **12** Amazingly, the cows went straight down the road going to

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Beyt-Shemesh. They stayed on that one highway, walking and mooing, and they never once deviated to the left or the right, and the Pelishti rulers followed them as far as the border of Beyt-Shemesh.

13 Meanwhile in Beyt-Shemesh, the people were harvesting wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the box, they were very happy. **14** The cart came into the field belonging to Yehoshua (Joshua) and then the cows just stood there. There was a large stone there, and the people split the sides of the wooden cart into pieces to start a fire, then offered the cows as a burnt sacrifice to Yahweh. **15** Then the Levites lifted down Yahweh's box and the other container that was with it with the gold objects in it, and they placed them on the large stone. Then the men of Beyt-Shemesh offered up more burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices to Yahweh on that day. **16** The five Pelishti rulers watched all this from a distance before returning to Ekron that same day.

The gold replicas

17 The gold replicas of tumours that the Pelishtim sent back as a guilt offering to Yahweh were for the five cities: Ashdod, Azah (Gaza), Ashkelon, Gat, and Ekron. **18** And the gold mice were from the number of all the Pelishti cities under the five rulers, including fortified cities as well as the villages in the open country, and as far as the large stone that they sat Yahweh's box on. (It's still in Yehoshua's (Joshua's) field in Beyt-Shemesh (Heliopolis) until this day.)

19 But some Beyt-Shemesh men looked into Yahweh's box, and he killed seventy[12] of them. The people mourned because Yahweh had caused such devastation among the people.

The sacred chest is taken to Kiryat-Yearim

20 The Beyt-Shemesh (Heliopolis) men said, "Who can stand in front of the face of Yahweh, this holy God? And where should we send the box to from here?" **21** So they sent messengers to those living in Kiryat-Yearim, saying, "The Pelishtim have returned Yahweh's box. Come over here and get it."

7:1 So the men from Kiryat-Yearim came and lifted up Yahweh's box and brought it into Avinadav's house on the hill.[13] They consecrated his son Eleazar to take care of it.

Shmuel guides Yisrael

2 The sacred chest ended up staying in Kiryat-Yearim for twenty years but the Israelis longed sadly for Yahweh.

3 Then Shmuel (Samuel) told all the Israelis, "If you all really want to return to Yahweh, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtarot from among you. Then decide firmly to serve Yahweh and no other, then he'll rescue you from the Pelishtim' oppression." **4** So the Israelis removed the Ba'al and Ashtoret idols, and began to serve Yahweh only.

5 Then Shmuel called, "Gather all Yisrael (Israel) to Mitspah, and I'll pray to Yahweh for you all." **6** So they gathered at Mitspah, and drew water and poured it out in front of Yahweh, and they fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against Yahweh." And Shmuel guided the Israelis at Mitspah.

7 When the Pelishtim heard that the Israelis had gathered at Mitspah, the Pelishti rulers decided to attack Yisrael. When the Israelis heard that, they were afraid of the Pelishtim **8** and begged Shmuel, "Don't stop crying out to our god Yahweh, so that he'll rescue us from the Pelishtim." **9** So Shmuel got a young lamb and offered it up—a whole burnt up offering to Yahweh. And he cried out to Yahweh for Yisrael, and Yahweh answered him. **10** While Shmuel was offering up that burnt offering, the Pelishtim approached to battle against Yisrael. But that day Yahweh made an intense sound like thunder that confused the Pelishtim and the Israelis were able to defeat them. **11** The Israeli men ran out from Mitspah and chased the Pelishtim—killing them all the way to Beyt-Kar.

12 Shmuel took a single rock and stood it between Mitspah and Shen. He named it 'Even-Ha'ezer' (Ebenezer) (which means 'stone of help'), saying, "Yahweh helped us all the way up to here." **13** So the Pelishtim ended up being subdued and didn't invade Yisrael's border again, and Yahweh worked against the Pelishtim as long as Shmuel lived. **14** The cities that the Pelishtim had taken from Ekron and as far as Gat were returned to Yisrael. And so Yisrael rescued their territory from the Pelishtim, and there was peace between Yisrael and the Amorim.

15 So Shmuel guided Yisrael while he lived. **16** Every year he did the circuit around Beyt-El (Bethel), Gilgal, and Mitspah, and he helped settled disputes for the people in all those places, **17** but he always returned to Ramah because his home was there. He would judge disputes there, and built an altar to Yahweh there.

The Israelis request a king · Full kingdom

8:1 As Shmuel (Samuel) grew older, he appointed his two sons as judges over Yisrael (Israel). **2** The eldest was Yoel (Joel) and his brother was Aviyah. They were based in Be'er-Sheva (Beersheba). **3** However, they didn't take after time, but rather chased dishonest gain—accepting bribes and perverting justice.

4 Eventually, the Israeli elders met together with Shmuel at Ramah **5** and requested, "Listen, you're old now, and your sons don't follow your example. So appoint a king for us now to lead us like all the other nations."[14] **6** But Shmuel thought

12 RV 6:19 · Note TC: The oldest Hebrew text has 50,070 men being killed here, making it hard to imagine how that many men kept clambering over dead bodies to look into the sacred chest. (But possibly we're not understanding the situation correctly?) We have followed later manuscripts here.

13 RV 7:1 · Cross-ref. 2Sam 6:2-4; 1Ch 13:5-7.

14 RV 8:5 · Cross-ref. Deu 17:14.

that their request for a king was an evil request, so he prayed to Yahweh 7 who replied, "Listen to everything that the people are saying, because they're not rejecting *you*, but they're rejecting me from reigning over them. 8 They're doing to you just what they've done to me every since I rescued them out of Mitsrayim (Egypt) and right up until today: deserting me and serving other gods. 9 So listen to what they're saying now, but certainly warn them about what kings require of their subjects."

Advance warnings about having a king · Full kingdom

10 Then Shmuel (Samuel) passed on everything that Yahweh had said to the people who were requesting a king from him, 11 telling them, "If you all have a king reigning over you, this is what he'll demand: he will conscript your sons and appoint them as his cavalry or charioteers, or they'll run as foot-soldiers in front, of his chariot. 12 Others he'll appoint a commander of various units. Some will end up ploughing his fields or harvesting his crops, or manufacturing his weapons and chariots. 13 He'll take your daughters to manufacture perfumes, or to be cooks and bakers. 14 He'll confiscate your best fields and vineyards and olive orchards, and give to his servants to control. 15 Then he'll demand a tenth of your seeds and grape harvests for his officials and his servants. 16 He'll commandeer some of your best male and female servants and young men, and he'll impound some of your donkeys, then he'll use them all for his projects. 17 He'll expect a tenth of your sheep and goats, and you yourselves will end up being his slaves. 18 When that all happens, you'll all cry out in front of the king who you chose for yourselves, but Yahweh won't be answering you at that time."

19 However, the people refused to consider Shmuel's (Samuel's) advice and they argued, "No, we want a king over us 20 so we'll be like all the other nations. Our king will judge us, and will lead out our warriors in battle." 21 Shmuel listened to everything the people said, and passed it on to Yahweh, 22 and Yahweh told him, "Do what they're asking and get them a king." So Shmuel told the people and then sent them all back to their homes.

Sha'ul is chosen as king · Full kingdom

9:1 Now there was a Benyamite man named Kish (son of Aviel, son of Tseror, son of Bekorat, son of Afiah, the son of a Yemini man) who was strong and wealthy. 2 Kish had a son named Sha'ul (Saul) who was a handsome young man and good—in fact there wasn't any Israeli man better than him, and he was head and shoulders taller than anyone else.

3 One time, the female donkeys of Sha'ul's father Kish had gone missing, and Kish told his son, "Take one of the servants with you, and pack up and go and find those donkeys." 4 So they passed through the Efrati hill country, then through the Shalishah region, but they didn't find them. Then they went through the Sha'alim region, but there was nothing, so they continued on through the land of the Benyamites, but they didn't find them. 5 Finally, they entered the Tsuf area, and eventually Sha'ul said to his servant, "Come on. Let's go back home in case my father stops worrying about the donkeys and starts worrying about us."

6 But he replied, "Listen, please. There's an honoured man of God in this city. Everything he says comes true. Let's go there now. Perhaps he'll tell us which way we should have gone."

7 "Okay, then. We can go there," Sha'ul responded, "but what can we give the man? We don't have any more food in our bags, and we never brought along a gift. What else do we have?"

8 "Look," answered the servant, "I've got a small silver coin. We can give that to the man and he'll tell us where to go." 9 (In Yisrael (Israel) before then, when people wanted an answer from God, they'd say, "Come and let us go to the 'seer'," because the prophet of today was called the 'seer' before.)

10 "Good idea," Sha'ul told his servant. "Let's go then." So they went to the city there where the man of God was. 11 They were climbing up the rise towards the city when they met some young women going out to draw water, and they asked them, "Is the seer in town?" 12 "Yes he is," they answered. "Hurry though, because he's come to the city today to offer the sacrifice for the people at the high place. 13 You'll find him as soon as you enter the city, before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people won't eat until he gets there, because he himself will bless the sacrifice. Afterwards, those who've been invited will eat together there. So go up there now and you'll soon find him." 14 So they went on up into the city, and as they were entering, wow, there was Shmuel (Samuel) coming out towards them to go up to the high place.

15 On the previous day, Yahweh had quietly told Shmuel, 16 "About this time tomorrow, I'll send a Benyamite man to you, and you should anoint him to be ruler over my people Yisrael. He will rescue my people from the Pelishtim, because I've noticed my people because I heard their cries."

17 Then Shmuel saw Sha'ul, and Yahweh told him, "Look, that's the man that I you about. He will help control my people." 18 As Sha'ul approached Shmuel right there in the middle of the city gateway, he asked, "Please tell me, where's the seer's house?"

19 "I am the seer," Shmuel answered, "Now, Go up to the high place ahead of me, and you'll eat with me today. In the morning, I'll tell you what you want to know, then I'll send you off. 20 As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, don't worry anymore about them because they've been found. Now, all of Yisrael is wanting your father's household, and wanting you in particular." 21 "But I'm a Benyamite," Sha'ul responded, "That's the smallest tribe in Yisrael, and my clan's the lowliest of all the Benyamite clans. So why did you talk to me like that?"

22 Then Shmuel took Sha'ul and his servant to the room

where the meal had been prepared, and he gave them a place at the head of table—even above the invited guests. (There were about thirty men.) 23 And Shmuel told the cook, "Give the special piece of meat that I showed you and said to keep aside." 24 So the cook lifted the cooked leg and placed it in front of Sha'ul. Then Shmuel told Sha'ul, "Look, this has been reserved for you. Eat it, because it's been kept until the appointed time when I could call these people together."

Shmuel anoints Sha'ul with oil · Full kingdom

So Sha'ul (Saul) ate with Shmuel (Samuel) that day, 25 and then they went back from the high place down into the city, and Shmuel spoke with Sha'ul on his house roof.

26 They rose early the next day. At dawn, Shmuel had called to Sha'ul on the roof, saying, "Get up and I will send you off." So Sha'ul got up, and the two of them went outside. 27 When they reached the edge of the city, Shmuel said to Sha'ul, "Tell your servant to go on ahead," and so he went on ahead. "But you stand here, and I'll give you the message from God."

10:1 Then Shmuel took a flask of oil, and poured it on Sha'ul's head and kissed him, and told him, "It's Yahweh who has anointed you to be ruler over his chosen people. 2 After you leave me today and get back to Benyamite territory, then you'll see two men near Rahel's (Rachel's) tomb in Tseltsah, and they'll say to you, 'The donkeys that you went to look for have been found. But, wow, your father has stopped worrying about the donkeys and now he's worried about *you* and trying to figure out what he should do.' 3 Then further on from there, as you approach the oak tree at Tavor, you'll find three men going to Beyt-El (Bethel) to worship God. One will be taking three young goats, one will be carrying three rounds loaves of bread, and one will be carrying a wine in a container. 4 They'll ask about how you're doing and give you two loaves of bread which you should accept. 5 After that, you'll come to the hill of God (where there's a camp of Pelishti warriors). When you enter the town, you'll meet a group of prophets descending from the altar area, 6 and Yahweh's spirit will rush onto you. Then you'll join them in prophesying, and you'll be transformed into a different person. 7 When this all comes true, do whatever you think is correct because God will be helping you. 8 Then go ahead of me to Gilgal and wait there for seven days, until I get there and tell you what to do. I'll join you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings.

9 Then as Sha'ul (Saul) started to leave Shmuel (Samuel), God changed his thinking. Then all Shmuel's predictions came true that day, 10 so when Sha'ul and his servant came to the hill, a group of prophets met them and God's spirit rushed onto Sha'ul and he joined them in prophesying. 11 Then everyone who had known Sha'ul previously heard him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, "What's happened to Kish's son? Is Sha'ul really a prophet now?" 12 A man from there answered, "And who is *their* father?" So after that it became a common saying, "Has Sha'ul also become a prophet?"[15] 13 When he had finished prophesying, he ascended to the altar area.

14 Later, Sha'ul's uncle asked him and his servant, "Where did you two take off to?"

"To look for the donkeys," Sha'ul replied. "But we couldn't find them, so we went to Shmuel."

15 "And what did he tell you?" the uncle asked.

16 "He assured us that the donkeys had been found," Sha'ul replied. But he didn't tell him anything that Shmuel had said about becoming king.

Sha'ul is selected as king · Full kingdom

17 Then Shmuel (Samuel) summoned the people to come before Yahweh at Mitspah, 18 and he told them, "Yahweh, the god of Yisrael (Israel), says, 'I myself brought Yisrael out of Mitsrayim (Egypt). I rescued you from Mitsri (Egyptian) control, and from all the kingdoms that oppressed you.' 19 But since then, you all have rejected your god—the one who saves you from all your calamities and distresses. And you've all said to him, 'We'd rather have a king over us.' So station yourselves now in front of Yahweh by your tribes and clans."

20 Then Shmuel had all the Israeli tribes approach, and the tribe of Benyamin was selected. 21 Then he had all the Benyamite clans approach, and the Matri clan was selected. Then Kish's son, Sha'ul (Saul) was selected and they tried to find him, but they couldn't find him anywhere 22 so they asked Yahweh again, "Is that man around here anywhere?"

"Look, he's hiding among the supplies," Yahweh replied.

23 So they ran and got him from there, and when he took his place among the people, he was head and shoulders taller than anyone else. 24 Then Shmuel announced to everyone, "Can you see the one that Yahweh has chosen? Certainly there's no one else like him among all the people."

All the people saw that and responded, "Long live the king."

25 Then Shmuel explained how the kingship would work, and wrote it in a book and placed it in front of Yahweh. Then he sent everyone home. 26 Shmuel also went home to Giveah, accompanied by some of the powerful warriors whose hearts God had touched. 27 But some worthless men asked, "How can that one save us?" and they despised Sha'ul (Saul) and didn't bring him any gifts, but he made no comment.

15 RV 10:12 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 19:23-24.

Readers' Version

Sha'ul rescues Yavesh from the Amonim · Full kingdom

11:1 About a month later,[16] Nahash the Amoni took his men and camped around Yavesh-Gilead, and the leaders of Yavesh told him, "Make a treaty with us, and we'll serve you."

2 "Yes, I'll make an treaty with you," Nahash replied, "by gouging out all of your right eyes in order to shame all Yisrael (Israel)."

3 "Oh! Then leave us alone for seven days," the Yavesh elders responded, "so that we can send messengers through all the territory of Yisrael. If no one will come to rescue us, then we'll surrender to you."

4 When the messengers arrived where Sha'ul (Saul) lived at Giveah and passed the news onto the people, everyone started wailing loudly. **5** At that time, Sha'ul was walking home behind the cattle and he asked, "What's with all the people wailing?" Then they told him what the messengers from Yavesh had said. **6** God's spirit rushed on Sha'ul as he heard the message, and he became very angry. **7** Then he took a pair of cattle and chopped them into pieces, and sent messengers to take them throughout Yisrael and announce, "This is what will be done to the cattle of anyone who doesn't join Sha'ul and Shmuel (Samuel) in battle."

Then Yahweh caused the people to be afraid of him, and they united together. **8** When Sha'ul assembled them at Bezek, there were three hundred thousand warriors from Yisrael and thirty thousand from Yehudah (Judah), **9** and they told the original messengers, "Go and tell the leaders of Yavesh-Gilead, 'Tomorrow you'll all be rescued by the time that the sun's at its hottest.' " **10** So the Yavesh leaders told Nahash, "We'll surrender to you all tomorrow, then you can do to us whatever seems good to you all."

11 The next day, Sha'ul divided his warriors into three divisions, and they attacked the Amoni camp before the sun rose. Then they slaughtered the Amonim until the hottest part of the day. Their remaining warriors were scattered so completely that no two of them were able to stay together.

Sha'ul reaffirmed as king · Full kingdom

12 Then the people asked Shmuel (Samuel), "Who were the ones saying that Sha'ul (Saul) wasn't fit to reign over us? Bring them here and we'll execute them."

13 "No one's going to be executed today," Sha'ul said, "because today Yahweh has rescued Yisrael (Israel)."

14 "Come on then," said Shmuel. "Let's go to Gilgal and renew the kingship there." **15** So all the people when to Gilgal and in front of Yahweh they reaffirmed Sha'ul as king. Then they offered sacrifices as peace offerings to Yahweh, then Sha'ul and the people celebrated together.

Shmuel's farewell speech · Full kingdom

12:1 Then Shmuel (Samuel) said to all Yisrael (Israel), "Listen to me now. I've listened to your voices and taken notice of everything that you all said to me. And I've appointed a king to reign over you all. **2** So look now and you can see your king walking here in front of you all. But as for me, I'm old and grey, and my sons are among you all. I've served you all openly from my youth right up to the present time, **3** and here I am now. Now with Yahweh listening, answer this truthfully: Have I ever taken anyone's ox or donkey? Did I cheat anyone? Have I oppressed anyone or taken a bribe to not see something? I'll pay back anything I owe anyone."

4 "No, you haven't cheated us," they answered. "And you haven't oppressed us or taken any payments."

5 "Yahweh is a your witness," he said. "And his anointed king is a witness today, that you have never found me taking anything that wasn't mine."

"We witness that," they agreed.

6 "It was Yahweh who appointed Mosheh (Moses) and Aharon (Aaron)," Shmuel continued, "and who brought your ancestors out of Mitsrayim (Egypt).[17] **7** Now present yourselves to Yahweh as I confront you all in front of him by telling you about his righteousness that he displayed to you all as well as to your ancestors before you: **8** After Ya'akov (Jacob) went to Mitsrayim and your ancestors cried out to Yahweh,[18] then Yahweh sent Mosheh and Aharon, and they brought your ancestors out of Mitsrayim and settled them into this place. **9** Then they forgot their god Yahweh, and he allowed them to be oppressed by Sisera (the commander of the army from Hatsor),[19] and the Pelishtim,[20] and the king of Moav (Moab).[21] Then they fought against them **10** and cried out to Yahweh, 'We have sinned, because we've abandoned Yahweh and have served the Baals and the Ashtarot. But if you rescue us now from our enemies, we will serve you.'[22] **11** Then Yahweh sent Gid'on,[23] Bedan,[24] Yiftah (Jephthah),[25]

16 **RV 11:1 · Note** This appears only in a few ancient documents.

17 **RV 12:6 · Cross-ref.** Exo 6:26.

18 **RV 12:8 · Cross-ref.** Exo 2:23.

19 **RV 12:9 · Cross-ref.** Jdg 4:2.

20 **RV 12:9 · Cross-ref.** Jdg 13:1.

21 **RV 12:9 · Cross-ref.** Jdg 3:12.

22 **RV 12:10 · Cross-ref.** Jdg 10:10-15.

23 **RV 12:11 · Cross-ref.** Jdg 7:1.

24 **RV 12:11 · Cross-ref.** Jdg 4:6.

25 **RV 12:11 · Cross-ref.** Jdg 11:29.

and Shimshon (Samson)[26] to rescue you all from your enemies all around you, and so you all have had times of living securely.[27] **12** But then you all saw Amoni King Nahash coming against you, and you demanded that you all wanted a king to reign over you rather than having your god Yahweh as your king.[28]

13 So now, look, here's the king that you all chose to have. Yes, Yahweh has given you all a king. **14** If you all honour Yahweh and listen to his instructions and don't rebel against his commands, then both you and your king will indeed be following your god Yahweh. **15** But if you all don't listen to Yahweh, and you rebel against his commands, then he will work against you all just like he worked against your ancestors.[29] **16** So now stay there and you'll all see the incredible sign that Yahweh is about to do in front of you. **17** Now, isn't it the time of the wheat harvest right now? I'll call to Yahweh, and he'll send unseasonal thunder and rain, and then you'll all see and realise that in Yahweh's view, asking for a king was very evil."

18 So Shmuel (Samuel) called to Yahweh and he sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people became very afraid of Yahweh and Shmuel **19** and begged Shmuel, "Pray to your god Yahweh for your servants, so that we won't die, because we've added more evil onto all our previous sins by requesting a king for ourselves."

20 "Don't be afraid," Shmuel responded. "You yourselves have indeed done all this evil. However, don't make it worse by turning away from Yahweh, but rather, serve him with all your being. **21** And don't turn away from Yahweh and worship useless idols because they can't benefit you or rescue you, because they're empty of life. **22** Yahweh won't abandon his people because he has an excellent reputation to uphold, especially since he's declared you all to be his people. **23** Also, far be it from me to sin against Yahweh by not praying for you all, as well as instructing you all in the good and proper way. **24** Just honour Yahweh and serve him faithfully and sincerely—always remembering the incredible things he's done for you all. **25** But if you all continue to do evil, both you and your king will get swept away."

Shmuel scolds Sha'ul · Full kingdom

13:1 Sha'ul (Saul) was thirty[30] years old when he began to reign over Yisrael (Israel), and when he'd reigned for two years, **2** he chose three thousand Israeli warriors for himself: two thousand were stationed with him in Mikmas, and one thousand were with his son Yonatan (Jonathan) in Benyamite Giveah. All the others, he sent back to their homes.

3 Then Yonatan attacked and defeated the Pelishti unit that was at Geva, and the Pelishtim heard about it. So Sha'ul had a trumpet blown throughout the country, with the message, "Listen all you Ivrim (Hebrews)." **4** All of Yisrael heard the news that Sha'ul had wiped out a Pelishti outpost, and realised that Yisrael had become repulsive to the Pelishtim. So the people were summoned to join Sha'ul at Gilgal.

5 The Pelishtim assembled themselves to fight Yisrael with thirty thousand chariots, six thousand mounted cavalry, and warriors as numerous as the sand on the beach. They went to Mikmas and camped there, east of Beyt-Aven. **6** But the Israeli warriors were very anxious because their troops were so outnumbered, so they hid in caves and thickets, among rocks, and in tombs and wells. **7** Some of them crossed the Yarden (Jordan) River to the Gad and Gilead regions.

Sha'ul stayed at Gilgal, but the people with him were trembling. **8** He waited seven days until the time when Shmuel (Samuel) had said that he'd get there,[31] but he didn't appear so Sha'ul's men began to desert him. **9** "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings," Sha'ul commanded, then he offered up the burnt offering. **10** Just as he'd finished, wow, Shmuel arrived at last, and Sha'ul went over to greet him. **11** "What have you done?" Shmuel asked.

"When I saw the people leaving me," Sha'ul replied "and you, you didn't get here when you said you would, and the Pelishtim were gathering at Mikmas, **12** then I thought, 'The Pelishtim are about to attack us at Gilgal, and I haven't offered any gift to Yahweh.' So I forced myself, and offered up the burnt up offering."

13 "That was stupid of you," Shmuel responded. "You haven't obeyed what your god Yahweh instructed, because if you had, then Yahweh would have established your reign over Yisrael (Israel) forever. **14** But now your kingdom won't survive. Yahweh has found a man who's loyal to him and he's commanded that man to lead his people,[32] because you haven't obeyed him.

15 Then Shmuel left Gilgal and went to Giveah in Benyamite territory. Meanwhile, Sha'ul counted up the warriors with him—around six hundred of them. **16** Sha'ul and his son Yonatan (Jonathan) and the people with them, were staying in Geva, whereas the Pelishtim were camped at Mikmas, **17** and they sent out three raiding parties—one went north to Ofrah in the Shual region, **18** one went west to Beyt-Horon, and one went towards the wilderness where the

26 RV 12:11 · Note TC: This list of four names varies between different ancient manuscripts so you might find variation in other translations.

27 RV 12:11 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 3:20.

28 RV 12:12 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 8:19.

29 RV 12:15 · Note TC: or (in the ancient Septuagint translation), ...against you all **and your king**.

30 RV 13:1 · Note TC: There's some confusion around the numbers in this verse in the original manuscripts, so other translations might differ.

31 RV 13:8 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 10:8.

32 RV 13:14 · Cross-ref. Acts 13:22.

Readers' Version

border overlooks the Tsevoeim valley.

19 At that time, there were no blacksmiths in Yisrael (Israel) because the Pelishtim didn't want the Israelis to be able to make swords or spears, 20 so all the Israelis had to go to the Pelishtim to get their axes and plough blades, etc., sharpened. 21 (They were charged two-thirds of a shekel for larger things like plough blades, and one-third for picks and axes, and for straightening ox goads.) 22 So on the day of battle, Sha'ul and his son Yonatan had a sword and spear each, but none of their warriors had any.

23 Now one Pelishti unit had been sent out to guard the pass at Mikmas.

Yonatan's bravery · Full kingdom

14:1 Then one day, Sha'ul's (Saul's) son Yonatan (Jonathan) said to the young man who carried his equipment, "Come on, let's cross over to the Pelishti unit that's over on the opposite side." But he didn't tell his father. 2 Meanwhile, Sha'ul was still waiting under the pomegranate tree in Migron on the outskirts of Geva with around six-hundred warriors. 3 Ahiyah the priest was also there wearing a sacred apron. (He was son of Ahituv the brother of I-Kavod, son of Pinhas, son of Eli, Yahweh's priest at Shiloh.) But the people didn't know that Yonatan had gone.

4 Meanwhile, for Yonatan to get to the Pelishti garrison, they had to go through a narrow pass between two cliffs. (The cliff on one side was named Botsets, and the other was named Seneh. 5 One cliff faced north toward Mikmas, and the other side faced south toward Geva.)

6 Yonatan said to his servant carrying his equipment, "Come on. Let's pass over to that group of these uncircumcised ones. Perhaps Yahweh will help us, because it doesn't matter to him whether he saves using many people or just a few."

7 "Do everything that you feel is right," he responded. "Go on ahead and be confident that I'll be there supporting you."

8 "Now listen," Yonatan said. "We'll cross over and then reveal ourselves to them. 9 Then if they tell us, 'Stay there until we get down to you,' then we'll stay where we are and not go up to them. 10 But if they say, 'Come on up to us,' then we'll go up, because that'll be the sign to us that Yahweh will help us overpower them."

11 So the two of them revealed themselves to the Pelishti unit, and the soldiers said, "Hey, look! The Ivrim (Hebrews) are coming out from the holes there where they've hidden themselves." 12 Then some of the men called to Yonatan and his servant, "Come on up here to us and we'll teach you a thing or two."

"Come on up behind me," Yonatan told his servant, "because Yahweh has already declared Yisrael (Israel) to be the victor." 13 So Yonatan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his servant following behind him. Then at the top, Yonatan struck them down with his sword while his servant followed behind and killed them. 14 In that first offensive, Yonatan and his servant killed about twenty men in an area of around 30m square. 15 At that time, Pelishtim in the camp started getting the jitters, then all the people, and even raiding parties. Then the ground shook, and it turned into a god-given panic.

Yisrael defeats the Pelishtim · Full kingdom

16 Sha'ul's (Saul's) lookouts in Giveah (in Benyamite territory) saw to their surprise that their opponents were starting to scatter in every direction. 17 "Count our people and see who's missing," Sha'ul commanded, so they called the roll and wow, it was Yonatan (Jonathan) and his servant who weren't accounted for. 18 "Bring the sacred chest here," Sha'ul told Ahiyah the priest, because the Israelis had control of it again at that time. 19 But even as Sha'ul was speaking to him, the confusion in the Pelishti camp was continually increasing, and Sha'ul told him, "Oh, don't worry about it." 20 Then he called his warriors together and they went forward to battle. To their surprise, the Pelishtim were fighting each other in total confusion. 21 Now before that time, some Ivrim (Hebrews) had joined the Pelishti camp, but now they switched alliance back to Yisrael (Israel) with Sha'ul and Yonatan. 22 Also, there had been some Israeli deserters who'd hidden in the Efrati hill country heard that the Pelishtim were fleeing, and so they too also chased and attacked them. 23 So Yahweh saved Yisrael that day, and the fighting went as far as Beyt-Aven.

Yonatan eats honey · Full kingdom

24 Now the Israeli warriors were getting exhausted that day, but Sha'ul (Saul) had made the them promise, "We need to avenge our enemies. Anyone who eats food before the evening is cursed." 25 But when they reached the forest, there was honeycomb on the ground. 26 Although the warriors entered the forest and saw the honey, none of them tasted any because they were afraid of the curse. 27 But Yonatan (Jonathan) hadn't heard his father's oath, so he dipped his staff into the honeycomb and ate some honey and felt rejuvenated.

28 However, someone noticed it and mentioned, "Your father made the people promise, 'Anyone who eats food today will be cursed.' So the people are faint."

29 "My father's caused trouble for us," Yonatan responded. "See how much better I feel now because I tasted a little bit of this honey. 30 Actually, if the troops had eaten what they'd found from the plunder of their enemies today, how much better it would have been because we might have had an even more decisive victory over the Pelishtim."

31 That day they killed Pelishtim from Mikmas to Ayalon, but the fighters were totally exhausted. 32 They rushed greedily at the plunder, grabbing sheep, cattle, and calves which they slaughtered right there and ate with the blood still in them. 33 Then King Sha'ul (Saul) was told, "Look, the people are sinning against Yahweh by eating meat with the

blood still in it."[33]

"You've all acted treacherously," he responded, "Now, roll a big stone over to me." 34 Then he said, "Go out among the warriors and tell them to bring their animals over here to slaughter and to eat, so they don't sin against Yahweh by eating meat with the blood still in it." So the people brought their animals over and slaughtered them there. 35 Then Sha'ul built an altar to Yahweh—it was the first one he built.

36 Then Sha'ul said, "Let's go after the Pelishtim tonight and plunder them until the light of morning. Let's not leave any of them alive."

"Do what you feel is right," they responded.

But the priest said, "Let's ask God here first."

37 So Sha'ul asked God, "Should we go after the Pelishtim? Will you give Yisrael (Israel) victory over them?" But Yahweh didn't answer him that day. 38 Then Sha'ul commanded, "All you leaders of the warriors. Gather here so we can find out what sin was committed today. 39 As Yahweh who saves Yisrael lives, even if it's my own son Yonatan (Jonathan), whoever sinned today will certainly die." But the people didn't volunteer any information. 40 "You all can be on one side, and my son Yonatan and I will be on the other side," Sha'ul said.

"Do whatever feels right to you," the people replied.

41 Then Sha'ul asked Yisrael's god Yahweh, "Show us the truth." And Sha'ul and Yonatan were selected—not the people.[34] 42 Then Sha'ul asked again, "Choose between me and my son Yonatan." And Yonatan was selected. 43 Sha'ul demanded from Yonatan, "Tell me what you've done."

"Actually," Yonatan answered, "I did taste some honey from the end of my staff, so take me—I'm ready to die."

44 "May God do to me whatever he wants," Sha'ul said. "because you will certainly die, Yonatan."

45 But the people stood up to Sha'ul, "Should Yonatan die? Wasn't it him who saved Yisrael today? We won't stand for it. As Yahweh lives, not even a hair on his head will be touched because he worked with God today." And so the people rescued Yonatan and he wasn't executed.

46 Then Sha'ul stopped chasing the Pelishtim and went home, and the Pelishtim also returned to their place.

Sha'ul's kingdom, and his family details · Full kingdom

47 After Sha'ul (Saul) had taken on the kingship of Yisrael (Israel), he fought against their enemies from all around: against the Moavim, the Amonim, the Edomim, the kings of Tsovah, and against the Pelishtim. Wherever he turned, he punished his enemies. 48 He acted bravely and defeated even the Amalekim, always rescuing Yisrael from those who came in to plunder it.

49 Sha'ul's sons were Yonatan (Jonathan), Yishvi, and Malkishua. His oldest daughter was Merav, and the younger one was Mikal. 50 His wife's name was Ahinoam (daughter of Ahima'ats). His army commander was Avner (son of Sha'ul's uncle Ner— 51 Kish was Sha'ul's father, and Avner's father Ner was Aviel's son).

52 The conflict with the Pelishtim was intensive for all of Sha'ul's life, so whenever he saw a good warrior or any strong, young man, then he would conscript them.

Sha'ul destroys the Amalekim · Full kingdom

15:1 One day Shmuel (Samuel) said to Sha'ul (Saul), "It was Yahweh who sent me to anoint you as king over his people Yisrael (Israel) back then,[35] so now, listen to what he has to say. 2 Commander Yahweh says, 'I've noticed what the Amalekim did to Yisrael when they came out of Mitsrayim (Egypt)—they attacked them as they passed by.[36] 3 So go now and attack Amalek and destroy them completely without compassion, putting men and women, children and infants to death, along with their cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.' "

4 So Sha'ul summoned the people to Telaim and counted them: two hundred thousand foot soldiers as well as ten thousand warriors from Yehudah (Judah). 5 Then Sha'ul took them to Amalek city, and they lay in wait in the valley. 6 Then he warned the Keynim, "You all need to move out from among the Amalekim, so that you all won't be attacked along with them. That's because you all were kind to our ancestors when they came out of Mitsrayim." So the Keynim moved out from among the Amalekim.

7 Then Sha'ul slaughtered the Amalekim from Havilah to Shur (near Mitsrayim), 8 and they captured King Agag alive but killed everyone else with swords. 9 However, as well as sparing Agag, they took the best sheep and cattle

God rejects Sha'ul · Full kingdom

10 Then Yahweh told Shmuel (Samuel), 11 "I regret that I've appointed Sha'ul (Saul) as king because he's turned away from following me and hasn't obeyed my instructions." That really upset Shmuel and he cried out to Yahweh all night. 12 Early the next morning, Shmuel got up to meet Sha'ul, but someone told him, "Sha'ul went to Karmel, and wow, he set up a monument to himself. Then he turned around and went to Gilgal." 13 When Shmuel caught up with Sha'ul, Sha'ul told him, "May Yahweh bless you. I've followed Yahweh's instructions."

14 "Then what's that bleating of sheep that I can hear?" asked Shmuel. "And I'm sure I can hear cattle sounds too?"

15 "Ah, the warriors took them from the Amalekim," Sha'ul answered. "They wanted to save the best of the sheep and

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33 **RV 14:33 · Cross-ref.** Gen 9:4; Lev 7:26-27; 17:10-14; 19:26; Deu 12:16,23; 15:23.

34 **RV 14:41 · Cross-ref.** Num 27:21; 1Sam 28:6.

35 **RV 15:1 · Cross-ref.** 1Sam 10:1.

36 **RV 15:2 · Cross-ref.** Exo 17:8-14; Deu 25:17-19.

Readers' Version

the cattle in order to sacrifice to your god Yahweh. But we completely destroyed the rest."

16 "Stop," said Shmuel, "and let me tell you what Yahweh told me last night."

"Go ahead," Sha'ul responded.

17 So Shmuel told him, "Although you consider yourself insignificant, aren't you the head of the tribes of Yisrael (Israel)? Yahweh anointed you as king over Yisrael, 18 then sent you off with the task of completely destroying the sinful Amalekim—fighting until they were all destroyed. 19 So why didn't you obey Yahweh's command? Instead, you headed straight for the plunder and disobeyed Yahweh."

20 "I did listen to Yahweh's instructions," Sha'ul insisted. "and I did what he asked. So now I've brought Amaleki King Agag here and I've completely destroyed the Amalekim. 21 Yes, the people kept some of the best sheep and cattle to sacrifice to your god Yahweh here at Gilgal."

22 But Shmuel asked,

"Is Yahweh happier with burnt offerings and sacrifices
than with those who follow his instructions?
Listen, obedience is better than sacrifice—
paying attention is worth more than the fat of rams.
23 Rebellion is as sinful as doing sorcery,
and being stubborn is as sinful as worshipping idols.
Because you have rejected Yahweh's instructions,
he has rejected you as king."

24 "Yes, I've sinned," Sha'ul (Saul) responded. "I can see that I've disobeyed Yahweh's instruction, and yours too, because I feared the people and did what they were requesting. 25 But now, please forgive my sin and come back with me so I can worship Yahweh."

26 "No, I won't return with you." Shmuel (Samuel) replied. "You've rejected Yahweh's instructions, and Yahweh has already rejected you as Yisrael's (Israel's) king."

27 As Shmuel turned around to go, Sha'ul grabbed the edge of his robe and it tore.[37] 28 "Today, Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Yisrael away from you," Shmuel told him. "And he's given it to another man who's better than you. 29 And by the way, Yisrael's powerful God doesn't go back on his word, and doesn't change his mind like people tend to do.

30 "It's true that I've sinned," Sha'ul said, "but please honour me now in front of the Israeli people and their elders. And then return with me, so I can worship your god Yahweh." 31 So Shmuel followed Sha'ul back, and Sha'ul worshipped Yahweh.

32 Then Shmuel commanded, "Bring the Amaleki King Agag over here to me."

So they brought him over, and trembling,[38] he said, "I've faced up to death now."[39]

33 Then Shmuel told him,

"Just as your sword has made women childless,
so too will your mother be made childless among women."

And Shmuel hacked Agag to pieces in front of Yahweh there at Gilgal.

34 Then Shmuel went home to Ramah, and Sha'ul (Saul) returned to his house in Giveah. 35 After that, Shmuel never saw Sha'ul again, but he mourned for him, and Yahweh regretted that he'd made Sha'ul king over Yisrael (Israel).

Shmuel anoints David as King · Full kingdom

16:1 Then Yahweh spoke to Shmuel (Samuel), "How long are you going to keep mourning for Sha'ul (Saul) for, when I myself have rejected him as king over Yisrael (Israel)? Fill your horn with oil and go. I'll send you to Yishay (Jesse) from Beyt-Lehem (Bethlehem), because I've seen one of his sons who'd make a good king for me."

2 "How can I do that?" asked Shmuel. "Sha'ul would kill me if he heard about it."

"Take a heifer with you," Yahweh said, "and say, 'I've come to sacrifice to Yahweh.' 3 Invite Yishay to the sacrifice, and I'll show you what do to from there, and you should anoint the one I tell you to."

4 So Shmuel did what Yahweh had told him, and went to Beyt-Lehem. The town elders trembled when they met him, and asked, "Do you come in peace?"

5 "Yes, in peace," he answered "I've come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he purified Yishay and his sons and called them to the sacrifice.

6 When they arrived, Shmuel saw Eliav and thought, "Surely this man's the one that Yahweh wants to anoint."

7 But Yahweh told him, "Don't look at his height or outward appearance, because I've rejected him. Because it isn't what a person sees with their eyes, but Yahweh sees their motives and values."

8 Then Yishay called for Avinadav to walk across in front of Shmuel, but he said again, "Yahweh hasn't chosen that one."

9 Then Yishay made Shamah walk across in front, but again he said, "Yahweh hasn't chosen that one." 10 So all up, Yishay made seven of his sons walk across in front of Shmuel, but Shmuel told him, "Yahweh hasn't chosen any of them."

11 Then Shmuel asked Yishay, "Is this all your sons?"

"Well, there's just the youngest," he answered "but you see,

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37 RV 15:27-28 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 28:17; 1Ki 11:30-31.

38 RV 15:32 · Note The meaning of the original word here is unclear and so there'll be different interpretations.

39 RV 15:32 · Note Some translations interpret the original words as Agag thinking (or saying to himself) that he was going to be spared, but he surely knew Shmuel.

he's out looking after the flock."[40]

"Send for him," Shmuel instructed him, "because we won't do anything else until he gets here." 12 So he sent for him and brought him in. He was a good-looker with beautiful eyes and red colouring, and Yahweh said, "Stand up and anoint him, because he's the one." 13 So Shmuel took the horn full of olive oil and anointed him right there with his brothers, and Yahweh's spirit rushed onto David from that day onwards. Then Shmuel left and went home to Ramah.

Sha'ul employs David · Full kingdom

14 Meanwhile, Yahweh's spirit left Sha'ul (Saul), and instead an evil spirit from Yahweh tormented him, 15 and his servants told him, "Look, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. 16 Let our master please get your servants to find a man who knows how to play the harp. Then, whenever the evil spirit from God is on you, then he'll play it and it'll be good for you."

17 "Okay," Sha'ul responded, "Find a man for me who's good at playing it, and bring him to me."

18 Then one of his servants spoke up, "Listen, I've noticed one of the sons of Yishay (Jesse) in Beyt-Lehem (Bethlehem) who knows how to play. He's also a very powerful warrior, as well as being good looking and wise in what he says. And Yahweh is with him."

19 So Sha'ul sent messengers to Yishay to tell him, "Your son David who looks after your flock, send him to me." 20 So Yishay loaded a donkey with bread, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent them to King Sha'ul with his son David. 21 When David got to the king, he became his servant, and he was liked so much that he was appointed as the one who carried the king's equipment. 22 Sha'ul sent a message back to Yishay, saying, "Let David remain in my service, because I really like him." 23 Then whenever the spirit from God tormented Sha'ul, David would take the harp and play it. That would bring relief to Sha'ul and make him feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

Galyat Challenges the Israelis · Full kingdom

17:1 At that time, the Pelishtim gathered their army divisions together ready for battle. They assembled at Sokoh in Yehudah (Judah), and camped between Sokoh and Azekah in Efes-Damim. 2 Sha'ul (Saul) and the Israeli warriors gathered and camped in the Elah valley, then they arranged themselves for battle against the Pelishtim. 3 So the Pelishtim stood on one hill and the Israelis on the opposite hill, with the valley between them.

4 Then the Pelishtim sent a champion out from their camp to represent them. His name was Galyat (Goliath) and he came from Gat, and he was almost three metres[41] tall. 5 He wore a bronze helmet, and his body armour had overlapping plates weighing a total of some fifty-five kilograms. 6 He had bronze armour on his legs, and a bronze plate[42] between his shoulders. 7 The wooden shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam and his spear time weighed around seven kilograms. His shield-bearer walked in front of him. 8 Galyat stood there and called out to the Israeli warriors, "Why have you all come out to line up for battle? Now, I'm down here as a Pelishti, and all of you are Sha'ul's slaves, so choose a man for yourselves and let him come down here to fight me. 9 If he's able to fight with me and kill me, then we'll become your slaves. But if I'm the winner and kill him, then you'll all become our slaves and work for us." 10 Then he said, "I personally scoff at Yisrael's (Israel's) lines today. Give me a man so we can fight together." 11 When Sha'ul and the Israelis heard all that, they were discouraged and very afraid.

David and Galyat · Full kingdom

12 [43]Now David was the son of Yishay (Jesse) (from the Efrat clan, he lived in Beyt-Lehem (Bethlehem) in Yehudah (Judah)) who had eight sons, and by Sha'ul's (Saul's) time, was quite old compared to other men.[44] 13 Yishay's three oldest sons (Eliav, Avinadav, and Shamah) had gone to the battle with Sha'ul, 14 but David was the youngest. While the three oldest were with Sha'ul, 15 David went back and forth between Sha'ul's camp and looking after his father's flock at Beyt-Lehem.

16 For forty days, the Pelishti champion came out and presented himself in the early morning and again in the evening.

17 One day Yishay said to his son David, "Here's a sack of roasted grain and ten loaves of bread. Take them straight away to your brothers at the camp. 18 And take these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of their unit. Find out how your brothers are doing and bring back anything they want to send to me. 19 Sha'ul and them and the other warriors are in the Elah valley, fighting against the Pelishtim."

20 So David got up early in the morning and left the flock with a shepherd, and set out just like Yishay had told him to. When he got to the battleground and the camp, the warriors were just going out to the battle line and they were shouting the battle cry. 21 The Israelis and the Pelishtim arranged themselves—battle line to battle line. 22 David left what he'd brought with a guard, and ran into the battle line. Then he caught up with his brothers and asked them how they were doing. 23 While he was talking with them, look, the Pelishti champion from Gat was coming out with his challenge.

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40 **RV 16:11 · Note** We deliberately left the word 'flock' here (rather than 'sheep'), because although young David is always thought of as 'the shepherd boy' in English culture, in the middle-East, **goats** are probably a more important part of the flock than sheep.

41 **RV 17:4 · Note** Some Greek sources have a height closer to two metres.

42 **RV 17:6b · Note** It's not totally clear what's being described in the second part of this sentence, so other interpretations might differ.

43 **RV 17:12 · Note** Verses 12–31 aren't included in every ancient Greek translation.

44 **RV 17:12 · Note** There's a small variation in the original manuscripts at the end of the verse, but it has minimal effect on the essential story-line.

Readers' Version

Galyat (Goliath) spoke like he had before and David heard it all. **24** But when the Israelis saw the champion, they were terrified and fled away from him. **25** saying to each other, "Have you seen this man who's coming out? He's certainly coming to mock Yisrael (Israel)! Any man who can defeat him will be made very wealthy by the king, and he'll give his daughter to him, plus his extended family will be exempt from paying taxes."

26 "What was it that'll be done for the man who kills this Pelishti and take's Yisrael's disgrace away?" David asked some of the men standing around him. "Because who does that uncircumcised Pelishti think he is that he would taunt the army of the living God?" **27** Then the men told him again what would be given to the man who defeats him.

28 But when David's oldest brother Eliav heard him talking to the men, he got very angry and scolded him, "Why have you come down here? Who's looking after those few sheep that you left in the desert? I know you have a big head and you're just a troublemaker—you just want to watch the battle."

29 "What have I done now?" David asked. "Wasn't it just a question?" **30** Then he went over to another group and asked the same question and got the same answer.

31 So it got around what David was saying, and when Sha'ul (Saul) heard about it, he sent for him.[45] **32** David told the king, "Don't be discouraged. Your servant will go and fight against this Pelishti."

33 "You can't go against this Pelishti and fight him," Sha'ul told David. "You're still a lad, but he's been a professional warrior since he was young."

34 "Your servant has been working for his father tending the flock," David replied. "Sometimes a lion or a bear has come and taken a sheep from the flock **35** and I would go after it and beat it and rescue the sheep from its mouth. If it went to attack me, then I'd grasp it by the jaw and beat it and kill it. **36** Your servant has killed both a lion and a bear, and that uncircumcised Pelishti will end up just like them, because he's insulted the army of the living God." **37** Then he added, "Yahweh who has saved me from the lion and from the bear, *he* will be the one to save me from that Pelishti."

"Go then, and Yahweh be with you." Sha'ul assented. **38** Then Sha'ul had David dressed in his own battle attire, and then in body armour with a bronze helmet. **39** David strapped his sword over the top and then tried to walk because he hadn't been trained in wearing it. But he told Sha'ul, "I couldn't walk in all that without practice," so he took it all off. **40** Then he picked up his staff, and selected five smooth stones from the riverbed. He placed them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag, and picked up his sling and headed towards the Pelishti champion.

David fronts up to Galyat · Full kingdom

41 Then Galyat (Goliath) came closer and closer to David, with his shield-bearer walking in front of him. **42** When he looked and realised that David was a reddish, good-looking lad, he despised him **43** and asked him, "Are you coming to me with a stick because you think I'm a dog?" Then the Pelishti cursed David by his gods. **44** "Come over here," he told David, "and let me give your flesh to the vultures and wild animals."

45 "You're coming to me with a sword and spear and dagger," David shouted back. "But I'm coming to you in the name of Commander-in-chief Yahweh, the god of Yisrael's (Israel's) army that you've been taunting. **46** Today, Yahweh will help me defeat you and I'll knock you down and cut off your head. What's more, I'll give the Pelishti army corpses to the vultures and wild animals today, then everyone will know that there's a god in Yisrael. **47** Everyone here will learn that Yahweh doesn't save with swords or spears, because he's in charge of the battle and will help us defeat you all."

48 Then as Galyat went closer to meet David, David ran quickly towards him at the battle line. **49** He slipped his hand into his bag and took out a single stone and slung it towards the Pelishti—striking him on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead and he collapsed forwards onto the ground, **50** and so David defeated the Pelishti with a sling and a stone—knocking him down and killing him.[46] Not having a sword with him, **51** David ran and stood over the Pelishti—drawing Galyat's sword out of its sheath to kill him and cut off his head.[47]

When the Pelishtim saw that their powerful champion was dead, they fled **52** and the Israeli warriors started yelling and they chased the Pelishtim into the valley and as far as the gates of Ekron. The dead bodies of the Pelishtim could be seen on the road all the way from Sha'arayim to Gat and Ekron. **53** When the Israelis returned from chasing the Pelishtim, they raided the valuables from their camp. **54** David put Galyat's equipment into his own tent, then he carried his head to Yerushalem (Jerusalem).

Sha'ul asks about David · Full kingdom

55 When Sha'ul (Saul) had seen David going out to meet Galyat (Goliath), he'd asked Avner, the army commander, "Whose son is this lad, Avner?"

"As surely as you live, your majesty," replied Avner, "I don't know."

56 "Find out whose son he is," the king had commanded.

57 Then when David had returned from killing the Pelishti, Avner brought him to stand in front of Sha'ul, and he was

45 RV 17:31 · Note Verses 12–31 aren't included in every ancient Greek translation.

46 RV 17:50 · Cross-ref. 2Sam 21:19.

47 RV 17:51 · Cross-ref. 2Sam 21:19.

holding Galyat's head. 58 "Whose son are you, lad?" Sha'ul asked.

"I'm the son of your servant Yishay (Jesse), who lives in Beyt-Lehem (Bethlehem)," replied David.

David's friendship with Yonatan · Full kingdom

18:1 After David had finished speaking to the king, him and Yonatan (Jonathan) became close friends, in fact Yonatan really loved him. **2** From that day, Sha'ul (Saul) kept David with him, and wouldn't allow him to return home. **3** Then Yonatan and David made an agreement together, because Yonatan loved him as much as he loved himself. **4** Yonatan took off the cloak that he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his armour, his sword and bow, and even his belt. **5** David went on missions wherever Sha'ul sent him and always succeeded. Sha'ul put him in charge of the warriors, and that pleased all the people, as well as Sha'ul's servants.

Sha'ul becomes envious of David · Full kingdom

6 When they'd all come back after killing the Pelishti, the women from the Israeli cities had come out to meet King Sha'ul (Saul) with singing and dancing—playing tambourines and other instruments with great happiness.
7 However, as they danced they sang,

"Sha'ul has killed his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands."[48]

8 Sha'ul found that offensive and it made him very angry. "They've attributed tens of thousands to David," he complained, "but only thousands to me. Next thing he'll end up as king." **9** So from that day onwards, Sha'ul remained wary of David and kept an eye on him.

10 Then the next day, an evil spirit from God rushed on Sha'ul and even in the middle of the house he started prophesying. As David was playing near him (as he did every day), Sha'ul was holding a spear **11** and he suddenly hurled it, saying, "I'll pin that David to the wall." But twice when he did that, David managed to elude him.

12 So Sha'ul ended up afraid of David because Yahweh was with him, but was no longer with the king. **13** Then Sha'ul sent him out of the room and appointed him as the commander of a thousand warriors, so he came and went in front of the people.[49] **14** Yahweh was with David and he was succeeding in everything he did. **15** Sha'ul knew about his successes and couldn't stand looking at him, **16** but all the people of Yisrael (Israel) and Yehudah (Judah) loved David because they observed his comings and goings.

David wins Mikal as his wife · Full kingdom

17 One day Sha'ul (Saul) told David, "Look, here's my oldest daughter Merav—I'll give her to you for a wife. The only condition is that you become a powerful warrior for me and fight Yahweh's battles." (Sha'ul had said to himself, "I don't need to hurt him physically—I'll let the Pelishtim do that for me.") **18** "Who am I," David asked, "and who are my relatives in my father's clan in Yisrael (Israel), that I should become the king's son-in-law?"

19 However, when it was the time for Sha'ul to give his daughter Merav to David, she was given to Adriel the Mehola to marry.

20 Now Sha'ul's other daughter Mikal loved David, and when they told the king, he was pleased about it, **21** saying to himself, "I'll give her to him so she can become a trap for him so the Pelishtim could be the ones to attack him." So he said a second time, "You'll become a son-in-law of mine today." **22** Then Sha'ul commanded his servants, "Tell David privately, 'Listen, the king is pleased with you, and all of us his servants love you. So now we think that you should become the king's son-in-law.' "

23 So they told David privately, but he responded, "Something that significant isn't likely to happen. I'm hard up and without much honour."

24 When Sha'ul's servants told him what David had said, **25** he replied, "Pass this onto David, 'The king doesn't want an expensive bride price—only a hundred Pelishti foreskins taken from the king's enemies.' " But Sha'ul was still wanting the Pelishtim to be the ones to kill David. **26** Now when David heard this from the servants, he decided that he could indeed marry the king's daughter within the time period that had been given, **27** so he and his men got ready and went and killed *two* hundred Pelishti men. He brought them to the king and had them counted to fulfill the pledge, and so Sha'ul had to give his daughter Mikal to become his wife.

28 But when Sha'ul realised that Yahweh was helping David, and that his daughter loved him, **29** he became more afraid of David, so he remained hostile to David from then on.

30 Whenever the Pelishti commanders decided to attack, David was more successful than any other of Sha'ul's commanders, so he became very famous.

Sha'ul persecutes David · Full kingdom

19:1 Then Sha'ul (Saul) urged his son Yonatan (Jonathan) and all his servants to kill David, but Yonatan really liked David **2** and told him, "My father Sha'ul wants to get rid of you, so please watch out in the morning. Find a hiding place and stay there. **3** And what I'll do, I'll go out and stand by my father in the countryside where you're hiding, and I'll bring you into the conversation to see what he'll say about you."

4 So the next morning, Yonatan spoke well of David to his father Sha'ul, saying, "Don't let the king sin against his servant, against David, because he hasn't sinned against you,

48 RV 18:7 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 21:11; 29:5.

49 RV 18:13 · Note It's not entirely clear what the implications of this coming and going were (and similarly at the end of v16). It could easily refer to him returning successfully from military excursions.

Readers' Version

and actually, he's been a big help to you. 5 He took his life into his hands when he fought against Galyat (Goliath), and Yahweh used it to save all Yisrael (Israel). So why would you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death for no reason."

6 Sha'ul listened to Yonatan, then he promised, "As surely as Yahweh lives, he won't be put to death." 7 Afterwards, Yonatan called David and told him what had been said. Then he brought David back to work for Sha'ul and things carried on as before.

8 Then war broke out again, and David went out and battled against the Pelishtim and defeated them so badly that they fled away from him.

9 One day as Sha'ul was sitting in his house, an evil spirit from Yahweh came on him. He had his spear in his hand, and David was playing the harp. 10 Sha'ul tried to hit David with the spear, but David eluded him and the spear went into the wall. Then David slipped away and fled that night.

11 Sha'ul sent messengers to watch David's house to kill him in the morning,[50] but his wife Mikal told him, "If you don't do something to save your life tonight, you'll be dead by tomorrow." 12 So Mikal lowered David out through the window, and he was able to slip out and take off. 13 Then she took a household idol and put it in the bed, putting a goats' hair quilt where the head should be and covering it with the bed-clothes. 14 When Sha'ul sent messengers to arrest David, she told them, "He's sick." 15 Sha'ul sent the messengers back, telling them, "Bring him up to me bed and all so I can kill him." 16 But when the messengers returned, look, it was a household idol in the bed with a goats' hair quilt as its head. 17 Sha'ul had Mikal brought in and questioned, "Why did you deceive me like that and sent my enemy off, so that he slipped away?"

"He told me that he'd kill me," Mikal answered Sha'ul, "if I didn't help him escape."

18 After David had slipped away, he went to Shmuel (Samuel) in Ramah and told him everything that Sha'ul had done to him, then the two of them went and stayed in Navit. 19 But Sha'ul was told that David was in Navit near Ramah, 20 so he sent messengers to capture David. When they saw a group of prophets prophesying and Shmuel standing as head over them, God's spirit came onto Sha'ul's messengers and they also prophesied. 21 They told Sha'ul and he sent more messengers and they also prophesied. He sent messengers a third time, and they started prophesying as well. 22 Finally Sha'ul himself headed towards Ramah and got as far as the large water cistern in Seku. He asked around about Shmuel and David, and was told that they were in Navit near Ramah. 23 So he went to Navit, and God's spirit came on him as well. As he walked, he kept prophesying until he entered Navit. 24 He took off his outer clothes and prophesied in front of Shmuel. He lay undressed all that day and all night, so that's why people ask, "Is Sha'ul a prophet as well?"[51]

Yonatan helps David · Full kingdom

20:1 Then David fled from Navit near Ramah and went to Yonatan (Jonathan) and asked, "What have I done? What did I do wrong? What sin has made your father so angry that he wants to take my life?"

2 "Far from it," Yonatan responded. "You won't die. Listen, my father doesn't do anything, big or small, without telling me. So why would my father hide this from me if it was his plan? No, you're wrong."

3 "For sure, your father knows that you've taken a liking to me," said David, "and he would have decided not to tell you so you wouldn't be upset." Then David made an oath again, "Indeed, as Yahweh is alive, and as your soul is alive, death is definitely only a step away from me."

4 "I'll do anything for you—whatever you say," Yonatan confirmed.

5 "Listen, the new moon celebration is tomorrow,[52] and I'll definitely be expected to sit with the king to eat," David told him. "But you should let me go, and I'll hide myself in the countryside until the third evening. 6 If your father misses me, then tell him, 'David begged me to let him go to his home in Beyt-Lehem (Bethlehem), to join his clan for their yearly sacrifice.' 7 If your father says, 'That's fine,' then your servant can relax. But if he gets really angry, you'll know that he's planning evil. 8 If that's the case, it'll be up to you to do what's right with your servant in terms of our agreement before Yahweh. If I've been disloyal to the king, kill me yourself—no need to drag me to him.

9 "Don't even think of it," Yonatan responded. "If I find out that my father has decided to harm you, I'll certainly tell you."

10 "If your father does have a cruel plan, who'll tell me?" David asked Yonatan.

11 "Come with me out to the countryside." Yonatan replied. So they went out to the countryside together 12 and he promised David, "By Yahweh the god of Yisrael (Israel), I will definitely sound out my father around this time tomorrow, or soon after. If it looks good for you, then I'll certainly send a message to let you know. 13 But if he's planning evil for you, may Yahweh punish me similarly or even worse if I don't inform you, and send you away so you can leave in peace. And may Yahweh be with you just like he used to be with my father. 14 But as long as I'm still alive, please keep our agreement of faithfulness before Yahweh so I won't die. 15 Don't ever terminate that agreement of faithfulness to-

50 **RV 19:11 · Cross-ref.** Psa 59 header.

51 **RV 19:24 · Cross-ref.** 1Sam 10:11-12.

52 **RV 20:5 · Cross-ref.** Num 28:11.

Readers' Version

wards my family,[53] even when Yahweh destroys your enemies wherever they are. **16** So Yonatan made a multi-generational agreement with David, adding, "And may Yahweh punish David's enemies."

17 Then Yonatan got David to promise again because he loved him as much as he loved his own life, **18** and he told him, "The new moon celebration is tomorrow, and you'll be missed because your seat will be empty. **19** The following day, go to the place where you hid before and stay by the big rock. **20** I'll shoot three arrows to the side of it, as if trying to hit a target. **21** Then I'll send my boy to find the arrows. If I tell him that they're on my side, then just as Yahweh lives it'll be safe for you to come out. **22** But if I tell the boy that they're on the far side, go because Yahweh is sending you away. **23** As for our pact, Yahweh will watch over us and our descendants."

24 So David hid himself in the countryside, and at the new moon celebrations, the king sat down to eat— **25** sitting at his usual seat by the wall. Yonatan sat opposite, and Avner sat beside Sha'ul (Saul). No one was sitting in David's seat **26** but Sha'ul didn't say anything that day, thinking, "Something must have happened that made him ceremonially unclean." **27** However, the next day of the celebration when David was still missing, Sha'ul asked his son Yonatan, "Why didn't Yishay's (Jesse's) son come to the meal yesterday or today?"

28 "David begged me to let him go to Beyt-Lehem (Bethlehem)," Yonatan answered. **29** "He requested, 'Please release me because our clan's sacrifice will be in the city, and my brother has told me to be there. So now, if I've found favour in your eyes, please let me slip away and go to see my brothers.' That's why he hasn't come to the king's table."

30 Sha'ul was furious at Yonatan and yelled at him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do you think that I don't know that you're taking the side of Yishay's son? It's to your detriment and to the shame of your mother's nakedness, **31** because as long as that son of Yishay stays alive on this earth, you and your kingdom will never be established. Now, send men and arrest him, because he's on his way to the grave!"

32 "Why should he be put to death?" Yonatan retorted. "What wrong has he done?"

33 Then Sha'ul hurled his spear at him to kill him, and Yonatan knew then that his father had already determined to kill David. **34** Yonatan angrily got up from the table. He didn't eat any food that second day of the celebration—he was upset about David because his father had dishonoured him.[54] **35** So it was that the following morning, Yonatan went out to the countryside at the time agreed with David, taking a small boy with him. **36** "Run ahead—find the arrows that I'm about to shoot," he told his boy. The boy ran and he shot the arrow to go over his head. **37** The boy went to where the arrow was, but Yonatan called out, "Isn't the arrow further past you?" **38** Then he added, "Hurry up! Don't mess around." So the boy picked up the arrow and brought it back to his master, **39** but the boy didn't realise what had just happened—only Yonatan and David knew. **40** Then Yonatan gave his equipment to the boy and sent him back to the city.

41 When the boy was gone, David came up from the side and dropped onto his knees, bowing three times with his face to the ground. Then they greeted each other with a kiss and cried together, although David cried the most. **42** Then Yonatan told David, "Go in peace, because us two have made a pact together in Yahweh's name, agreeing, 'Yahweh will watch between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.' " Then David set off and Yonatan went back to the city.

David stays at Nov · Full kingdom

21:1 David went to the priest Ahimelek at Nov, but Ahimelek trembled when he saw David and asked him, "Why are you here by yourself? How come you don't have a companion?"[55]

2 "The king sent me on an errand," David replied, "but he told me not to tell anyone about the matter that he sent me on. Plus I've told my young men where to meet me. **3** Now, what food do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread or whatever you can find."

4 "There is no ordinary bread on hand," the priest answered. "But there is the sacred bread, if only the young men have kept themselves from women."

5 "There's definitely been no women near us for three days," David told the priest. "That's how I always do missions. The men[56] have been pure, even though it was a common journey, and today even more so."

6 So the priest gave him the sacred bread, because there was no other bread there other than the previous day's bread of the presence which had been removed from in front of Yahweh to be replaced by fresh bread.[57]

7 Now it so happened that one of Sha'ul's (Saul's) servants was there that day presenting himself to Yahweh. He was Doeg the Edomi, a leader of Sha'ul's herdsmen.

8 David asked Ahimelek, "Do you have any spear or sword

53 RV 20:15 · Cross-ref. 2Sam 9:1.

54 RV 20:34 · Note It's not entirely clear who this 'him' was (as Sha'ul had seriously dishonoured Yonatan as well), so we've left it ambiguous (although David was certainly the last name mentioned).

55 RV 21:1-6 · Cross-ref. Mat 12:3-4; Mrk 2:25-26; Luk 6:3.

56 RV 21:5 · Note The Hebrew says 'the men's vessels' (or 'containers'). It's not culturally clear if that referred to their 'bodies' (as this translation implies) or to something they carried.

57 RV 21:6 · Cross-ref. Lev 24:5-9.

Readers' Version

here? I didn't have time to grab my sword or my weapons when I left, because the king's matter was urgent."

9 "I've only got Galyat's (Goliath's) sword," replied the priest. "From the Pelishti who you killed in the Elah valley.[58] Look, it's wrapped in the cloak behind the sacred apron. If you want to take it for yourself, take it, because there's no other sword around here."

"Yes, there's no other sword like it," said David. "Get it for me."

David flees to Gat · Full kingdom

10 Then David left and continued moving to distance himself from Sha'ul (Saul), and he went to King Akish of Gat. **11** But Akish's servants complained to him, "Isn't that David who'll become king of Yisrael (Israel)? Isn't he the one they sing about when they dance, chanting, 'Sha'ul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?' "[59]

12 David listened to those words without any reaction because he was very afraid of what King Akish might do,[60] **13** so he changed his behaviour when he was with them and pretended to be insane.[61] He scratched on wooden doors and let his saliva dribble down his beard. **14** Then King Akish complained to his servants, "Look, that man's insane. Why did you all bring him to me? **15** Don't I already have enough madmen around here—why add another? Must that man come into my house?"

David moves around but gains followers · Full kingdom

22:1 So David left there and slipped away to the cave at Adulam.[62] When his brothers and other relatives found out, they went and joined him there. **2** Over time, any man who was in trouble, or in debt, or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader—some four hundred men in all.

3 From there, David went to Mitspah in Moav (Moab), and he asked the king of Moav, "Please let my parents stay here in the palace with you until I find out what God will do for me." **4** So he took them to the king where they stayed with him the entire time that David lived in the fortress.

5 Then the prophet Gad told David, "Don't stay in the fortress. Leave it and come back to Yehudah's (Judah's) region." So David left and went to the Heret forest in Yehudah.

The slaughter of the priests · Full kingdom

6 One day, Sha'ul (Saul) was sitting holding his spear underneath the tamarisk tree on a hill near Giveah with all his servants stationed around him, when he heard where David and his men were, **7** and he accused his servants, "Listen now, you Benyamites. Will Yishay's (Jesse's) son also[63] give fields and vineyards to all of you? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? **8** Yes, all of you have conspired against me. Not one of you informed me when my own son made a pact with that son of Yishay. And none of you took my side or even informed me that my son has encouraged my servant to lie in ambush against me as he is today!"

9 Now Doeg the Edomi was stationed there with Sha'ul's servants, and he spoke up, "I saw Yishay's son go to Nov and talk with Ahimelek the priest,[64] **10** and the priest asked Yahweh for directions for him, and gave him food and Galyat's (Goliath's) sword."

11 Then the king summoned Ahituv's son Ahimelek and all his relatives who were priests to Nov, and they all came to the king. **12** "Listen now, son of Ahituv," said Sha'ul.

"Go ahead my master," answered Ahimelek.

13 "Why have you all conspired against me?" asked Sha'ul. "You gave bread to Yishay's son, and a sword, and you asked guidance from God for him, so now he's risen up against me—lying in ambush this very day?"

14 "Isn't David one of your most faithful servants?" Ahimelek answered the king. "He's the king's son-in-law and commander over your guards, and isn't he honoured in your house? **15** Did I begin to inquire for him from God today? Far be it from me! Don't let the king accuse his servant or any of my father's household, because your servant doesn't know about any of this—nothing at all."

16 "For certain, Ahimelek," the king declared. "you and all your father's household will certainly die for that!" **17** Then the king commanded his messengers who were stationed beside him, "Turn around and put Yahweh's priests to death because they've taken David's side. And because they knew he was fleeing, but they didn't inform me." But the king's servants weren't willing to attack Yahweh's priests. **18** So the king commanded Doeg the Edomi, "You turn around and attack the priests." So Doeg turned and he himself attacked the priests. He killed eighty-five men that day who wore sacred linen aprons. **19** Also at Nov (the city of priests) he killed men and women with his sword, children and infants, cattle, donkeys, and sheep.

20 But one of Ahimelek's sons was able to slip away. His name was Evyatar and he fled to join David, **21** and informed him that Sha'ul (Saul) had commanded Doeg to kill Yahweh's priests. **22** "I knew on that day," David responded, "when

58 RV 21:9 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 17:51.

59 RV 21:11 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 18:7; 29:5.

60 RV 21:12 · Cross-ref. Psa 56 header.

61 RV 21:13 · Cross-ref. Psa 34 header.

62 RV 22:1 · Cross-ref. Psa 57 header; Psa 142 header.

63 RV 22:7 · Note See note on 'גַּם' ('gam') at https://www.sil.org/resources/publications/entry/99313.

64 RV 22:9-10 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 21:7-9; Psa 52 header.

Readers' Version

Doeg the Edomi was there, that he would probably tell Sha'ul. It's my fault that your father and all his family were murdered. **23** Stick with me—don't be afraid, because the one who wants to kill me would kill you as well. You'll be safe with me."

David rescues Ke'ilah · Full kingdom

23:1 Some time later, David was told, "Listen, the Pelishtim are fighting against the city of Ke'ilah and they are stealing grain from the threshing floors," **2** so he asked Yahweh, "Should I go and attack those Pelishtim?"

"Go and attack the Pelishtim and save Ke'ilah," Yahweh responded.

3 But David's men warned him, "Listen, we're afraid here in Yehudah (Judah), and we'd be even more afraid if we went to Ke'ilah against the Pelishtim' battle lines." **4** So David double-checked with Yahweh who answered, "Get ready and go to Ke'ilah, because I'm about to give you victory over the Pelishtim." **5** Then David and his men went to Ke'ilah and battled against the Pelishtim—thoroughly defeating them and taking their livestock, thus saving the inhabitants of Ke'ilah.

6 Now when Ahimelek's son Evyatar had fled to David at Ke'ilah, he'd brought a sacred apron with him.

7 Sha'ul (Saul) was told that David had gone to Ke'ilah, so he said, "Ah, God has deserted him and given him to me because he's shut himself in by going into a walled city with doors that can be barred shut." **8** So Sha'ul initiated preparations to go to Ke'ilah to entrap David and his men.

9 But David discovered that Sha'ul was planning to destroy him, so he summoned Evyatar the priest, "Bring the sacred apron here." **10** Then David prayed, "Yahweh, God of Yisrael (Israel), your servant has heard that Sha'ul is intending to come to Ke'ilah—to destroy the city because of me. **11** Will Sha'ul come here, just as your servant has heard? Will the masters of Ke'ilah turn me over to him? Yahweh, God of Yisrael, please tell your servant."

"Yes, he will go there," Yahweh answered.

12 "And will the masters of Ke'ilah hand me and my men over to Sha'ul?" David asked again.

And Yahweh said, "They will deliver up."

13 So David and his men (about 600 of them), left Ke'ilah and moved around from place to place. When Sha'ul was told that David had slipped away from Ke'ilah, he didn't continue with his plans.

Sha'ul pursues David · Full kingdom

14 David stayed in various fortresses in the wilderness, and sometimes he stayed in the hill country in the Zif wilderness. Sha'ul (Saul) kept searching for them, but God didn't allow him to capture them. **15** Once David was staying in the Zif wilderness and he saw that Sha'ul had arrived there to try to kill him. **16** Then Sha'ul's son Yonatan (Jonathan) went to David at Horesh and encouraged him to keep trusting God, **17** saying, "Don't be afraid, because my father Sha'ul won't capture you. As for you, you'll reign over Yisrael (Israel), and I'll be your second in command. Even my father knows that." **18** Again, the two of them made an agreement before Yahweh.[65] Then David stayed at Horesh and Yonatan returned home.

19 Some men from Zif went to Sha'ul at Giveah, saying, "We're pretty sure that David's hiding himself among us in the fortresses in Horesh, on the Hakilah hill south of Yeshimon.[66] **20** So now, your majesty, come over whenever you want, and we'll make sure he's handed over to you."

21 "May you all be blessed by Yahweh," Sha'ul responded, "because you've had compassion on me. **22** Please go back and double-check and find out who's seen him there. Learn more and look at the place yourselves, because I've been told that he's very crafty. **23** Find out all the other places where he hides himself. Return to me with definite information, then I'll go with you all, and if he's there in that region, then I'll search for him among the population of Yehudah (Judah)."

24 So they left and returned to Zif ahead of Sha'ul. At that time, David and his men were in the Maeon wilderness south of Yeshimon **25** when Sha'ul and his men came to search for them. When David was told, he went further south to a rocky hill therein that wilderness, but Sha'ul also heard that and followed them. **26** At one point, Sha'ul was on one side of a hill, and David and his men were on the other side. David was hurrying to get away from Sha'ul, but Sha'ul and his men were trying to surround David and his men to capture them. **27** Just then, a messenger arrived for Sha'ul, saying, "Come quickly because the Pelishtim have raided our region." **28** So Sha'ul had to give up chasing David and went to repel the Pelishtim. **29** David also left that area and stayed in the fortresses around Eyn-Gedi.

David refuses to kill Sha'ul · Full kingdom

24:1 After Sha'ul (Saul) returned from repelling the Pelishtim, they told him that David was now in the Eyn-Gedi wilderness. **2** So Sha'ul chose three thousand Israeli warriors and went searching for David and his men at Wild Goats Rocks. **3** On the way, as they reached the sheep yards, Sha'ul went into a cave to relieve himself, but David and his men were hiding there further inside the cave.[67] **4** David's men whispered to him, "Wow, today what Yahweh told you is coming true when he said, 'Listen, I'm about to give victory over your enemy, and you will do to him whatever you think is right.' " Then David sneaked up and quietly cut a piece off the edge of Sha'ul's robe. **5** Afterwards however, David felt bad because he'd cut a piece off Sha'ul's clothes **6** and he said to his men, "By Yahweh, I

65 RV 23:18 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 18:3.

66 RV 23:19 · Cross-ref. Psa 54 header.

67 RV 24:3 · Cross-ref. Psa 57 header; Psa 142 header.

shouldn't have done that to my master—to Yahweh's anointed king—to do him harm because he's the one Yahweh anointed."[68] **7** He restrained his men with a few quiet words and wouldn't allow them to attack Sha'ul.

Then Sha'ul left the cave and headed down the path. **8** After waiting a few moment, David went out of the cave and called out behind Sha'ul, "My master the king." When Sha'ul turned and looked behind him, David bowed **9** and said, "Why do you listen to people when they say that I'm wanting to harm you? **10** Look, you can see for yourself that Yahweh gave me the opportunity to harm you today in the cave, and some of my men wanted me to kill you, but I showed you compassion and told them that I wouldn't do harm to my master, because he's Yahweh's chosen king. **11** Your majesty, look of this piece of your robe that I'm holding, because when I cut it off, I didn't kill you. So now you can see for yourself that I have no evil plans, and I haven't do you any wrong, even though you're ambushing me so you can kill me. **12** May Yahweh judge between you and me because I'll let Yahweh repay you for any harm against me—it won't be me who works against you. **13** As the ancient proverb says, 'Evil things are done by evil people.' But it won't be me who harms you. **14** Who has Yisrael's (Israel's) king come to find? Who are you chasing after? A dead dog? A flea?[69] **15** May Yahweh take his judgement seat and judge between me and you, and may he see my case and find me innocent and save me from you."

16 When David finished saying that to Sha'ul, Sha'ul called back, "Is that your voice, my son David?" Then he cried loudly **17** and told David, "You're more righteous than I am, because you were good to me even when I did evil things to you. **18** You've stated that you've treated me well—how Yahweh gave you the advantage over me, yet you didn't kill me. **19** Now if a man finds his enemy unprepared, does he just send him off happily? Well, may Yahweh reward you for your mercy towards me today. **20** Now listen, I know for certain that you're going to become king and that the kingdom of Yisrael will prosper under your leadership. **21** Now promise me by Yahweh that you won't destroy my name from my family line by killing my descendants." **22** David promised that to Sha'ul, then Sha'ul went back home and David and his men returned to their fortress.

David, Naval, and Abigil · Full kingdom

25:1 Later on, Shmuel (Samuel) died and all the Israelis gathered and mourned for him, then they buried him at his house in Ramah.

Then David left and went to the Paran wilderness. **2** Now there was a man in Maeon whose business was in Karmel. He owned three thousand sheep and one thousand goats, and was busy shearing his sheep at Karmel. **3** The man's name was Naval, and his wife was Avigayil. The wife was wise and very good-looking, whereas the man (who was a Kalevi) was harsh and cruel.

4 While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Naval was shearing his sheep, **5** so he told ten young men, "Go to Naval at Karmel and greet him in my name. **6** Then tell him, 'Make you live long. Peace to you and your household and everything that belongs to you. **7** Now I've heard those shearers are working for you, and your shepherds have been living with us. We haven't harmed them or taken anything of theirs while they've been in Karmel. **8** Ask your servants and they'll confirm this. May these young men enjoy your favour because harvesting the wool is a prosperous time, so I request a gift for your servants and for your 'son', David.' "

9 So David's men went and passed all that onto Naval, and then waited for his response. **10** But Naval answered them, "Why should I care about David? Yishay's (Jesse's) son isn't anyone important. There's lot of servants these days who are on the run from their masters. **11** This bread and water, and the meat that I've butchered, is for my shearers. Why should I give it to men when I don't even know where they're from?"

12 David's men left and returned to inform him what Naval had been said. **13** Then David told his men, "Strap on your swords." So David took around four hundred men, leaving around two hundred with their gear.

14 Meanwhile, Naval's wife Avigayil had been informed by a servant, "Listen, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he yelled at them. **15** Their men had been very good to us—we were never harmed or had anything go missing when we were in the countryside. **16** They protected us both day and night for the whole time that we were tending the sheep. **17** So now you should think about it and decide what you can do, because no doubt disaster is about to hit our master and all his household. He's a terrible man who listens to no one."

18 So Avigayil quickly collected two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five butchered sheep, a large basket of roasted grain, a hundred bunches of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs. She loaded it all on donkeys **19** and told her servants, "Go ahead with the donkeys. I'll come along behind you all." But she didn't say a word to her husband Naval.

20 As she rode down a hill and into the ravine, suddenly she encountered David and his men coming down to meet her. **21** David had told them, "Well it was certainly a waste of time looking after that fellow in the wilderness, and taking such care not to take anything of his. Then all he did was to return insults for our good behaviour. **22** May God preserve my enemies, if I don't eliminate all of the older and young men

68 RV 24:6 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 26:11.

69 RV 24:14 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 26:20.

in his household before the morning.

23 When Avigayil saw David, she quickly dismounted from the donkey and fell to her knees in front of David and bowed her face to the ground. 24 She clutched his feet and said, "My master, let the guilt be on me myself. Please let your female servant explain to you—please listen to what your female servant has to say. 25 My master, please don't remain angry at that worthless man, Naval. His name means 'fool' and so he is. He's a senseless man, but my master, your female servant didn't see the young men you sent. 26 And now, my master, as Yahweh lives and as your spirit lives, it's Yahweh who's prevented you from spilling blood and taking his punishment into your own hands. And now may your enemies and anyone who makes plans against my master be like Naval. 27 Now let this gift that your servant has brought to my master be given to the young men who serve my master. 28 Please forgive your female servant for being forward because Yahweh will certain advance my master's reputation. My master is fighting Yahweh's battles and all your life, you haven't broken the law. 29 Even if someone decides to chase you and try to kill you my master, your god Yahweh will keep you wrapped in his bundle of the living, whereas your enemies will be slung away like stones from a sling. 30 If Yahweh does all the good things he's promised for my master, then in time you'll become Yisrael's (Israel's) ruler. 31 It would be good not to have someone's unnecessary death as an obstacle for you or to be seen as my master just saving his own skin. Then Yahweh will bless my master, and you will appreciate your female servant."

32 "May Yisrael's god Yahweh be blessed," David responded. "The one who sent you to meet me today. 33 And blessed be your discernment and blessed be you yourself, because you've prevented me from shedding blood today and from taking my own revenge. 34 Yes indeed, as Yahweh lives, Yisrael's god prevented me from harming you. If you hadn't hurried here to meet me, certainly neither Naval nor any of his older or young men would have survived to see the morning light. 35 Then David accepted the gifts that she had brought for him, and said, "Go back to your house in peace. See, I've listened to what you said and granted your request."

36 When Avigayil got home to Naval, wow, he had put on a celebration at his house with a feast fit for a king. He was feeling very contented and was quite drunk, so she didn't tell him anything at all until it was light in the morning. 37 And so it was in the morning, when Naval's wine had worn off, his wife told him what she'd done. In his rage, he had a stroke and became totally paralysed 38 for about then days. Then Yahweh struck Naval and he died.

39 When David heard that Naval had died, he said, "Blessed be Yahweh, who has judged the case of Naval's insult and has prevented his servant from doing the wrong thing. And Yahweh has repaid Naval for his own evil."

Then David sent messengers to Avigayil about taking her as a wife. 40 His servants went to her at Karmel and told her, "David sent us to take you back to become his wife."

41 She knelt down with her face to the ground and replied, "See, your female servant is ready for washing the feet of my master's servants like a slave woman." 42 Then Avigayil and five of her servant girls quickly got ready, and she mounted the donkey. She followed the messengers to where David was and became a wife for him.

43 David had also married Ahinoam from Yizre'el (Jezreel), so both of them became his wives. 44 (Meanwhile Sha'ul (Saul) had given his daughter, David' wife Mikal, to Palti, Layish's son from Galim.)[70]

David spares Sha'ul again · Full kingdom

26:1 One time some Zifim went to Sha'ul (Saul) at Giveah and told him, "Isn't David hiding himself on the Hakilah hill opposite Yeshimon?"[71] 2 So Sha'ul got ready with three thousand chosen Israeli warriors and went to the Zif wilderness to search for David. 3 They camped at Hakilah hill (opposite Yeshimon) by the path, but David stayed in the wilderness when he saw the Sha'ul was there trying to get him. 4 (He'd sent some spies and knew that Sha'ul had definitely arrived.) 5 That night, David moved out and got to the place where Sha'ul had camped. He could see where Sha'ul was sleeping, along with Ner's son Avner, his army commander. Sha'ul was asleep in the secure centre with his warriors all around him.

6 David spoke to Ahimelek (the Hiti) and to Avishay (son of Yoav's (Joab's) brother Tseruyah) asking, "Who'll go into the camp with me to Sha'ul?"

Avishay answered, "I will. I'll go with you."

7 So that night David and Avishay crept into the camp. Sha'ul was asleep there in the centre with his spear stuck into the ground near his head, and Avner and others were lying in a circle around him. 8 Avishay whispered to David, "Today God has arranged for you to defeat your enemy. So please let me pierce him now with the spear through him and into the ground. Only one strike will do it—I won't have to strike him a second time.

9 "Don't kill him," David responded, "because who can attack Yahweh's anointed king and be considered innocent?" 10 As Yahweh lives, he will certainly strike him, or else his time will come and he'll die, or maybe he'll go into battle and be swept away. 11 May Yahweh prevent me from harming Yahweh's anointed one.[72] Just grab the spear that's by his head, and the jug of water, then we can get out of here." 12 So David took the spear and water jug that were near

70 RV 25:44 · Cross-ref. 2Sam 3:14-16.

71 RV 26:1 · Cross-ref. Psa 54 header.

72 RV 26:11 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 24:6.

Sha'ul's head and then got out of there. No one saw them, and no one woke up or realised, because Yahweh had caused them all to fall into a deep sleep.

13 Then David crossed the valley and stood on the top of the opposite hill—quite a distance away **14** and called out to Avner and the camp, "Won't you answer, Avner?"

"Who are you that's shouting to the king?" Avner answered.

15 "Aren't you a warrior?" David called out. "And who in Yisrael (Israel) is as good as you? But why didn't you watch over your master the king? Because one of the people came to destroy the king your master. **16** Your performance wasn't good. As Yahweh lives, all of you who were supposed to be watching over your master, over Yahweh's anointed one, deserve to be executed. Look around, where's the king's spear and water jug that were by his head?"

17 Then Sha'ul recognised David's voice and called back, "Is that your voice, my son David?"

"Yes, it is my voice, my master the king." David replied. **18** Then he asked, "Why is my master chasing his servant? What have I done? What wrong am I guilty of? **19** Now please listen, my master the king, to your servant's words. If it's Yahweh who's incited you against me, may he accept an offering, but if it's people, may they be cursed in front of Yahweh because they've driven me away from enjoying Yahweh's inheritance for me,[73] saying, 'Go away and serve other gods.' **20** So now, don't let me die far from Yahweh's presence. It seems that Yisrael's king has come all this way to chase a flea, just like someone chases a wild bird in the hills."

21 Sha'ul responded, "Yes, I've sinned. Go home, my son David. I won't wrong you again, because you spared my life today. Yes, I've acted foolishly and been following the wrong path."

22 "Look, here's your spear." David called back. "Get one of your young men to come across and get it. **23** May Yahweh repay each person for their obedience and faithfulness. Yahweh put you in a vulnerable position today, but I wasn't willing to hurt Yahweh's anointed king. **24** Just as I honoured your life today, so to may Yahweh honour my life and rescue me from all my difficulties.

25 "May you be blessed, my son David," Sha'ul told David. "You certainly have both ability and the skill to use it."

Then David went on his way and Sha'ul went back home.

David among the Pelishtim · Full kingdom

27:1 But David thought to himself, "One of these days, I'm going to be caught off-guard by Sha'ul's (Saul's) actions. There's no future for me here, so I definitely need to slip away to the Pelishtim region. Then hopefully Sha'ul will give up looking for me again across all Yisrael (Israel), and I'll slip be able to stay under his radar." **2** So he left Yisrael and crossed over with his six hundred men to Gat and King Akish (Maeok's son). **3** Then David and his men settled with Akish in Gat. David had his two wives Ahinoam (from Yizre'el (Jezreel)) and Avigayil (widow of Naval from Karmel) with him. **4** When Sha'ul was told that David had fled to Gat, he stopped searching for him.

5 One day, David asked Akish, "If I've found favour in your eyes, ask them to give me a place in one of the cities in the countryside so I can live there. There's no need for us to bludge on you here in the royal city." **6** So Akish gave Tsiklag to David that day, and as a result, it still belongs to Yehudah's (Judah's) kings until today.

7 David ended up living in the Pelishti countryside for around sixteen months, **8** and during that time, he would take his men to raid the Geshurim, the Gizrim, and the Amalekim. They had lived in that region from long before—from Shur all the way to Mitsrayim (Egypt). **9** When David attacked a place, he would take the sheep and cattle, donkeys and camels, and clothes, but he didn't leave anyone alive. Then he'd return home and visit Akish. **10** The king would ask him, "Which place did you raid today?"

David would tell him, "In southern Yehudah," or "South of the Yerahme'elim," or "In the southern Keyni region". **11** David never allowed any man or woman to live to be able to go back to Gat and report on what he'd really been doing. That was how he handled things for the entire time that he lived in the Pelishti countryside. **12** But King Akish was trusting David, thinking, "He'll definitely be hated now by his people in Yisrael (Israel), so he'll be forced to remain here as my servant."

Sha'ul consults a medium · Full kingdom

28:1 Some time later, the Pelishtim gathered their forces getting ready to battle against Yisrael (Israel), and King Akish complimented David, "We'll definitely want you and your men to join with our forces."

2 "Sounds good," David replied, "because you'll be able to see for yourself what your servant can do."

"I'll appoint as my permanent bodyguard," Akish told him.

3 By now, Shmuel (Samuel) was long dead and all Yisrael had mourned for him and had buried him in his town of Ramah,[74] and Sha'ul (Saul) had had expelled all the mediums from the country, along with those who contacted the spirits.

4 Then the Pelishtim went to Shunem and camped there. Meanwhile Sha'ul gathered all Yisrael's warriors and they camped at Gilboa, **5** but when he saw the Pelishti camp, he was afraid and trembled inside. **6** He asked Yahweh for direction, but Yahweh didn't answer him either through a dream,

73 RV 26:19 · Note This is possibly referring to David not being able to enjoy his piece of land, but we haven't said that in the translation because it's not certain. (It could be referring to having a peaceful or prosperous life, for example.)

74 RV 28:3 · Cross-ref. 1Sam 25:1.

Readers' Version

nor by use of the sacred pouch,[75] nor through any prophet.
7 Then Sha'ul instructed his servants, "Find a woman for me who talks to the spirits of dead people, so I can go to her and ask her something."

"Sure," his servants told him, "there's a woman in Eyn-Dor who can do that."

8 So Sha'ul put on different clothes to disguise himself, and went off in the night with two of his men. They went to the woman and he asked, "Please divine for me with a spirit of the dead and bring up the person that I tell you."

9 "Listen," said the woman, "surely you're aware of what Sha'ul has done—he's expelled anyone out of the country brings back the dead or converses with the spirits. So why are you trying to trap me? Are you trying to get me killed?"

10 Sha'ul promised her in front of Yahweh, "As Yahweh lives, you won't be punished for doing this."

11 "Okay then, who do you want me to bring up for you?"

"Bring Shmuel (Samuel) up for me." he replied.

12 When the woman saw Shmuel, she yelled out and said to Sha'ul, "Oh no, you've tricked me! You're Sha'ul!"

13 "Don't be afraid," said the king, "but what have you seen?"

"I saw gods coming up out of the ground," she replied.

14 "What does he look like?" he asked.

"An old man's appearing," she said, "wearing a robe."

Sha'ul knew it was Shmuel, and he knelt down and bowed his face to the ground.

15 "Why've you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Shmuel asked.

"I'm very distressed," Sha'ul replied, "and the Pelishtim are about to go to war against me. And God has turned away from me and doesn't answer me anymore—he hasn't sent me any prophets or given me any dreams, So I've called to you so you can tell me what I should do."

16 "If Yahweh's turned away from you and become your enemy," Shmuel responded, "what's the point in asking me?"
17 He's simply done what he told me to tell you that he'd do. He's ripped the kingdom away from you and given it to your neighbour David.[76] 18 You didn't do what Yahweh instructed and you didn't execute his anger against Amalek,[77] so that's why Yahweh is doing that to you today. 19 He will also allow Yisrael (Israel) to be defeated by the Pelishtim, and tomorrow you and your sons will be here with me. Yahweh will also allow Yisrael's entire camp of warriors to be captured by the Pelishtim."

20 Sha'ul, who'd been standing immediately toppled right over and crashed to the ground—he was very scared by Shmuel's words, plus he didn't have much strength because he hadn't eaten for twenty-four hours. 21 The woman knelt over Sha'ul and saw that he was terrified, and told him, "Listen to me. Your female servant has risked my life to do what you said and follow your instructions. 22 So now, although you're the king, please listen to your female servant. Let me get you some food, and then eat it to regain your strength for the journey home.

23 But he refused, saying, "No, I won't eat anything." However his servants and also the woman urged him, and he decided to take their advice so he got up from the ground and sat on the bed. 24 Now the woman had a calf in a stall at the house, and she quickly slaughtered it, She took flour and kneaded it and baked flat bread. 25 She placed the food in front of Sha'ul and his servants, and they ate before getting up and going out into the night.

The Pelishtim don't trust David · Full kingdom

29:1 Meanwhile, the Pelishtim had gathered in their camp at Afek, while the Israelis were camped near the Yizre'el (Jezreel) spring. 2 As the Pelishti leaders marched out groups of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were behind them with King Akish. 3 But the Pelishti commanders asked, "What are those Ivrim (Hebrews) doing here?"

"That's David," Akish replied. "He was the servant of King Sha'ul (Saul) of Yisrael (Israel), but he's been with me for over a year, and I haven't found anything distrustful in him from when he lost favour until today?"

4 But the Pelishti commanders were furious at him and told him, "Send that man back to whatever place you've given him! There's no way he's joining us in the battle! What if he turned against us during the fight? What better way could he have to win back his master's favour than by killing our men? 5 Isn't this the David that when they dance they sing,

'Sha'ul has struck down his thousands,
and David his ten thousands'?"[78]

6 So Akish called David and told him, "As Yahweh lives, you've definitely been honest, and everything I've seen of your activities has been good, because I haven't seen you do anything wrong since the day you first arrived. However, these rulers don't approve of you, 7 so turn back and go in peace so that you don't do anything to displease them."

8 "But what have I done?" David rebutted. "What wrong have you found in your servant from the day I arrived at your place until now? Why can't I come and fight against the enemies of my master the king?"

9 "All I know, is that as far as I'm concerned you're as reliable as a messenger from God." Akish responded. "Nevertheless, the Pelishti commanders have said, 'He can't join our

75 **RV 28:6 · Cross-ref.** Num 27:21.

76 **RV 28:17 · Cross-ref.** 1Sam 15:28.

77 **RV 28:18 · Cross-ref.** 1Sam 15:3-9.

78 **RV 29:5 · Cross-ref.** 1Sam 18:7; 21:11.

side in the battle.' 10 So you and your master's servants who
came with you should get up with the early morning light
and leave."

11 So David and his men packed up early in the morning to
return to the Pelishtim region, but the Pelishti warriors
headed towards Yizre'el (Jezreel).

David pursues the Amalekim · Full kingdom

30:1 David and his men got back to
Tsiklag three days later and found that
the Amalekim had raided Tsiklag and
other parts of the wilderness in southern Yehudah (Judah).
They had attacked Tsiklag then burnt it down, 2 capturing
the women and children and everyone else. They hadn't
killed anyone, but had taken them away with them, 3 so
when David and his men arrived at the town, wow, it had
been burnt down and their wives, and sons and daughters
had been taken captive. 4 David and his men cried loudly un-
til they didn't have the strength to cry any more. 5 David's
two wives, Ahinoam (from Yizre'el (Jezreel)) and Avigayil
(Naval's widow from Karmel),[79] had been taken captive along
with the others.

6 David was in a tight spot because the men were consider-
ing throwing rocks at him to kill him, because they were
very upset about their children, but he found strength in his
god Yahweh. 7 Then David asked the priest Evyatar
(Ahimelek's son),[80] "Please get the sacred apron and come
back to me." So Evyatar got the sacred apron and went back
to David. 8 Then David asked Yahweh, "If I chase after these
raiders, will I catch up to them?"

"Chase them because you'll definitely catch up and you'll
certainly be able to rescue the captives," Yahweh answered.

9 So David and the six hundred men who were with him
took off and they reached the Besor riverbed, where some of
the slower ones remained. 10 David and four hundred men
continued, but two hundred more of the men who were ex-
hausted stopped at the far end of the Besor riverbed. 11 They
found an Mitsri (Egyptian) man in the countryside and took
him to David. They gave him water to drink and bread to eat,
12 along with a slice of fig cake and two raisin clusters. He ate
it and felt stronger again because he hadn't eaten or drunk
for three full days. 13 "Who do you belong to?" David asked.
"And where are you from?"

"I am an Mitsri," he replied. "I'm an Amaleki man's slave
but my master left me three days ago because I got sick.
14 We'd raided the southern area of the Kereti as well as part
of Yehudah (Judah) and the south of Kalev (Caleb). And we
burnt down Tsiklag."

15 David asked him, "Can you lead us to them?"

"I'll take you to them," he answered, "if you promise by
God that you won't kill me and won't hand me back over to
my master." 16 So he took David down to the plain, and sure
enough, there were the Amalekim spread out, eating and
drinking and celebrating because of all the plunder that they
had taken from the Pelishti and Yehudah regions. 17 David
attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next
day, and none of the Amalekim were able to escape except
for four hundred young men who jumped on camels and
fled. 18 So David was able to rescue everyone that the
Amalekim had taken, including his two wives. 19 None of
their sons or daughters were missing, and they also recov-
ered all the animals and all the plunder—nothing was miss-
ing—big or small. 20 David took all the flocks and herds and
they drove them in front of the other livestock, saying, "This
is David's spoil."

21 Then David got back to the two hundred men who'd
been too exhausted to go all the way with them. They'd
stayed at the Besor riverbed, and they went out to meet
David and his men. As David approached to greet them, 22 all
the evil and worthless men who'd gone with David com-
plained, "Because they didn't go with us, we won't give them
any of the plunder that we recovered, except that each man
can get his wife and children then take them away and
leave."

23 "No, my brothers," David said. "You won't do that with
what Yahweh has given to us. He's protected us and helped
us defeat the raiders who came against us. 24 Who'll listen to
you all when you talk like that? The portion for the ones who
went and fought will be the same as for those who stayed
with the equipment. They'll all share alike. 25 So from that
time onwards, it's been a custom and law in Yisrael (Israel).

David distributes gifts · Full kingdom

26 When David got back to Tsiklag, he
sent a gift from some of the plunder to
the elders in Yehudah (Judah), telling them, "Look, here's a
blessing for you—some of the spoil from Yahweh's enemies."
27 Gifts were sent to: those in Beyt-El (Bethel), Ramot-Negev,
Yatir, 28 Aroer, Sifmot, Eshtemoa, 29 Rakal, the cities of the
Yerahme'elim and the Keynim, 30 Hormah, Bor-Ashan, Atak,
31 Hevron, and all the places where David and his men had
been to.

The death of Sha'ul and his sons · Full kingdom[81]

31:1 Meanwhile, the Pelishtim were
battling against Yisrael (Israel), and
the Israelis fled from the Pelishtim but
many were killed on Mt. Gilboa. 2 The Pelishtim stayed hard
on the tail of Sha'ul (Saul) and his sons, and they killed his
sons Yonatan (Jonathan), Avinadav, and Malkishua. 3 Then
the battle was fierce around Sha'ul, then the Pelishti archers
sighted him and he writhed in terrible pain from the arrows.
4 He said to the man carrying his equipment, "Draw out your
sword and pierce me through with it, lest these uncircum-

79 **RV 30:5 · Cross-ref.** 1Sam 25:42-43.

80 **RV 30:7 · Cross-ref.** 1Sam 22:20-23.

81 **RV 31:1 · Parallel** 1 Chr. 10:1-12

Readers' Version

cised Pelishtim come and pierce me through then torture me as I'm dying." But the man who carried his equipment was very scared and wouldn't do it, so Sha'ul took his sword and fell on it. **5** When the man carrying his equipment saw that the king was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him. **6** So Sha'ul, three of his sons, and the man carrying his equipment all died on that same day, along with all his warriors. **7** When the Israelis on the north side of the Yizre'el (Jezreel) valley and on the east side of the Yarden (Jordan) saw that the Israeli warriors had fled and that Sha'ul and his sons had been killed, they left their cities and fled, and the Pelishtim came and lived in them.

8 The next day when the Pelishtim came to strip anything valuable from the bodies, they found the bodies of Sha'ul and his three sons there on Mt. Gilboa. **9** They cut off the king's head and took all his gear. Then they sent messengers all around the Pelishti region to spread their good news to the temples of their idols and to all their people. **10** They Sha'ul's armour and weapons in the temple of the Ashtarot, and hung his body on the Beyt-Shean city wall.

11 When the residents of Yavesh-Gilead heard what the Pelishtim had done to Sha'ul's body, **12** all their warriors walked all night to take Sha'ul's body and those of his sons, off the wall at Beyt-Shean. They took them back to Yavesh and burnt them there. **13** Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Yavesh, and fasted for seven days.

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