

OT Bible Characters - 2

Judges and Kings

Alan Hitchen

Contents

Joshua Under Moses	1
Joshua's Life as Leader of Israel	6
Joshua - Conquest	12
Judges - Introduction	23
Barak	27
Gideon	27
Jepthah	28
Samson	32
Samuel	41
Saul Chosen as King	55
Saul Fails his first Test	61
David - Man after God's own Heart	68
David Began to Reign	73
Worship Under David	78
David's Sin	82
David's Final Years	88
Solomon	94
Solomon Built God's House	101

Joshua - 1 - Under Moses

Early Life

How Joshua grew up and later met Moses is not revealed anywhere in the Scriptures. We know he was born around the time Moses killed the Egyptian and fled to Midian, but we don't know exactly how old Joshua was when he met Moses. Some (Josephus) have given an educated guess he was 45 when Moses led Israel out of Egypt, but there is nothing in the Scriptures to confirm it. We just don't have enough information. We do know he was 110 when he died, but there is nothing to tell us how long after the death of Moses it took to conquer the promised land or how long he lived in his inheritance before he died.

*Now it came to pass after these things that **Joshua the son of Nun**, the servant of the Lord, died, being **one hundred and ten years old**. Josh 24:29*

We can work out Caleb's age and the time it took to conquer the land, but not how long he lived in his inheritance.

*And **Caleb the son of Jephunneh** the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. 7 **I was forty years old** when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. Josh 14:6-8*

*And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, **these forty-five years**, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, **here I am this day, eighty-five years old**. Josh 14:10-11*

So we know it was five years after they entered Canaan that this conversation took place, but with the other statement, it still remains vague.

*Now it came to pass, **a long time after** the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. Josh 23:1-2*

So even with all these facts, Joshua's age and early life will remain an enigma to us. He simply appears as Moses minister.

Moses' Minister

Joshua simply appears out of nowhere. All we really know about his past is that he was of the tribe of Ephraim. introduction or background. We know he was from the tribe of Ephraim because he was chosen from that tribe to represent them.

*2 Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them." 8 from the tribe of Ephraim, **Hoshea the son of Nun**; ... 16 These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And **Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua**. Num 13:8-9, 16*

The name *Hoshea* (or *Hosea*) means "salvation," or "deliverer," while Joshua or *Jehoshua* means "Jehovah (Yahweh) is salvation." When the Septuagint translated this word into Greek they chose "iesou" or *Jesus*. No explanation is given as to why Moses changed his name, but it was significant. There was a reason why Moses did so and he was already calling him *Joshua* even before they came to Mt Sinai because he is first introduced with the name Moses called him and not the one he was born with so their knowledge of each other had to precede that and may have been during the time of the ten plagues in Egypt. Hence there is really no introduction or reason given as to why Moses chose Joshua, but it is evident that he already trusted Joshua and as willing to put him into this important role.

*Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And **Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men** and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel*

prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 So **Joshua defeated Amalek** and his people with the edge of the sword. Ex 17:9-13

And **Joshua** discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. 14 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of **Joshua**: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. 15 And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner; 16 for he said, "Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Ex 17:13-16 *

*NOTE: The fulfillment of this prophesy brought about the downfall of Saul's as King over Israel.

A few weeks/months later After God asked Moses to come up to Mt Sinai, Moses brought Joshua with him at this time he is called Moses *assistant* (*minister* - ASV *servant* NASB *aid* NIV). So once again, even before they arrived at Sinai, it is revealed that Moses and Joshua had a very close relationship as Joshua even ascends onto Mount Sinai with Moses.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them." 13 **So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua**, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. 14 And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them." 15 Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. Ex 24:12-15

The term "assistant" is an important term as it was used, not as a slave or servant in a menial capacity, but an important one. So Joseph became a servant of Potiphar and Elisha ministered to Elijah. As a noun, it also was used of angels who are God's ministers.

Verb: sharat "to minister, serve, officiate." ... This word is a common term in Hebrew usage, ancient and modern, in various verbal and noun forms. It occurs in ancient Phoenician, and some see it in ancient Ugaritic as well. *Sharat* is found just under 100 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. The first time it is used in the Hebrew Bible is in the story of Joseph as he becomes the slave of Potiphar: "And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served [RSV, "attended"] him..." Gen 39:4. As a term for *servicing* or *ministering*, *sharat* is to be **distinguished from the term for more menial serving**, *abad*, from which the word meaning "slave" or "servant" is derived. *Sharat* is characteristically used of "serving" done by royal household workers 2 Sam 13:17; 1 Kings 10:5. In the manner of the modern "public servant" idea, the word is used in reference to court officials and royal servants 1 Chron 27:1; 28:1; Est 1:10. ... **Elisha "ministered" to Elijah** 1 Kings 19:21. Foreign kings are "to minister" to God's people Isa 60:10.

sharat OT:8334, "*minister; servant.*" The noun form of the verb appears several times meaning "minister" or "servant." As Moses' right-hand man Joshua is referred to as "minister" (KJV), "servant" (RSV, JB, NASB), "assistant" (NEB), or "aide" (NAB) in Ex 24:13. Angels are God's "ministers... that do his pleasure" Ps 103:21; cf. Ps 104:4. (Vine OT 8334)

We would love to know more, but this is all the information we have been given. Joshua may have continued to the top with Moses or waited somewhere near the top for the 40 days, but when Moses comes down from the Mount, Joshua is still with him.

And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand. The tablets were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other they were written. 16 Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets. 17 And when **Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted**, he said to Moses, "There is a noise of war in the camp." 18 But he said: "It is not the noise of the shout of victory, Nor the noise of the cry of defeat, But the sound of singing I hear." Ex 32:15-18

Joshua was also always in the tabernacle, when the Lord spoke to Moses. He is here again identified as a servant(*sharat*) and also a young man(even though he is more than forty years old). He remains near the tabernacle even when Moses leaves. We do not know if he heard or participated in these conversations.

So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the

camp, **but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.**

Ex 33:11

Later, but still before the spies were sent to Canaan, Joshua is again called Moses minister and this time it is added that Joshua is also one of his choice men or one who had served with him from his youth.

*But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 So **Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men**, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!" 29 Then Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" 30 And Moses returned to the camp, he and the elders of Israel. Num 11:26-30*

One of the Twelve sent into Canaan to spy out the land.

He was one of the leaders who was chosen by Moses as one of the 12 spies into Canaan. It was also here that we learn that while his parents called him Hoshea, Moses called him Joshua.

*And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, **every one a leader among them.**" 8 **Of the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun.** . . . 16 These are the names of the men that Moses sent to spy out the land. And **Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua.** Num 13:1-2, 16*

With great faith in the Lord Joshua and Caleb gave their testimony of what God could do with Israel. He showed at this time the reasons why Moses was drawn to him and had changed his name.

***But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;** 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' 9 Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them." 10 And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel. Num 14:6-10*

*Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, **all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.** 30 **Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun,** you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 31 But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35 I the Lord have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.'" Num 14:28-35*

Preparation as Leader to Replace Moses

When due to sin, Moses was forbidden to enter the promised land, and Moses interceded for the people asking God to select his successor, Joshua was chosen.

*Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying: 16 "**Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,** 17 who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep which have no shepherd." 18 And **the Lord said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;** 19 set him before Eleazar the priest and before all*

the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. 20 And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. 21 He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the Lord for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him — all the congregation." 22 So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 23 **And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.** Num 27:15-23 ✨

✨**NOTE:** This is the first time in the Scriptures that the “laying on of hands” was used. As in the NT, it “inaugurated” him.

Moses referred to Joshua in his sermon to the people.

"And the Lord heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, 35 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the Lord.' 37 The Lord was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not go in there. 38 **Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.** 39 'Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. 40 But as for you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.' Deut 1:34-40

God wanted Moses to help prepare Joshua by encouraging him and strengthening him.

"And **I commanded Joshua at that time, saying,** 'Your eyes have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings; so will the Lord do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. 22 **YOU MUST NOT FEAR THEM, for the Lord your God Himself fights for you.**' Deut 3:21-22

"But the Lord was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the Lord said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter. 27 Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan. 28 **But command Joshua, and ENCOURAGE HIM AND STRENGTHEN HIM; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.** Deut 3:26-28

One of Moses last acts before he died was to officially inaugurate Joshua in front of Israel.

Then **Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE, for you must go with this people to the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it.** 8 And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. **He will be with you, HE WILL NOT LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU; DO NOT FEAR NOR BE DISMAYED.**" Deut 31:7-8

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; **call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him.**" So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting. 15 Now the Lord appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle. Deut 31:14-15

Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel. 23 **Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you."** Deut 31:22-23

Thus the life of Moses ended and Joshua began his work as leader of Israel. Not only does Moses life end, but so also does the book of Deuteronomy of which he wrote all but the last chapter which records his death and Joshua taking up his role as leader. Joshua was fully prepared to take command, for when Moses had laid his hands upon him not only was he inaugurated, ut was also given and “the spirit of wisdom.”

So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. 7 Moses

was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. 8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended. 9 **Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.** Deut 34:5-9

Joshua - 2 - Joshua's Life as Leader of Israel

The book of Joshua begins at the moment of Moses' death. God appeared to Joshua to inform him that Moses was now dead.

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 2 "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them — the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. Josh 1:1-4

God Prepares His new Leader

God gave Joshua some precious promises and also some very important commands concerning his personal life and consecration. It is amazing to see that God always opens with promises to motivate then conditions to make the promise sure. .

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Josh 1:5

God has never asked anyone to do anything for Him without giving them the assurance that He would help them accomplish it. Moses' was given similar promises for his work in delivering Israel(Ex 3-4). God had already fulfilled His promises to Moses and Joshua could now look back on "as I was with Moses" and use it to see just how God would be with him. Joshua had both a promise and an example of the fulfillment of that promise.

The only variable in his success or failure would be his own trust and obedience. God asked Joshua to trust Him to fulfill the oath he had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Josh 1:6

But for God to accomplish what He has the power to do, He needs Joshua's courage and strength. When God's power works through man, God needs that individual to trust and be confident. Like the ten spies forty years earlier, if Joshua grows discouraged or fearful, then God will be unable to work through him.

The second variable was obedience. The same strength and courage that was needed for his trust in God's promises was also needed for him to be obedient to God's Law.

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. Josh 1:7

Lack of submission and disobedience always leads to failure. God cannot work through rebellious people. That is what happened with the spies and what would happen through all the Judges and Kings. God has never compromised. Even in the garden of Eden, his promises only lasted until disobedience occurred. At that moment, all was lost for Adam and Eve. It was also lost for Cain and later for King Saul and Solomon.

God instruct Joshua on the specific things he must do.

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Josh 1:8

Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth	Don't ever stop talking about God's Word!
You shall meditate in it day and night	Don't ever stop thinking about God's Word!
That you may observe to do all that is written	...You will then never stop doing God's Word!

The first two seem to be the conditions that will bring about the third. It takes courage, mind control and mouth control to become a faithful servant of God. God then concludes with the most comforting promise

of all. When He gives a command and His servant fulfills that command, He will do everything in His power to be certain that whoever is doing this will be successful.

If Joshua will comply with this, then God promises to be with him wherever he goes.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Josh 1:9

This ought to be obvious to all of God's servants, but it is always good to be reminded that whatever God commands His servants to do He will always give the power to accomplish it. All God needs is faith and submission from His servants, with that He can do everything else. But over and over again in the Scriptures when God's chosen vessel becomes wicked, or doesn't have the faith to complete the task, God's hands are tied because God never violates the freewill of His people.

The Two Spies and Rahab the Harlot

Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. Josh 2:1

The providence of God is often the underlying theme of many of the events in the Scriptures. Since God knows that hearts of all men, wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, and is longsuffering toward all not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance, it is obvious that He would always guide the feet of his people to those who would be most benefitted. So it was with Rahab, the one person in the entire town who had the faith to be saved.

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. Heb 11:31

Whether they knew this as they entered that home is not recorded, only that after they arrived, an emergency arose that allowed Rahab's faith to save the day.

And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country." 3 So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country." 4 Then the woman took the two men and hid them. Josh 2:2-4

At that moment, Rahab had the choice of turning them over or protecting them. Like Moses before and the opposite of Delilah later, she chose to stand with the people of God.

Rahab told a Lie

Many have looked carefully at her words to the servants of the king. Seeking for a way to justify her words is futile. She told a lie. None of what she said happened, and there is no way to justify or rationalize it away. It was a lie.

So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. 5 And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." 6 (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) Josh 2:4-7

Some even among our brethren have concluded that this was not a sinful lie, but a simple omission. They then seek to use her place in Hebrews 11 as the reason why it was not a sin. But it just won't work. She was also a harlot, so can that be justified as well. The Holy Spirit records things as they happen and often leaves unspoken the moral consequences. Thus Abraham's lies about Sarah are not condemned, nor is Judah's fornication with Tamar, or Saul's suicide. God simply records the events and leaves it to His people to assess the moral consequences of each action. In this case there is not wiggle room. First, it is impossible for God to lie and the devil is the father of all lies/liars. Second because all lies and all liars will be cast into the lake of fire.

*that by two immutable things, in which **it is impossible for God to lie**, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. Heb 6:18*

*You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, **for he is a liar and the father of it.** John 8:44-45*

*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and **all liars** shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Rev 21:8*

*But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or **a lie**, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Rev 21:27*

*But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and **whoever loves and practices a lie.** Rev 22:15*

So Rahab was a harlot and a liar, but later repented of both and having sought forgiveness and being restored, she has been placed among the great people of Heb 11.

Words to inspire Confidence

Rahab's faith was based on the reputation that had preceded the children of Israel's arrival. They had heard about the Red Sea and previous victories that the Lord had given to Israel. It had led the people to be very afraid. This must have emboldened the spies and even Joshua when they recounted it to him. No longer did they appear to be grasshoppers in the sight of those living in the land of Canaan.

"I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, Josh 2:9-11

And they said to Joshua, "Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us." Josh 2:24

Rahab's "Good Confession" and Plea

Rahab then made a "good confession" regarding her faith in God and her hope that she and her house could be saved.

for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. 12 Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, 13 and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." Josh 2:11-13

Whether the men should have agreed to her proposal without consulting Joshua and hearing from God in the matter is passed over in silence. They did agree and it turned out to the glory of God. They then give her three specific instructions that would lead to her salvation. First, unless she tied a scarlet cord to her window, the oath would no longer be binding. Second, all she wanted to be saved must be in her house at the time of the battle. Third, if she tells anyone about this business they will be free of the oath.

*We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, 18 unless, when we come into the land, **you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down**, and unless **you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home.** 19 So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. 20 And **if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath** which you made us swear." Josh 2:17-20*

She agreed to all their words and immediately tied the scarlet cord to the window.

Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window. Josh 2:21

God exalts Joshua when Israel Crosses the Jordan

The people are given specific instructions by “officers” to allow 2,000 cubits between the ark of the covenant borne by the priests and Levites and the nearest tribes. This would be about 3,000' or a little over half a mile. This was to allow the priests to show them the right path and be certain the people did not stray. Joshua then specifically addresses them commanding that they sanctify themselves (in some manner similar to when they stood before Mt Sinai (Ex 19:10-14).

God then promised that the events of that day would exalt Joshua and elevate him to a position similar to that of Moses.

And the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. Josh 3:7

Joshua then goes to the people to encourage them and help them make the proper application of what they are about to see. In a manner very similar to the parting of the Red Sea, Israel will pass over the Jordan River on dry ground and the water will stop flowing and heap itself up higher and higher as the waters are held back.

So Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the Lord your God." 10 And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: 11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. 12 Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. 13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap." Josh 3:9-13

The priests stood in the water while all the people crossed over. There must have been some interesting and conflicting emotions surging in the hearts of those men as they stood in river bed and watched that water surge higher and higher in the distance.

Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan. Josh 3:17

Memorial Stones

After everyone has safely passed over the Jordan, God commands that a man from every tribe go back into the river bed and collect 12 stones to carry with them to make a memorial that night at their camp.

Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe, 3 and command them, saying, 'Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.'" Josh 4:2-3

God then gives specific instructions about how they are to teach their children in the generations to come about the reason those stones were there and what significance was to be seen by looking at them.

that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' 7 Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever." Josh 4:6-7

When the children of Israel saw all these events, they realized that God had given him the same power as Moses had possessed and they respected him, and when the nations of Canaan heard about it, their confidence evaporated and they were demoralized.

*On that day **the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him**, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life. Josh 4:14*

So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, **that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer** because of the children of Israel. Josh 5:1

Israel on the Other Side of the Jordan

It is interesting to note that Israel crossed the Jordan the same day they had been told to select that Passover lamb when they left Egypt some forty years earlier.

Now the people came up from the Jordan on **the tenth day of the first month**, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. 20 And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. 21 Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' 22 then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; Josh 4:19-23

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 "**This month** shall be your beginning of months; it **shall be the first month of the year to you**. 3 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. ... 6 Now you shall **keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month**. Then **the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight**. Ex 12:1-3, 6

Circumcision

After they crossed the Jordan, in the three day period before the Passover, they circumcised the entire nation since it had not been done the entire time they had wandered in the wilderness.

At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time." 3 So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. 4 And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. 5 For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. Josh 5:2-5

All attempts to understand why they did not circumcise these children in the wilderness. Two possibilities exist. First, the children of Israel refused to fulfill the command, and God remained silent. Second, God abrogated the covenant after their refusal to enter the promised land after the evil report of the spies. Neither is expressed, although the latter may be inferred from God's words.

For the **children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed**, ... 7 Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom **He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way**. 8 So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. 9 **Then the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day**. Josh 5:6-9

From these words it is difficult not to see the Lord's hand in this. Why would Moses allow them to rebel against such an important command if it had not been God's will?

He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the **uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant**." Gen 7:13-14

After this circumcision, God rolled away the reproach of Egypt and they stood sanctified and prepared to be the true nation of God.

The Passover and End of the Manna

Again, during the three day period from passing over the Jordan they were first circumcised and

then prepared and ate the Passover. They also ate the produce of the land and the Manna ceased.

Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. 11 And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. 12 Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year. Josh 5:10-12

Israel is now in Canaan, circumcised, in covenant relationship with God and prepared to be God's instrument to pour out wrath on the seven nations of Canaan.

Joshua - 3 - Conquest

Israel's entrance into Canaan, not only fulfilled God's promised covenant to Abraham.

Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." Gen 15:13-16

It also brought God's judgment upon the nations that then possessed the land. In this respect, God used Israel exactly the same way He had used the flood on the ancient world, and fire and brimstone on Sodom. His wrath was being poured out upon them because of their wickedness.

Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you. It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Deut 9:4-5

Jericho

When Joshua crossed the Jordan, and began God's long planned "dispossessing," God used Jericho as an example to make a very powerful statement, both to Israel and to these nations. He did this by first sending the angel of Jehovah to reveal to Joshua the importance of this event in the eyes of God. This was something that needed to be done as a just retribution for their sins. God intended that nothing should go wrong by completely taking away the defenses of the city with overwhelming force.

Jericho did what all cities did at that time when threatened by a superior force outside their walls. They locked down the city and prepared to wait out a siege, trusting in their walls for protection.

Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. Josh. 6:1

It was God's intention to remove one of the greatest comforts to the people of that day. The walls were designed to stop an attack. If they were strong enough, the city could not be taken. God sent a message to all the other cities that all their defenses would not help them. God used the first battle after crossing the Jordan to prove that this was a judgment upon them.

God Promised the Walls would Fall

Since this was to be an example both to Israel and to all the nations, God did something similar to what He did to Egypt. In Egypt instead of immediately destroying them, he made a great name for Himself with the Ten Plagues and passage through the Red Sea. Now, God will take a full week to prepare Jericho for the coming destruction.

You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. 4 And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him." Josh 6:3-5

The army of Israel was to march around the city one time "early in the morning" each day for six days. During those six days no word or sound was to be made from anyone in the army. The only sound was the "continued blowing" of the seven trumpets carried by the priests who were with the ark.

8 So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Lord advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them. 9 The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. 10 Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth... 12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. 13 Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the Lord, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. Josh 6:8-9, 12-13

On the seventh day, they again rose early in the morning, about dawn and marched seven times around the city. This final day after the seventh time around the city, Joshua commanded them to shout, and the wall fell down, their defenses were swept away, and they took the city.

15 But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only, they marched around the city seven times. 16 And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city! ... 20 So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. Josh 6:15-16, 20

In this way, God made it clear to Israel, the inhabitants of that land, and all future servants of the LORD that He was casting these nations out and fighting for Israel. This was not done by their own power. They were working out God's plan and purpose.

Jericho was "Doomed to Destruction" - NKJV / "Under the Ban" -NAS!

God also made Jericho special in a second sense. He had strictly charged them once the walls came down, they were to do to Jericho exactly what the flood did to the ancient world. They were to completely destroy it. Nothing was to be left alive, and all possession were to be burned or taken into God's treasury. The entire city was to be seen as accursed.

*17 Now the city shall be **doomed** by the Lord **to destruction (under the ban, - NAS)**, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. 18 And you, by all means abstain from the **accursed things (things under the ban - NAS)**, lest you become **accursed** when you take of the **accursed things (things under the ban, - NAS)** and make the camp of Israel a **curse (accursed - NAS)**, and trouble it. 19 But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord." Josh 6:17-19*

It is very important for all servants of God to understand His intent and purpose in this. He had already explained it to them in the Law:

*Anything **devoted to destruction** is most holy to the LORD. No one who may **have been set apart** among men shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death. Lev 27:28*

When something is placed under the ban, it has been accursed or devoted to destruction. It cannot be ransomed or redeemed. It must be put to death or given to the Lord. The term is defined:

"to ban, to devote, to destroy utterly, to completely destroy, to dedicate for destruction, to exterminate..."

God had reserved this term for those things that belong only to Him. Man can dedicate things to Him so that they become devoted, as Jephtha did his daughter, but generally this term is used to describe those persons or things that were under God's divine judgment. When God decreed something no longer had a right to exist, no one was to stand in God's way. Those who refused to listen and take something that has been devoted to destruction become devoted to destruction themselves:

*25 You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. 26 Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be **doomed to destruction (come under the ban -NAS)** like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is **an accursed thing (something banned - NAS)**. Deut. 6:25-26*

All of this was spoken before the children of Israel began their conquest. God had made it clear that this city was different. It was to be an example of God's wrath. Much like the Amalekites were later.

Rahab was Spared

As had been previously agreed, the promise of the men would be kept. The scarlet thread had been placed and all of Rahab's family had entered and remained in her home. Joshua made certain that the oaths that had been taken were fulfilled.

And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword. 22 But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." 23 And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. Josh 6:21-23

The BAN was Violated!

Yet with all the warnings, there was an Israelite who did not listen, and took something that was accursed and under the ban.

*But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding **the accursed things, (things under the ban - NAS)** for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of **the accursed things (things under the ban - NAS)**; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel. Josh 7:1*

Everything God had warned against was now put to the test. Achan did not resist the temptation to take something. But when he did so, God's anger burned not only against him, but against the entire camp of Israel.

Another important lesson had to be taught. Fellowship with God requires purity and holiness. This is true on an individual level, but Israel must now learn that it must also be on a national level as well. For God to be with Israel they must be pure. After what Achan did, the entire nation of Israel had been contaminated. What needed to be learned centered on the consequences of sin. Although the guilt for sin can only harm the individual, the consequences of sin can be far reaching. What they had to learn is that their sin would also impact the entire nation.

Sadly, though God's anger burned against Israel, there was only one man in all Israel (and perhaps some in his family), who could have warned the others that there was sin in the camp. When Achan took some things from Jericho, he made the camp of Israel accursed.

*And you, by all means abstain from the **accursed things (things under the ban - NAS)**, lest you become **accursed** when you take of the **accursed things (things under the ban - NAS)** and make the camp of Israel a **curse (accursed - NAS)**, and trouble it. Josh 6:17-19*

Disaster at Ai

After the great victory at Jericho, the faith of the people reached new heights. They now fully trust in God's power and are confident in the outcome. But with sin and its curse in the camp, God did not act for them and they were defeated. But far worse was the affect on the people. Their hearts have melted and became like water.

And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water. Josh 7:5

Joshua's leadership faced its first great test and he failed. As so many of God's people have done, he thinks first of a failure on God's part and not man's. While God would never fail or forsake, He had firmly warned that if they took something from Jericho, the camp would become a curse. But Joshua jumped to the wrong conclusion.

Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord God, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all--to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan!" Josh 7:6-7

He was blaming it all on God! He accused God of delivering them up to the Amorites. He bemoaned the fact that they had not been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan. Such lack of faith came from a lack of knowledge and a lack of proper application. Yet God does not rebuke, but only reproves.

*So the Lord said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? 11 Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of **the accursed things (under the ban NAS)**, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. 12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become **doomed to destruction**. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy **the accursed (things under the ban NAS)** from among you. Josh 7:10-12*

All the fault lay with Israel. Even though only one man sinned, the fellowship of each Israelite to every other Israelite and to God led to the entire nation becoming sinful and accursed. What one man did affected the entire nation, and the entire nation needed to act to remove this stain.

God's simple statement must have filled Joshua and all who heard this with alarm. God warned that He would never be with them again, unless they removed the accursed thing that had been brought from Jericho and the one who had become accursed by taking it from their midst. es. became What a powerful indictment against those things God condemns. One man's violation of

God's order led to the cursing of the entire camp. God would never be with them again unless they dealt with this thing properly.

The thing needed to be dealt with immediately, so God gave specific instructions to be carried out the next day.

Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel: "There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you." 14 In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the Lord takes shall come according to families; and the family which the Lord takes shall come by households; and the household which the Lord takes shall come man by man. 15 Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.' Josh 7:13-15

The Punishment of Achan

So Joshua rose early the next morning and carried out these instructions. When he brought the tribes, Judah was taken, and it was quickly narrowed down to Achan. Although Joshua gave Achan the opportunity to confess his sin, and it is between God and Achan what happened to his soul, the consequences of his action could not be removed through confession.

Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me." 20 And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: 21 "When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it." Josh 7:19-21

They quickly find the garment, 200 shekels of silver and wedge of gold and return to Joshua. Once this had been done, the rest of God's instructions were followed. It was a sad day in Israel as this terrible vengeance was poured out on Achan.

Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. 25 And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Josh 7:24-25

This was the only way to remove this blot. The guilty person had placed himself under the ban and made himself a curse. He must be burned with fire just as Jericho had been burned. Yet the judgment did not fall on him alone, but on all that belonged to him, including his family.

Applications

Jericho stands with Sodom, Gomorrah and the world that perished in the flood as a sign of Divine wrath. By placing it under the ban and devoting it to destruction, God again revealed His demand that His creation must submit to His will or face His wrath.

When the 70 Greek scholars translated the Hebrew Bible into the Greek Septuagint, they used the Greek word "*anathema*" to translate "under the ban," and it means exactly the same thing. Paul used this word to describe those in the church who are under the same ban Jericho was:

But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. Gal 1:8

God demands that we view all who add to or take from His word, preaching a different gospel than that revealed by the apostles as being under the ban! Let none of us be as Achan!

A second application centers on church discipline. Just as one sin in Israel affected the entire nation, one sin in the church can do something very similar.

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles--that a man has his father's wife! 2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. 1Cor 5:1-5

The Destruction of Ai

After Israel followed God's instructions concerning the sin of Achan, He makes it very clear that all has been forgiven and they are now ready to move forward. Everything is as it was when God first promised to work with Joshua.

Now the Lord said to Joshua: "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. 2 And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind it." Josh 8:1-2

God also revealed that He would once again take an active role in helping them. He gave exact instructions about how to destroy them and how they should form the attack.

As they drew near to Ai, Joshua is told to send off 5,000 men in an ambush as God had commanded.

And all the people of war who were with him went up and drew near; and they came before the city and camped on the north side of Ai. Now a valley lay between them and Ai. 12 So he took about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. 13 And when they had set the people, all the army that was on the north of the city, and its rear guard on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley. Josh 8:11-13

They then approach the city and act as though they are fleeing again, emboldening the leaders, making them believe that once again it will be an easy defeat.

And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. 16 So all the people who were in Ai were called together to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. 17 There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. So they left the city open and pursued Israel. Josh 8:15-17

But after they empty the city the trap set by the ambush is accomplished.

Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the spear that was in his hand toward the city. 19 So those in ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire. Josh 8:18-20

Now the men of Ai are caught between two armies and have no where to go or to escape. Before the day is over both the city and its people are destroyed.

One of the big differences between Ai and Jericho is the fact that this time, God allowed them to keep all the possessions of the people of Ai.

For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. 27 Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the Lord which He had commanded Joshua. Josh 8:26-27

One cannot help but think of Achan. If he could have resisted that temptation and waited a few more weeks, he could have had all he desired.

Mt. Ebal & Mt. Gerazim

Since they are now at the nearest point to them, before they continue their conquest, they have an appointment they must keep. Moses had given very specific instructions for them to camp between these two mountains and fully elaborate on the covenant they had agreed to, noting especially the blessings for keeping them and the curses for disobedience.

"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; 28 and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. 29 Now it shall be, when the Lord your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. Deut 11:26-29

And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime. 3 You shall write on them all the words of this law... 4 Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. 5 And there you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron tool on them. 6 You shall build with whole stones the altar of the Lord your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the Lord your God. 7 You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before the Lord your God. 8 And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the

words of this law.” Deut 27:1-8

And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying, 12 “These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; 13 and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. 14 “And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel: 15 ‘Cursed is the one who makes a carved or molded image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.’ “And all the people shall answer and say, ‘Amen!’ Deut. 27:11-15

So Joshua and the people do everything Moses had requested. They take the rocks, cover them with limestone and write the words of the Law (ten commandments and possible other portions of the Law). Later, he placed the people in front of the two mounts as God had commanded through Moses, and then read all the words of the Law. It was a solemn and important event that was designed to make a powerful impression. With about a million and a half people calling Amen, it must have been a powerful affirmation.

The Gibeonites

As news traveled throughout the region, most felt disdain and a desire to destroy them.

And it came to pass when all the kings who were on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon — the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite — heard about it, 2 that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord. Josh 9:1-2

But it was fear and dread that fell upon the Gibeonites and so they decided to attempt deception as a way out of their dilemma.

17 But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4 they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, 5 old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. 6 And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, “We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us.” Josh 9:3-6

For whatever reason, Joshua does not seek the counsel of the Lord on this matter. They are so completely taken in by their crafty deception that they make the covenant without any suspicion of concern at all.

There appears to be some faith in the hearts of these men as they are acting on what they had heard about Israel. How God had brought them out of Egypt and allowed them to successfully conquer all the nations they had previously faced.

17 So they said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the Lord your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, 10 and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan — to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth. 11 Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, “We are your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us.”’” Josh 9:9-12

After they find out the truth, they face a difficult dilemma. Should they keep the oath and violate the command or violate the command and keep the oath. The people were angry with the leaders for not seeking God’s counsel first. There is no indication if they even asked God’s counsel on the best way out of this problem.

Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the Lord. 15 So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them. 16 And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them. 17 Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim. 18 But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel. And all the congregation complained against the rulers. 19 Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, “We have sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them. Josh 9:14-15

The best they can do to resolve this problem is offer to make them slaves to Israel for the rest of their lives and that of their offspring.

So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. 27 And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord, in the place which He would choose, even to this day. Josh 9:26-27

The Battle against the Five Kings

When the area cities heard what Gibeon had done, they decided to destroy those cities first and then do battle against Israel. It appears they do not want the rebellion that Gibeon had started to grow. When the Gibeonites hear that they are coming they plead with Israel to help them. Although the previous chapter left us to understand they “*made a covenant with them to let them live,*” they now seek more. They now want Israel to protect them. Whether this was part of the oath, or God simply allowed it to occur, they saved them from this threat. God promised Joshua to deliver these armies into Israel’s hands.

And the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.” 9 Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. 10 So the Lord routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. Josh 10:8-11

As the battle progresses, two things of great importance occur that must have had great power to increase the faith of Israel. First, God took part in the battle by using hail stones to kill even more than Israel had.

And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword. Josh 10:11

Later, Joshua asked God to hold the sun in the sky and not allow darkness to end the fight before it was completed. God fulfilled his request.

Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: “Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.” 13 So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. Josh 10:12-13

Multitudes of people have scoffed at this event, questioning its possibility and validity. It is like most of the miracles in the Bible. If one leans upon their own understanding then it seems impossible, but if we trust in the Lord with all our heart and believe then nothing appears or is impossible.

Summation of the Conquests

After these details of the first few cities, God simply sums up the rest. He notes the ease with which they finished the punishment of the inhabitants of the South.

So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded. 41 And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. 42 All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. 43 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal. Josh 10:40-43

After these final words about the Southern battles, he moves to their work in the North. In a single great battle against multitudes as vast as the sands of the sea, Joshua gained the victory through God.

And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard these things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, 2 and to the kings who were from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west, 3 to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah. 4 So they went out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. 5 And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel. Josh 11:1-5

After this victory, Joshua was able to destroy a large number of cities after their soldiers died in this battle.

So all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded. 13 But as for the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, which Joshua burned. Josh. 11:12-13

Thus Joshua took all this land: the mountain country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, and the Jordan plain — the mountains of Israel and its lowlands, 17 from Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their

kings, and struck them down and killed them. 18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. 19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle. 20 For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the Lord had commanded Moses. Josh 11:16-20

God Commands Joshua to Stop Fighting and Divide the Land

As Joshua has aged during the conquest of Canaan, God wants him to stop fighting and divide the land. He told Joshua that Israel would finish what he had started, and it was time for him to complete his final task of dividing the land.

Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the Lord said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. ... 6 them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. 7 Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh." Josh 13:1, 6-7

He began with the tribes who had asked for their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan.

With the other half-tribe the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses had given them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the Lord had given them: Josh 13:8-9

After this, each of the rest of the tribes was given a certain portion by the casting of lots.

Their inheritance was by lot, as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. 3 For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them. 4 For the children of Joseph were two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for their livestock and their property. Josh 14:2-5

Reuben	<u>Josh 13:15-23</u>
Gad	<u>Josh 13:24-28</u>
Manasseh(½)	<u>Josh 13:29-33</u>
Judah	<u>Josh 15:1-63</u>
Caleb	<u>Josh 15:13-19; 14:6-15</u>
Ephraim	<u>Josh 16:5-10</u>
Manasseh(½)	<u>Josh 17:1-18</u>
Benjamin	<u>Josh 18:11-28</u>
Simeon	<u>Josh 19:1-9</u>

Zebulun	<u>Josh 19:10-16</u>
Issachar	<u>Josh 19:17-23</u>
Asshur	<u>Josh 19:24-31</u>
Naptali	<u>Josh 19:32-39</u>
Dan	<u>Josh 19:40-48</u>
Joshua	<u>Josh 19:49-50</u>
<hr/>	
Cities of Refuge	<u>Josh 20:1-9</u>
Levitical Cities	<u>Josh 21:1-45</u>

All God's Promises were Fulfilled

Many terrible errors have been made going on the assumption left from the Judges that Israel never received all its land. Although that is partly true because of the Israel's unfaithfulness they did not complete the task God had given them. But as far as God's promises were concerned it was **ALL** fulfilled.

So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. 44 The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. Josh 21:43-45

Since all was now fulfilled, and it was up to the individual tribes to finish the taking their own land, Joshua allows the tribes whose inheritance is on the east to leave and take possession of their land.

Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, 2 and said to them: "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. 3 You have not left your brethren these many days, up to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God. 4 And now the Lord your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore, return and go to your tents and to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side of the Jordan. 5 But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to

hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” 6 So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents. Josh 22:1-4

Israel’s Faithfulness Tested

After the Reuben, Gad and Manasseh(½) arrive in their land, word reaches Israel that they have built an altar on the other side of the Jordan. This creates great consternation and concern because at this point in time they are still faithful and seeking to serve the Lord. So much concern that the entire nation prepares for war against them.

And when they came to the region of the Jordan which is in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan — a great, impressive altar. 11 Now the children of Israel heard someone say, “Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan — on the children of Israel’s side.” 12 And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them. Josh 22:10-12

Before doing anything rash though they send leaders to offer them the opportunity to repent of their sin.

Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, 14 and with him ten rulers, one ruler each from the chief house of every tribe of Israel; and each one was the head of the house of his father among the divisions of Israel. Josh 22:13-15

Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord: ‘What treachery is this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the Lord? 17 Is the iniquity of Peor not enough for us, from which we are not cleansed till this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord, 18 but that you must turn away this day from following the Lord? And it shall be, if you rebel today against the Lord, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. Josh 22:16-18

It is refreshing to see them making the proper applications to the past. They still remember what happened at Peor, when Balaam counseled Balak to entice them to idolatry. They also add Achan and warn that the entire nation could be affected by their unfaithfulness.

Nevertheless, if the land of your possession is unclean, then cross over to the land of the possession of the Lord, where the Lord’s tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the Lord, nor rebel against us, by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the Lord our God. 20 Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity.’” Josh 22:19-20

At this moment, these maligned tribes offer an explanation and defense that removes all concern. They have not built this altar for worship, but as a sign and proof that they too are part of Israel if a time should ever arise when there was some doubt of that.

“The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself know — if it is in rebellion, or if in treachery against the Lord, do not save us this day. 23 If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the Lord Himself require an account. 24 But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, ‘In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, “What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? 25 For the Lord has made the Jordan a border between you and us, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the Lord. So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the Lord. Josh 22:22-25

The reality is that they were deeply concerned for the future and this altar was their guarantee that their descendants could not say that these tribes knew nothing about the Law of Moses. This altar proved that they were fully aware of the Law and its requirements.

Therefore we said, ‘Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice, 27 but that it may be a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, “You have no part in the Lord.”’ 28 Therefore we said that it will be, when they say this to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, ‘Here is the replica of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between you and us.’” Josh 22:26-29

When they heard these words, they were very happy and knew that there was no apostasy or sin. It was they who repented of their decision to go to war and destroy the land where these tribes then lived.

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the rulers, returned from the children of Reuben and

the children of Gad, from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought back word to them. 33 So the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle, to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt. 34 The children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar, Witness, "For it is a witness between us that the Lord is God." Josh 22:32-34

Joshua's Final Words to Israel

After a long time but undefined amount of time, Joshua is now very old and knows that his time on their earth is short. Like Moses before him and Paul many years later, he wants to address the leaders before he dies.

Now it came to pass, a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. 2 And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: "I am old, advanced in age. Josh 23:1-3

Evidently, like most wise men, he too can see the signs of apostasy growing around him and wants to warn them against it. He begins by reminding them that God kept all His promises, but that as with all other covenants, if they want Him to continue to do so, they must keep their side of the conditions of the covenant.

3 You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the Lord your God is He who has fought for you. ... 6 Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, ... 11 Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the Lord your God. 12 Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations — these that remain among you — and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, 13 know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. Josh 23:3, 6, 11-13

Sadly that last statement is exactly what happened not long after he died, so these are not idle words, but words of great import that sadly they did not take to heart. It is like Paul telling Timothy to preach the word, reproofing, rebuking and exhorting, since the time would come when they would turn aside unto fables. Even Timothy's preaching did not stop that after Paul and the rest of the apostles were gone and it did not stop it here either, but Joshua did his best.

He contrasted the blessings and the curses just as they had done on Mt Gerazim and Mt Ebal. Just as God had kept every word concerning the blessings He would bring them when they entered the land because they had been faithful, in exactly the same way God would keep His word concerning the curses of apostasy. It is much like those today seeking to remove the punishment of Hell. They want there to be a heaven, but want hell to be a misunderstanding. But the same God who promised heaven has also warned of Hell.

"Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. 15 Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the Lord your God promised you, so the Lord will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. Josh 23:14-16

A Second Meeting and Address

After this initial meeting with all the leaders, Joshua again assembles Israel at Shiloh. This may have been one of the regular feast days when all Israel was gathered together, but it may also have been a special meeting just for this purpose. Once again, Joshua speaks of his deep concern at the signs of apostasy that he is aware of.

He sums up their history and gives some information about Terah not found in Genesis.

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. 2 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. Josh 24:1-3

He reminds Israel of God's taking them out of Egypt and bringing them to Canaan and giving them the land just as He promised. He concludes with a strong warning that they must put away the god's they had been serving and continued to serve. God addressed this many years later through Amos just prior to their going into Assyrian captivity.

“Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? 26 You also carried Sikkuth your king And Chiun, your idols, The star of your gods, Which you made for yourselves. 27 Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus,” Says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts. Amos 5:25-27

Joshua then words one of the most often quoted words from his book about the choice they must make and the one he had made long long ago.

“Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! 15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Josh 24:14-15

Joshua hears their answer of fidelity and faithfulness but challenges them for more. Though they offer to serve the Lord, he is deeply concerned and warned them that they would not long fulfill what they were promising that day.

So the people answered and said: “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; 17 for the Lord our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. ... 19 But Joshua said to the people, “You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. 20 If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good.” 21 And the people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the Lord!” 22 So Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him.” And they said, “We are witnesses!” Josh 24:16-18

At that time, Joshua added to the words written in the Law. This is evidence that Joshua himself wrote the words of his book, leaving only the final words for another to complete. We do not know who wrote this addendum, but very probably the author of the Judges since that book begins as they one ends.

26 Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. ... 29 Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being one hundred and ten years old. 30 And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. Josh 24:26, 29-30

The final words of Joshua are heartening until we read the first words of Judges and find the rest of that story which is truly heart breaking. Israel remained faithful throughout the life of Joshua and even the elders who outlived Joshua. But when the generation who had been born and lived during the forty years in the wilderness passed from the earth, the faithfulness of Israel passed with them.

Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. Josh 24:31

So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. Judg 2:7-8

When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. 11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals; 12 and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger. Judg 2:10-12

Judges — Introduction:

The book of Joshua closed with his death and offered a great compliment and tribute both to him and to Israel.

Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. Josh 24:31

The book of Judges opens with the account of the final days of the elders who outlived Joshua and what happened next. There are a few perplexing questions in the chapter that are much easier to answer when we see it in the proper context. The faithful service to God that they had given under Joshua's leadership continued as long as these elder lived. Since Joshua and Caleb were the only ones over 20 who survived the forty years of wilderness wandering, these elders were substantially younger. Probably at least 20 years. So this period was longer than we might have otherwise thought. It would have taken in those who were alive at the time of the sending in of the spies (that 20 year generation).

So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. ... 10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. Judg 2:7, 10

This generation that did not know the Lord would have been those who were born toward the end of the wilderness wandering and/or during the time of the conquest. It was the men who had seen and knew "the work which He had done for Israel." As this generation passed from the earth, a new generation (probably who were then 20-40 years old). This 3rd and 4th generation forsook the Lord God and followed other Gods.

Obviously these transitions did not occur overnight. As the older generation faded from the leadership roles and the new generation gradually took over a wave of unfaithfulness and rebellion swept slowly across the nation. This is the general theme of the first three chapters. The first chapter revealed the gradually descent from complete faithfulness to the deserved rebuke in 2:1-4.

Chapter 1

For the faithful elders who outlived Joshua, the most important goal after the death of Joshua was to fully comply with God's commands to completely destroy the inhabitants of the land. After his death they continue to do this. They sought God's counsel and Judah was selected. Judah and Simeon began working to fulfill God's will and the Scriptures are clear "Jehovah delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand." (Judges 1:1-7).

For these first few years, even without Joshua, all continued as it had under Moses (Jdg. 1:1-25). Then in quick succession it tells of Judah's success at *Jerusalem*, then 'the Canaanites that dwell in the hill-country, and in the South, and in the lowland,' (1:8-9) and Hebron. We are also given a glimpse of Caleb again as he takes his inheritance (1:10-15). Judah also took Zephath, Gaza with the border thereof, and Ashkelon with the border thereof, and Ekron with the border thereof. (1:16-19).

Yet this section also revealed the the first break in the continuity of victory. Though it says God was with him as they took the hill country, it also revealed they could not take the valley because of the chariots of iron. One might take this at face value were it not for Joshua's words.

And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph — to Ephraim and Manasseh — saying, "You are a great people and have great power; you shall not have only one lot, 18 but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong." Josh 17:17-18

Obviously there was more involved than the chariots of iron. Since the next passages revealed the lack of faith of the other tribes, this may be the first problem manifested even by Judah.

The remainder of the chapter revealed the unfaithfulness as it unfolded among the tribes. It began slowly, first with a lack of zeal and intensity in keeping the positive commands they had been given.

Benjamin did not take all his inheritance	(1:20).
Manasseh did not take all his inheritance	(1:23-25)
Ephraim did not take all his inheritance	(1:29)
Zebulun did not take all his inheritance	(1:30)
Asher did not take all his inheritance	(1:31-32)
Naphtali did not take all his inheritance	(1:33)
Dan did not take his inheritance	(1:34-36)

Chapter Two

This is the hub of the book of Judges. It explains everything that follows. First, it reveals God's attitude toward the half-hearted efforts we read about in the previous chapter. The compromises and outright rebellion are dealt with first when the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Israel and brought them terrible tidings.

Then the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. 2 And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? 3 Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'" 4 So it was, when the Angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. 5 Then they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the Lord. Jdg. 2:1-5

As the Angel of the LORD revealed how the efforts described in the previous chapter had been understood by God, He summed it up with: "you have not obeyed My voice." As punishment, "I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you."

Sadly, though Israel wept at the bad news there is no indication of any repentance. They did build an altar and called it "the weepers" or "weeping" which is the meaning of "Bochim." But it appears to be the sorrow of the world, and not godly sorrow as there was no sign after this event of any change of heart.

As a matter of fact it is just the opposite, a gradual decline that did not stop until they had completely left the Lord and turned to idols. gathered to their fathers, Israel no longer knew Jehovah or the work he had done for Israel.

When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. 11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals; 12 and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger. 13 They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. Jdg 2:10-14

As this is the first time, it seems amazing how quickly this occurred. Yet after finishing Judges, we see this occurred over and over again throughout the book. One generation served God and their children did not. God never tolerated their rebellion. He quickly allowed enemies to enter the land and bring His people into difficult circumstances until they were brought to repentance. Though some only see punishment here, actually God is acting with love for them hoping to get them to return to him fully so he can bless them. There are five distinct things that occurred each time, making a cycle that continued all the way through the book.

First, as noted above, Israel became unfaithful to God.

Second, God's wrath is kindled and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies.

And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for calamity, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed. Jdg 2:14-15

Third, when their distress and bitterness reached a certain level, the people at last were driven to repent and seek the Lord's deliverance.

Fourth, God would then raise up a judge who would save them from the enemies who had subdued them. He was moved to pity because of their groaning.

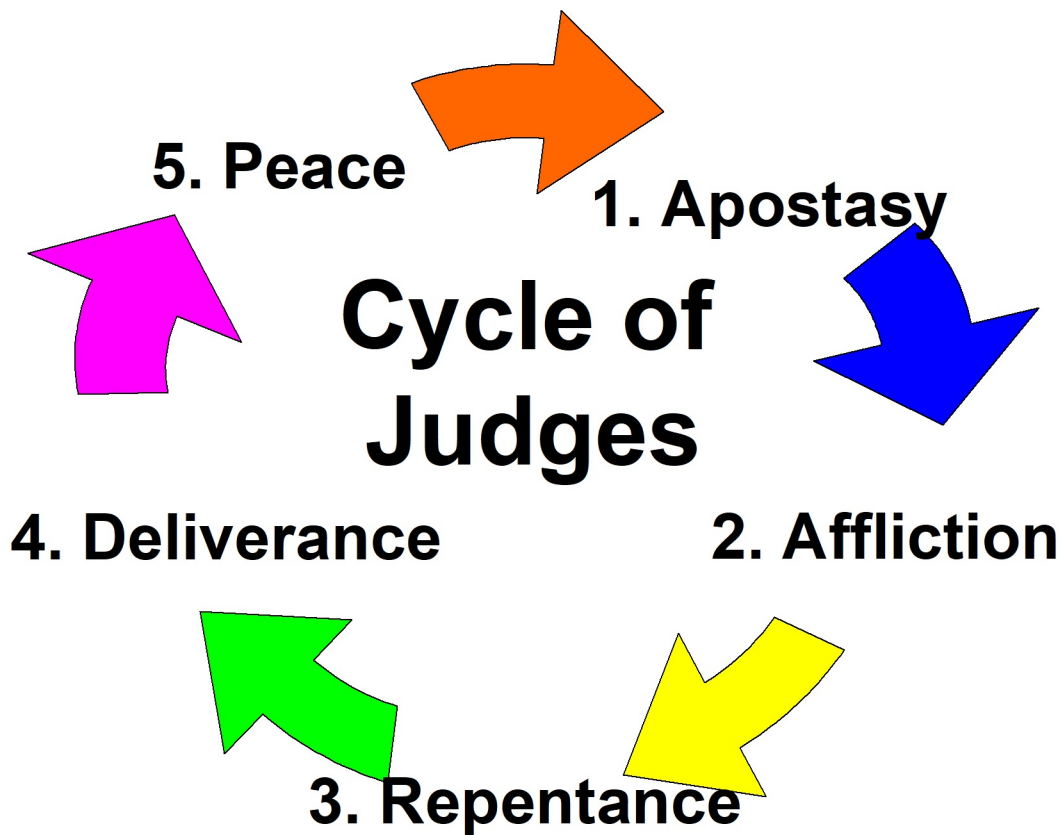
Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so. 18 And when the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. Jdg. 2:16-18

Fifth, there would be a period of peace and prosperity. But as soon as the blessings returned they stopped listening to the judges who were seeking to get them to be obedient to God. Instead they 'turned aside out of the way' and did not 'obey the commandments of Jehovah' God would repent each time they did and restore their fortunes, but as soon as the judge who delivered them was dead 'they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their fathers,'

And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way. Judg 2:19

At a certain point in this process God was led to a decision. He would leave some of the inhabitants of the land to test Israel.

Then the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, 21 I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22 so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the Lord, to walk in them as their fathers kept them, or not." 23 Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua. Judg 2:20-23



Judge	Years of Judge or Rest	Life Recorded	NT
1. Othniel	40 <u>Jdg. 3:11</u>	<u>Jdg. 3:7-11</u>	
2. Ehud	80 <u>Jdg. 3:30</u>	<u>Jdg. 3:12-30</u>	
3. Shamgar	—	<u>Jdg. 3:31, 5:6</u>	
4. Deborah / Barak	40 <u>Jdg. 5:31</u>	<u>Jdg. 4-5</u>	<u>Heb 11:32</u>
5. Gideon	40 <u>Jdg. 8:28</u>	<u>Jdg. 6-8</u>	<u>Heb 11:32</u>
6. Tola	23 <u>Jdg. 10:2</u>	<u>Jdg. 10:1-2</u>	
7. Jair	22 <u>Jdg. 10:3</u>	<u>Jdg. 10:2-5</u>	
8. Jephthah	6 <u>Jdg. 12:7</u>	<u>Jdg. 10:6-12:7</u>	<u>Heb 11:32</u>
9. Ibzan,	7 <u>Jdg. 12:10</u>	<u>Jdg. 12:8-10</u>	
10. Elon,	10 <u>Jdg. 12:12</u>	<u>Jdg. 12:11-12</u>	
11. Abdon	8 <u>Jdg. 12:15</u>	<u>Jdg. 12:13-15</u>	
12. Samson	20 <u>Jdg. 15:20</u>	<u>Jdg. 13-16</u>	<u>Heb 11:32</u>
13. Eli	40 <u>1Sam. 4:18</u>	<u>1Sam 1-4</u>	
14. Samuel	—	<u>1Sam 5-24</u>	<u>Heb 11:32</u>

As seen in the chart above, of the fourteen judges listed in Judges and 1 Samuel, five are recorded in the book of Hebrews.

*And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of **Gideon** and **Barak** and **Samson** and **Jephthah**, also of David and **Samuel** and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. Heb 11:32-35*

These men are recorded as men whose faith accomplished great things. They are a part of the great cloud of witnesses who are now testifying to us that it is worth any sacrifice to serve God. Everyone of them is stated as “having obtained a good testimony through faith...”

*39 And **all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith**, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Heb 11:39-40; 12:1*

What the Spirit was affirming is that all these men listed here(Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah) who are found in the book of Judges, did obtain and continue to obtain, “good testimony through faith.” The entire phrase “having obtained a good testimony” is a single word. “Having obtained” is an aorist passive participle, making the action timeless and unchanged. This is what they had in the book of Judges and they continue to have it. The term good testimony is the word “*martureo*” from which we have the term martyr.

*“martureo... to be a witness, to bear witness, testify, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, ... to prove or confirm by testimony... to bear witness (of) anything... b. emphatically; to utter honorable testimony, give a good report... **passive. ... to be borne (good) witness to, to be well reported of, to have (good) testimony borne to one, accredited, attested, of good report, approved...**” (Thayer, p 390-391; 3140)*

So these men have had good testimony borne to them. They are accredited, attested and approved. This was given to them in the book of Judges and reaffirmed of them by the same Holy Spirit in the book of Hebrews.

What I have always found fascinating about the men listed here is that what was actually revealed about them in Judges was not always to their credit, yet they still have their names listed. This gives the real power and substance of why the Spirit revealed we read the OT Scriptures today:

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Rom 15:4

After reading what was recorded about them, we find ourselves with greater hope, because these men were not perfect in their faith. They struggled with it and did their best, but did not find perfection. What gives us hope is that since God has already done that with them, He will also do

it with us.

Barak

The story of Barak is linked with four other main characters in the fourth chapter. First there were two adversaries: **Jabin** the king of the Canaanites and **Sisera**, his powerful captain who had 'nine hundred chariots of iron;' and 'mightily oppressed the children of Israel for twenty years.'

So the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. 3 And the children of Israel cried out to the Lord; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel. Judg 4:2-3

Deborah is introduced not as a judge, but as a prophetess who was also judging Israel at that time(4:4). There are several examples of this (Huldah 2K 22:14; Noadiah Neh 6:14; Isaiah's wife Isa 8:3; Anna Lk 2:36) as well as Joel's prophesy (Joel 2:28-29). In this situation God found a woman who had the faith and the devotion necessary for inspiration. As a prophetess, her words to Barak and the Song of Deborah are therefore inspired.

By inspiration she chose **Barak** and gave him God's commands regarding the battle and deliverance of Israel. She revealed to Barak that God had given a command to him to gather 10,000 men from Naphtali and Zebulun and a promise "I will deliver them into your hand."

Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5 And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6 Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; 7 and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand?'" Judg 4:4-7

Barak had a solid faith enough faith to do what was commanded, but not quite strong enough to act alone. He affirms he will go, but only if Deborah goes with him as a guarantee that these words are true. His obedience is therefore not absolute, but conditional. The fact that this was not the quality of faith God demanded is seen in the words "there will be no glory for you." and that God would therefore deliver the enemy into the hand of a woman, **Jael**.

And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!" 9 So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Judg 4:8-9

Yet in spite of his weakened faith, with Deborah's presence he found the courage necessary to fulfill God's will and find a place in Hebrews 11:32

Gideon

With no warning, the Angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon to appoint him as the next judge. Since God only chooses prepared vessels(2Tim 2:20-21), it is evident that Gideon was prepared and would be his chosen vessel to remove the Midianites and judge Israel.

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 2Tim 2:20-22

From Gideon's conversation with the LORD, and the events that follow we can gain a good insight into his character and God's guidance to help him grow. Like Moses, Peter and many other servants of God, he is judged by the potential of what he could become. At the time of his call, he was as weak as most new converts to the Lord. After reading 6:12-17, the following observations can be made.

1. Gideon is **a man of might and valor**, and **the Lord is with him**. 6:11
2. His question reveals both his ignorance and his faith. He knows of God's power in earlier times, and hopes for it again, but doesn't know about the wickedness of the people.
3. Gideon is told that he will be the one to bring this power back. Just like Moses, the assurance the angel gave can only come through faith. 6:14
4. Again, like Moses, Gideon's **humility** and/or lack of faith is seen in his answer that his family

- is the poorest in Manasseh, and he is the least in his father's house. 6:15
5. The LORD promised to be with him and that he would be victorious. 6:16
 6. Gideon's **faith needed strengthening**. He pleaded with God to show him a sign. 6:17-20
 7. When all is prepared the angel of the LORD gave a powerful sign. 6:21
 8. Once again **his humility and awe** are revealed in his fear that he had seen the LORD, but the LORD assured him he would be safe 6:22-23

That same evening God asked him to tear down the altar of Baal, which he fulfilled to the letter though the Scriptures reveal his fear in the manner it was done.

But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night. Judg 6:27

A short time later, Midianites and Amalekites appeared as they had done in the past. The Spirit of the Lord moved him to blow the trumpet and he calls Israel to prepare for battle. 6:33-35

Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34 But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, Judg 6:33-34

After the arrival of the neighboring tribes of Israel, he is still wavering and seeks more signs(6:36-40). First the fleece will be wet and the ground dry and then later that the ground will be wet but the fleece dry. (6:36-40).

God Tests Gideon's Faith

It was a powerful test of faith to expect Gideon with 32,000 to fight against 135,000 enemies. They were outnumbered 4-1. But God stretched that faith further by proclaiming that these odds were too high and the people might think they had won without God's help. So God commanded that all who are afraid should leave and 22,000 returned and only 10,000 remained(Odds are now 13.5-1). (7:1-3)

Yet God is still not satisfied, so God devised a final means concerning they way they drink water. Those who put their lips in the water and those who used their hands. This decreased the number to 300(Now it is 450 - 1).

With these 300, God promised to deliver the 135,000. Gideon's faith was growing and he did not ask for a sign, but God felt the need to encourage him by allowing him to hear a dream and its interpretation.

It happened on the same night that the Lord said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant. 11 And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp Judg 7:9-11

And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." 14 Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." 15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." Judg 7:13-15

Gideon instructs the 300 to take a torch inside a pitcher and a trumpet. He divides them into three companies and instructs them to surround the camp, then blow the trumpet with one hand, break the pitcher and hold up the torch. Then they simply watched while 120,000 men fought against each other and were destroyed(judg 7:16-22)

Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen. Judg 8:10-11

After these events, he judged Israel, forty years. We see with Gideon that though the ultimate end is that he obtained good testimony, God held his hand and encouraged him every step of the way.

Jephthah

Though born an illegitimate child, he is chosen to be a judge of Israel. Unlike Barak and Gideon, the

role of God in these events is not revealed until just before the battle, but it is inferred.

*11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them; and Jephthah **spoke all his words before the Lord in Mizpah.** ... 29 Then **the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah,** and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced toward the people of Ammon. ... 32 So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and **the Lord delivered them into his hands.** Judg 11:11, 29, 32*

The real role the Lord took is not revealed. Jephthah is the main character in all the events and only the passages above speak of the Lord's involvement.

He began by trying to reason and negotiate with the king of Ammon who was ignorant of the truth. He believes Israel has taken his land, but they never did. Jephthah reminded him of the actual facts by quoting much of what we can read in Numbers 20:1, 14-21; 22:21-26 The Lord had forbidden taking any of the land of Ammon.

'This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. 19 And when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.' Deut 2:18-19

Ammon and Israel were related through Lot. Even at that time there was hope that there would be no battle. He concluded that Israel has done nothing wrong. Sadly these words do no good.

Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me. May the Lord, the Judge, render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon.'" 28 However, the king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words which Jephthah sent him. 11:27-28

Jephthah's Vow

But with everything prepared and a clear knowledge that God was behind the effort, Jephthah chose to do something that has created one of the most interesting questions and dilemmas in the Scriptures and completely changed the focus of the account. Instead of discussing the great victory God gave through Jephthah, most people only want to talk about Jephthah's vow.

And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, 31 then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering." 32 So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands. 11:30-32

A vow was a solemn promise to God that if a certain outcome occurred a special sacrifice would be made. This is not the first vow in Scripture.

When Jacob left home he vowed that if God would bring him back safely he would give 10% of all his increase(Gen 28:20; 31:13).

Moses wrote a great deal in the Law about the importance of vow in the eyes of God(Lev 27; Num 30; Deut 23:21-23).

The nation of Israel had made a vow just before the battle with the Canaanites not far from where Jephthah was about to fight.

So Israel made a vow to the Lord, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." 3 And the Lord listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah. Num 21:2-3

Actually, this vow was part of the history Jephthah had recounted to the king of Ammon when he proved Israel had not taken any land from Ammon. Jephthah may have gotten the idea for his vow from there. If we compare the wording it is nearly identical in the first part of the vow.

Israel	vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, into my hand, then...	If You wilt indeed deliver this people
Jephthah	vowed a vow unto the Lord and said, into my hand, then...	If You wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon

But though the first part of the vow is identical, the latter part of the vow was not. In Jephthah's vow, the special sacrifice was first thing that came forth from the doors of his house would be offered

as a burnt offering.

It is difficult to know what he was thinking this might be when he made the vow. As one wisely noted, it would be an uncommon thing to expect a barnyard animal to come out of the doors of your house. A concordance makes it very clear that the term 'house' referred to servants and family, and not to animals. The vow was made contingent on a victory over the Ammonites and God gave him that victory.

As God had worked for Moses, Joshua and all the previous judges so now God worked for Jephthah. '*Jehovah delivered them into his hand; there was a very great slaughter; and the children of Ammon were subdued.*' (11:33). God gave Jephthah everything he had hoped for. Hence everything necessary for Jephthah to be obligated to fulfill his vow had been accomplished. Jephthah now had to do what he had vowed.

One has to wonder what was in his heart as he neared home. Excitement over the victory had to be mixed with concern over what the first thing might be that he would see. If he had any hope that God would intervene and make certain the first thing he saw would not be too painful, his hopes were dashed as he neared his house.

And Jephthah came to Mizpah unto his house; and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter.
11:34

At this point everything in the account shifts from the victory to the vow. As a matter of fact, nearly all comments made about Jephthah center more on the vow than on his victory. There is a huge moral dilemma here that will not be fully resolved until God reveals more details to us. The account is simple enough:

And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I have given my word to the Lord, and I cannot go back on it." 36 So she said to him, "My father, if you have given your word to the Lord, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because the Lord has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon." 37 Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I." 38 So he said, "Go." And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains. 39 And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man. 11:35-39

Here are the simple facts:

1. Jephthah vowed to offer the first thing that came from his house as a burnt offering.
2. His daughter was the first thing that came from his house and he was deeply troubled by it.
3. He said I have opened my mouth to Jehovah and I cannot go back.
4. She said do unto me according to that which proceeded from your mouth.
5. Her father did with her according to his vow which he had vowed.

From these facts, we ought to be able to draw a simple conclusion that everyone would agree with, but such is not the case. Even with no one disputing these facts, there are still two positions on what really happened.

Some believe that Jephthah killed his daughter exactly as prescribed for a burnt offering. Like Abraham in Gen 22, he tied her, used a knife to kill her and then burned her on the altar. Though this is the fair interpretation of the words of the passage above, it creates a grave moral dilemma so grave that many simply cannot accept it. Though this is the time of the Judges and the moral climate of the nation was at its one of its lowest, it is difficult to imagine that the two great moral dilemma's created by this vow would be solved by the death of Jephthah's daughter.

Murder is one of the highest moral wrongs revealed in Scripture. God makes it very clear that because man is made in the image of God, it is a great evil for one man to take the life of another.

Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. 6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. Gen 9:5-6

This principle was enshrined in the law of Moses as one of the ten commandments, and it always brought the death penalty. The second great moral principle is that of giving our word to God in the solemn and sacred way that a vow operates.

Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, "This is the thing which the Lord has commanded: 2 If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. Num 30:1-2

"When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you. 22 But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you. 23 That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth. Deut 23:21-23

We now have two great moral imperatives placed side by side. The first, all vows that are made to God must be paid and the second, no one can shed the blood of another human being. When these two come into direct conflict with each other as they do here which is the greater evil? After one makes a vow that leads to the need to kill, is it more right to kill or to modify the vow?

If we could boil down all the arguments pro and con, I think it all really comes down to this. Those who believe that God could not be pleased with any vow that requires a sinful act to accomplish it will interpret it differently than those who believe that no matter what the consequences all vows must be paid. Put another way, if a rash vow is uttered that is impossible to fulfill without grave harm following, which is the better course? To fulfill the vow and sin, or to not fulfill the vow and sin? Listen to God:

'Or if a person swears, speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, whatever it is that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it — when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty in any of these matters. 5 'And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing; 6 and he shall bring his trespass offering to the Lord for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats as a sin offering. 10 So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin. ... So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him. Lev 5:4-5; 10

This has led some to believe that Jephthah did not actually kill his daughter, but instead that she was so wholly dedicated to the Lord that she could not marry or have any of the things that a person would normally have. The argument would go like this. If an unclean beast were offered as a vow, it was not sacrificed so neither could the daughter be.

Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When a man consecrates by a vow certain persons to the Lord, according to your valuation, ... 11 If it is an unclean animal which they do not offer as a sacrifice to the Lord, then he shall present the animal before the priest; 12 and the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as you, the priest, value it, so it shall be. 13 But if he wants at all to redeem it, then he must add one-fifth to your valuation. 14 'And when a man dedicates his house to be holy to the Lord, then the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. 15 If he who dedicated it wants to redeem his house, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall be his. Lev 27:1-3; 11-15

Perhaps the writer of Ecclesiastes had Jephthah in mind when he gave his strong warning about vows:

Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few. . . 4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou vowest. 5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Eccl 5:2-5

There is no definitive answer to this debate. Because of the times in which Jephthah lived, he could very easily have decided to offer her as a burnt offering and God simply overlooked and forgave it as he did Rahab's harlotry. It may equally be that he did not actually offer her as a sacrifice, but simply removed her from the land of the living by some type of sequestering. At the judgment day all will be revealed.

Samson

Introduction:

Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. Acts 10:34-35

First, God is no respecter of persons! There is no favoritism or partiality with God. From the beginning to the end, God assesses the character of each man and woman with the same yardstick. Only those who fear and respect Him and works righteousness are acceptable.

Put another way, God's attitude toward each individual is based on looking into each heart making an assessment about their character based on their faith (Heb 11; especially 11:7). While we can only look at the outward appearance, God looks upon the heart:

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Sam 16:7

As Paul noted we often see the goodness and severity of God in the Scriptures, but it was never arbitrary. Branches were broken off or grafted back in based on the character of each person. So when we see something unusual or difficult in the Scriptures, it is important that we remember that His severity is always to those who fell and His goodness only to those who continued in His goodness by "standing by their faith."

You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? Rom 11:19-23

Hence only God and His Christ could know the Publican went home justified because of his contrition and repentance while the Pharisee stood condemned. (2) Only God could see into the heart of young David and know that his heart was far superior to those of his older brothers, and also know that with the coming of Nathan, David would truly repent and confess his sins. Hence when reading the lives of Bible characters we have to factor in these intangibles that God could see and we cannot.

Second, at birth, God gives each one a unique set of talents, gifts and abilities that differ from others. Then by our own decisions we create our own weaknesses and worldly lusts. These things will all be taken into consideration by God at the day of judgment, but can not be understood or factored in by any human judge.

*Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. 5 Therefore **judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.** 1 Cor 4:1-5*

*And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, **to each according to his own ability**; and immediately he went on a journey. Matt 25:15-16*

*For if there is first a willing mind, **it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.** 2 Cor 8:12*

*For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.** 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 **Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.** Rom 12:3-8*

Finally, God records the lives of the characters in Scripture as they occurred. The fact that He lists both the good and evil as it occurred does not mean endorsement. While those in Hebrews eleven were made righteous by faith, they were not sinless!

*What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? **"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."** 4 Now*

to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, Rom 4:1-5

Each was held to the same standard. Whether recorded or not, confession and repentance are required for each sin. It is not the self-righteous, but the penitent who receive grace and mercy from God. Faith must be maintained until the end for if they shrink back His soul will have not pleasure, and He will cast off forever.

*"For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now **the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.**" 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. Heb 10:37-39*

"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. 1Chron 28:9-10

These principles must be understood before we can successfully evaluate and draw the right conclusions/inferences. This is especially true in the study of the life of Samson. The gift God gave to Samson had great potential for good. His name in Heb 11 tells us that his character was richer and fuller than the deeds we read about in Judges revealed. Like David, Saul of Tarsus, Matthew the tax collector and the penitent publican there was more to the man than the deeds themselves indicated. But in spite of God's grace and mercy,

Obviously, God is not mocked and Samson still reaped exactly as he sowed(Gal 6:7-8). One has to wonder what kind of different story might have been written if his moral character matched his physical strength. But then we all might wonder the same thing about our own lives.

Important Events Before Samson's Birth

After forty years of oppression under the Philistines, Israel finally reached a condition of heart where God was willing to act and bring a deliverer(13:1). Like Jeremiah(Jer 1:4-5), John the Baptist(Lk 1:6-17) and Saul of Tarsus(Gal 1:15), Samson was chosen before he was born. God looked through all Israel and chose a barren couple from the tribe of Dan and began making preparations for the yoke of the Philistines to be broken.

The account begins with a visit from the angel of Jehovah who reveals himself to the wife of Manoah of the tribe of Dan. For whatever reason she is never named in the entire account, but is only referred to as his wife(13:2), the woman(13:3), she(13:3)and his mother (14:3). The angel of Jehovah begins with a promise and then gives the conditions that must be fulfilled.

Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. 3 And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. 4 Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. 5 For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." Judg 13:2-5

The first condition is placed upon the woman. She is not to drink wine, strong drink or anything unclean for the entire time of her pregnancy. The reason for this is given in verse five with the term "for behold" or "for this reason, behold." She is not to do any of these things because the child is to be a Nazirite from the womb, so he cannot have any thing of the grape for the entire pregnancy. This is a very special application of the Nazirite vow specified in Numbers 6. The term Nazirite comes from the Hebrew word *Nazir* which is defined:

nazir 5139, "one who is separated; Nazirite." There are 16 occurrences of the word in the Old Testament. ... Most frequently in Old Testament usage, *nazir* is an appellation for one who vowed to refrain from certain things for a period of time: "And this is the law of the Nazirite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" Num. 6:13. According to Num. 6, a lay person of either sex could take a special vow of consecration to God's service for a certain period of time. . . . Num. 6:1- 23 laid down regulatory laws pertaining to Naziritism. There were two kinds of "Nazirites": the temporary and the perpetual. The first class was much more common than the latter kind. From the Bible we have knowledge only of Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist as persons who were lifelong "Nazirites." According to the Mishna, the normal time for keeping a Nazirite vow was thirty days; but sometimes a double vow was taken, lasting sixty days. In fact, a vow was sometimes undertaken for a hundred days. (Vines Expository Dictionary)

Hence God expected this child to begin this separation even from his mother's womb so the woman must obey this command. From the moment of her conception until birth she must keep from these things so that the child would also be kept from them. The manner in which the angel of Jehovah spoke to her required her faith to begin at that moment though the child would not be born for some time.

She finds her husband and relates the conversation nearly exactly as found above(13:6-7). She is unsure of the exact nature of the visitor. She first calls him a man of God(prophet), but then describes his countenance as very terrible (lit. - to create fear and trembling, to create awe and

reverence - awesome). She then recounts the conversation only adding that he would be a Nazirite until the day of his death.

Manoah then entreats Jehovah to send the angel again so that they might have better understanding of what they should do when the child is born(13:8-9). The text reveals that God heard and answered the prayer by again sending the angel of Jehovah, although the angel again appeared to the woman while she is alone. As soon as she saw him she ran to her husband Manoah who then returned with her to speak to the angel of Jehovah(13:10-11).

Manoah said, "Now let Your words come to pass! What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?" 13 So the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. 14 She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe." 13:12-14

Although Manoah had hoped the angel might give him further insight, Manoah gained no more information than the angel of Jehovah gave to the woman. He simply repeated verbatim what He had told her and then warned that it was up to her to do all that he had said. One gets the impression that though Manoah had hoped to place himself somehow into this relationship between God, the angel of Jehovah and the child, the angel continued to use the pronouns 'she' and 'her.' Manoah was not invited into it.

Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You." 16 And the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord." (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the Lord.) 17 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?" 18 And the Angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?" Judg 13:15-18

Manoah then sought to show hospitality to strangers and became another who "sought to entertain angels unawares"(Heb 13:2). Thinking he would honor the man by offering him a meal, the angel asked only that if he was interested in giving up a kid it could not be offered to Him but given as a burnt offering to the LORD. This was not what Manoah had in mind. His true intent was to honor this person. He then asked His name so after the child was born and the words came to pass they might speak of Him in honor. His answer was intriguing since it gave no answer. He simply revealed His name was wonderful(KJV - secret; lit. - wonderful, incomprehensible, extraordinary). The root of the term is used in the next verse to describe the wondrous thing he did. It was not until then that Manoah was made fully aware of the nature of the person to whom he had been speaking.

So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on — 20 it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar — the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground. 21 When the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the Lord. 13:19-21

As the flame and smoke arose into heaven, the angel of Jehovah ascended in the midst of it and disappeared from their view. Immediately they knew that this was not a man of God or any human prophet. They knew they had been in the presence of the angel of Jehovah.

And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" 23 But his wife said to him, "If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have told us such things as these at this time." 13:22-23

The different reactions between Manoah and his wife seems to indicate that she had a more discerning spiritual nature than her husband. She has fully grasped the import of this revelation and the role they were to play in the next deliverer of God's people. She is fully prepared to do all that the angel of Jehovah has asked, and as she does these things, all that the angel revealed came to pass.

So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol. 13:24-25

There is so much left unsaid here that we are left with nothing tangible to conclude. The Lord blessed him and the Holy Spirit began to move him, but in what way is left unsaid. Many speculate that there were great feats of strength in his youth, or that he was moved to become a leader over others seeking to throw of the yoke of the Philistines, but the reality is that God only revealed he was blessed and that the Spirit was moving him.

Judges 14 - Samson's Early Years

Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife." 3 Then his

father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well." Judg 14:1-3

As Samson began his work, even his parents showed concern. When he expressed a desire to marry one of the daughter's of the Philistines, they remind him that she was the daughter of an "uncircumcised Philistine." They could not have forgotten the promise of the angel that "he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." Judg 13:5

Yet there was no prohibition against such a marriage as there had been the seven nations of Canaan(Deut 7:1-4). They were not of Canaan, but of his brother Mazraim(Gen 10:6-18). Still his parents realized the idolatry and ungodliness of the Philistines along with their tyranny and brutality and were deeply opposed to this marriage.

But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord — that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. 14:4

Clearly this is a very difficult passage requiring all our wisdom to properly navigate it to the truth. We know God tempts no one.

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Jas. 1:13-15

So any interpretation that begins with God using Samson's temptations to bring about this issue is clearly going in the wrong direction. So what does it mean "that it was of the Lord?" Since we know it wasn't something God in which was directly involved, only a few options can be considered.

First, Samson must have known he was a Nazarite and why. His hair was long and he had never eaten anything from the grapevine. Since his parents had not been forbidden to reveal these things to Samson, how could he not know he would become God's next judge. That is what the angel had specifically stated:

*And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and **he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.**" Judg 13:5*

So why would a man destined to deliver Israel from their enemies choose to marry one? Since Samson's later character continues to reveal rebellion and weakness, the only logical conclusion is that Samson was not taking it seriously.

He was not the devout, serious, sincere servant God wanted, but like Jonah, God could and would still make things happen. Although Samson may not have considered it in this light, God intended to use it to force Samson into his work. This is all that can truly and fairly be inferred from "it was of the Lord — that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines."

The Philistines were ruling over Israel at this time and what is affirmed is that God would use it to create a clash between Israel and the Philistines. As the account unfolds, we see the unfaithful way in which the Philistines acted It soon led to a complete break between Samson the Philistines.

Samson and the Lion

The passage does not state whether this is the first time, but clearly we get an insight into how Samson was to accomplish his work. It gave him a strength far beyond other men. The roaring of the lion signified an imminent attack, so Samson simply defended himself with his bare hands.

So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. 6 And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. 14:5-6

This event revealed the manner in which the Spirit of the LORD would come upon Samson. Although his parents were on the journey with him they were not present at this time and he did not reveal it to them. At that time it appears that all was arranged for the wedding.

A short while later as Samson was returning for the actual wedding(14:8-9), he returned and saw the lion he had slain had dried up and a hive of bees had created some honey within it. The weaknesses in his own character again as it was unclean for Israel to eat anything that had come into contact with a dead body(Deut 14:3-8). Perhaps this was why he did not tell his parents where the honey had come from.

When he arrived the festivities began and thirty men were chosen to be his companions(with one as his companion and friend 14:20). He then proposed a riddle based on his encounter with the lion. He was so convinced they would not guess it that he was willing to put up 30 changes of clothing against them.

Once again, we see a reckless character and an attitude toward the riddle that verges on gambling.

They accepted, but could not guess the riddle so they threatened to kill his young bride. Which again revealed the brutality and lawlessness of these people. She then began to beg and plead and weep with Samson to tell her the secret of the riddle. After he revealed it to her, she told the men and they gave him the answer within the appointed time.

These things might have happened to anyone in Samson's position. The Philistines had done an evil and wicked thing. The Holy Spirit then moved Samson and so began the conflict between himself and the Philistines. He went to Askelon (about 20 miles away) and killed 30 men, took their garments and used them to pay for the riddle. His anger was kindled against his wife and he left her for a time until he calmed down.

The father then gave his wife to the companion he had used as his friend (we would say best man). Now all is prepared and in the next chapter the battle will begin. Whether Samson wanted to be God's deliverer or not no longer matters, He had become a thorn in the side of the Philistines and would soon do what God had wanted him to do.

As the Philistines ruled over Israel, it appears that the type of injustice and unfairness that had been inflicted on Samson was happening all over the land, and God had determined to use this particular act of treachery to bring the proper vengeance upon them.

We see the danger of the covetousness that turned the riddle into an opportunity to gamble. Obviously neither side could afford to lose what was wagered and the entire thing turned into a big moral mess. The thirty 'companions' sought to betray Samson using the threat of a horrible death against his wife. Instead of trusting Samson, the wife chose to betray him by crying and pleading with him to give up the secret and which she then told the companions.

Samson is so angry over the way he had been treated by the companions and by his wife, that instead of taking his wife with him, he left and went back to his father's house. The chapter ends with a far worse act of treachery and betrayal. Samson's wife was given to his 'best man' to be his wife. Samson is unaware of this until he returns.

Samson began to Avenge the Tyranny of the Philistines

If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them. Eccl 5:8

So many terrible things like this have been done to men. Samson in all honor and integrity and youthful anticipation found a woman he loved and sought to make her his wife. By treachery and oppression she was taken from him and given to another. How many such terrible stories fill the pages of history? Yet this time, God revealed his own displeasure through his judge Samson. This time the act of treachery was done to a man who could do something about it.

The fact that it was the time of the wheat harvest not only lets us know that it is late springtime (April/May), but sets the stage for what Samson decided to do after the fullness of their treachery was revealed to him.

After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into her room." But her father would not permit him to go in. 2 Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead." 15:1-2

Samson's temper had cooled, and he brought a young goat as a gift or act of reconciliation. He then sought to go into his wife. One can only imagine the attitude of the father at this point. He has done a terrible thing and must now reveal it to Samson. He sought to soften the blow by offering him her younger sister but Samson was deeply offended. Under these circumstances, normally there would be nothing else to be done, but these are not normal circumstances. God intended to use Samson begin to throw off the yoke of tyranny and oppression that these Philistines had brought upon Israel for the past forty years (Judges 13:1). Things escalated rapidly.

And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!" 4 Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned the foxes tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. 5 When he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves. 15:3-5

Whether at the Spirit's inspiration, or just his own idea, he catches 300 foxes (or jackals) and tied a firebrand between their tails. Their fear of the fire which was constantly following them would cause them to run quickly through the standing grain so that multitudes of fires would be breaking out all at once all over the area. Before it was finished, the harvest of wheat as well as the oliveyards (like our vineyards - olive orchards) were all burned and thus destroyed. This would bring nearly a complete loss to the community. This was their food and livelihood.

Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the

Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. 7 Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." 8 So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam. 15:6-8

It was clear that this was a manmade disaster so they sought to know the how and the why so they could punish those involved. When the treachery of the father was revealed to them, they responded with equal treachery. They burn down the house of the father on both the father and his daughter, killing them. The brutality and treachery of these people appears to have no bounds. Now Samson felt completely justified to escalate the conflict to an even higher level. He avenged those who killed his wife. The expression 'smote them hip and thigh' seems to be an idiom of the day.

Our own idioms, "beat the fire out of" or "beat them half to death" seem pretty tame compared to this one. The fulness of its meaning is brought out in the phrase 'with a great slaughter.' It doesn't sound like there was much left of the community after Samson finished with them. As news of this spread, the next level of escalation begins.

Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us." 11 Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them." 15:9-11

God doesn't reveal exactly how large the force these Philistines gathered together to deal with Samson, but it was a force large enough that the 3000 men in Judah would rather deal with Samson than with that force. The men in Judah do not see in Samson a deliverer, but only a trouble maker. When the Philistines reveal their intent, these 3000 men from Judah decide to comply with their request. Either a lack of faith, or a lack of knowledge prevented them from seeing the opportunity God had given them. They find Samson and grumble to him about his conduct toward the Philistines. He simply answers that he has only done to them what they had done to him.

After getting assurance that the Israelites themselves would not harm him, Samson allows them to bind him with new ropes. This seems to be placed in the text to show conclusively that it was not the weakness of the rope, but the strength of Samson that led to what happened when he was turned over to the Philistines.

When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands. 15 He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. 15:14-15

The Philistines can't hold in their excitement at capturing this enemy and began shouting. What their plans were for him will never be known, though what they did the next time is likely what they had in mind. The 3,000 men of Judah are left in obscurity and the Spirit of God again comes mightily upon him. The ropes were changed and easily broken, and his strength was multiplied in a miraculous way. He found the jawbone of a donkey lying nearby and used it as a club. By the time the encounter was over, 1000 of the Philistines lay dead and Samson was completely victorious. But another pressing need arose.

Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the Lord and said, "You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" 19 So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. 20 And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines. 15:18-19

Samson's relationship with the Lord here is seems a little ambiguous and difficult to decipher. From Hebrews 11 we are told that he was a man of faith so it seems best to interpret these words in that light. He has seen God work through him and now as a result of this hard labor, he is faint with thirst and in dire need. So he boldly frames his request in light of the dire consequences. The fact that God helped him shows his heart.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. 1Jn. 5:14-15

Samson Judged Israel for Twenty years

The final statement in this chapter is full of meanings that we cannot fully understand. We have seen many judges now who judges Israel, yet each time we are left somewhat in the dark about exactly what that encompassed.

We saw the role of all the Judges earlier in the book. There is no reason the think things are

different here.

Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so. 18 And when the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; Judg 2:16-18

With this in mind how do we interpret that fact that Samson 'judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years(15:20)? Obviously the events recorded in the next chapter would have only take a few weeks out of those twenty years. So what about the rest of the time?

Possibly Samson did many similar acts of deliverance to those just described. Perhaps the rest of Israel learned the incidents surrounding his birth and understood God had raised him up as their judge. Perhaps for a time he held back the idolatry of the people.

And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way. Judg 2:19

There is so much we don't know of those 20 years. God only gave two glimpses into his life. They do not reflect highly on his character, revealing his dealings with two women: A harlot and Delilah.

The Harlot at Gaza

Chapter 16 opens with Samson's visit to a harlot in Gaza. As noted in the introduction God simply records the events of the lives of his people. Sometimes good and sometimes bad but always brutally honest. The law condemned this visit but God simply recorded it without comment. The weaknesses of men are as varied as the lusts of the flesh that create them. Each struggles with his own sins and repents of them to gain forgiveness. God grace covered this event and therefore we must infer that Samson had the right attitude after this moment of weakness.

Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. 2 When the Gazites were told, "Samson has come here!" they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, "In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him." 16:1-3

The Philistines gathered to capture him but at midnight, he picked up the gates enclosing and protecting the city of Gaza and carried it up to the top of a nearby hill. This escape along with the gates up on the top of the hill must have been a story told both by the Philistines in anger and Israel in hope.

Delilah

While the story of the harlot was passed over in silence, Delilah became the "infamous" Philistine woman who brought about his fall. The valley of Sorek is the valley that connected Samson's home with Timnah (the town of the woman he sought to make his wife).

How they met is not revealed, she is introduced after Samson fell in love with her. One gets a sense of how important Samson had become by the fact that all five(Judg 3:3) of the Lords of the Philistines wanted him destroyed. Each of the five offered Delilah money 1,100 pieces of silver.

And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver." Judg 16:5

Samson's childlike innocence or folly is revealed in how he made this into a game. He obviously learned nothing from his wife and trusted this woman. It doesn't appear she struggled with her conscience over this man's life or trust in her. She immediately went to work to get the secret and allowed soldiers to lie in wait in her inner chamber while she sought to wile this secret from him.

During the course of Delilah's attempts to get the information Samson gave four answers

Seven green withes never dried(6-9).

So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you." 7 And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man." Judg 16:6-7

There is some ambiguity in what a withe is. Later translations have *cord*s(NAS) and *bowstring*(NKJ), or *thongs*(NIV) the truth is we cannot with certainty know but Delilah knew and soon had him bound exactly as he had described. To test them, she cried out that the Philistines were upon him and watched to see what would happen. When he easily broke them she knew he had "mocked" her or made fun of her by telling her something that was not true.

New ropes wherewith no work hath been done, then (10-12)

Then Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with." 11 So he said to her, "If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man." Judg 16:10-11

She tried again and he gave another untruthful answer. She got the new ropes, bound him with them and again cried out the Philistines were upon him, once again Samson's untruthful answer failed to give her what she needed. One has to wonder why his suspicions were not aroused, but he continued to 'play this game with her.'

Weave the seven locks of my head with the web. (13-14)

Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom" — Judg 16:13

This time proceeded exactly like the previous two. She again accused him of making fun of her and telling her lies. This time he again gave an untruthful answer and all else proceeded as before.

Samson's Fall(15-20)

Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies." 16 And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death, 17 that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man." Judg 16:15-17

This time she worked on his emotions. She used his love as leverage. She complained that his heart is not with her because he wouldn't tell her where his strength lay. She then goes on to such daily pressing and urging that his soul was vexed to death. Finally, he revealed the truth about the Nazirite vow. For some reason, she sensed that this time was different. She sent for the lords of the Philistines and they were so convinced they brought the money with them. She then made him sleep upon her knees, called for a man to shave off the seven locks of his head.

So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. 21 Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison. 22 However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven. 16:20-22

This time when she said the Philistines are upon thee, the LORD had departed from him and his strength was gone. The Philistines were not gentle. They put out his eyes, brought him down to Gaza, bound him with fetters of brass, and made him grind in the prison-house.

Samson's End(22-31)

The mercy and compassion and the gracious dealings of God are again revealed in Samson's life. As his hair began to grow again(along with the necessary inference of his penitence and godly sorrow for sin), Samson was given a final opportunity to use his strength to the glory of God.

Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. And they said: "Our god has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy!" 24 When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said: "Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, The destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead." 25 So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may perform for us." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars. Judg 16:23-26

A great sacrifice was being offered to Dagon the idolatrous god of the Philistines to offer praise and honor to him for delivering Samson into their hands. As they praised Dagon for delivering such an enemy into their hands, someone came up with the idea of bringing the blinded and fettered Samson into the temple as evidence of their god's power. They made sport of him, which carries the idea of mocking and scorning. They made up some games or activities to shame Samson and his God.

Did Samson feel the terrible anguish of one who had brought shame upon God by their own conduct? Did he only care about the loss of his eyes? Although he expressed only the latter, Heb 11 must be taken into consideration. There must have been some faith here.

Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!" Judg 16:28-29

As they set him between the pillars an idea formed in his head. He asked those who led him by the hand to let him feel the pillars in the temple. We are also told that there were about 3000 men and women and all the Lords of the Philistines. Samson offered a humble prayer that the Lord heard.

He then used all his might; to push against those pillars and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people. The account closes that the dead that he slew at his death were more than they that

he slew in his life. He is then buried by his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him. Again we are told that he judged Israel twenty years.

Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life. Judg 16:30

There are many enigma's in the story. All we have to go on is God's assessment of him in Heb 11. Any interpretation of his life must be done taking that into account. For our judgment of him must concur with that of the Lord.

Samuel

Introduction:

The life of Samuel forms **an important transition** in how God worked with His people. Listen to Paul describe the transition from the wilderness wandering and entrance into the promised land :

The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. 18 Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. 19 And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. 20 "After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, Acts 13:17-22

Paul begins with the Exodus and forty years in the wilderness. Then the days of Joshua and the judges until Samuel. Finally, also during the time of Samuel, they asked for a king. First God used Samuel to give them Saul and later He used Samuel to give them David. Hence **Samuel forms the transition from the Judges to the Kings**. He is **the last Judge** and counted **among the first of the prophets** who spoke of the coming Messiah.

And **Samuel judged Israel** all the days of his life. 1 Sam 7:15-16

So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And **all Israel** from Dan to Beersheba **knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet** of the Lord. 1Sam 3:19-20

There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of **Samuel the prophet**; 2 Chr 35:18

Yes, and **all the prophets, from Samuel** and those who follow, **as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days**. Acts 3:24-25

The events of his life are among the most fascinating of all the Bible Characters. The details that God has given us about his special birth due to a vow, his call, his work, first as a judge and then as a prophet who advised King Saul and David make an epic life story.

Samuel, along with Moses and Jesus are among the few men in the Scriptures whose parents and details of their birth is recorded. Most accounts of judges and prophets simply begin when their work commenced. But in these three instances, their parents and events surrounding their birth had a important role in their work.

Birth and Early Life

Samuel's lineage is given both the book of Samuel and in Chronicles.

Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. 1 Sam 1:1

Of the sons of the Kohathites were Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, 34 the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, 35 the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, 36 the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, 37 the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, 38 the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. 1 Chron 6:33-39

Comparing the two genealogies we find they are nearly identical. The biggest difference is that in Samuel, Elkanah is called an Ephraimite and in Chronicles he is a Levite and specifically a Kohathite.

Zuph	Zuph
Tohu	Toah
Elihu	Eliel
Jeroham	Jeroham
Elkanah	Elkanah
Samuel	Samuel

There is no question that Samuel was a Levite and a son of Kohath. The reason he is called an Ephraimite is because he lived in Ephraim, not because he was of that tribe.

It is evident from the account that Elkanah was a devout man. First, because he went to sacrifice each year, and second because he allowed his wife's vow to stand and gave up her firstborn son to the Lord.

The account is another clear indication of the terrible consequences of polygamy. First there is a jealousy on the part of the wife who played second to Hannah, and the bitterness in the heart of Hannah because of this rivalry.

But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the Lord had closed her womb. 6 And her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the Lord had closed her womb. 7 So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat. 8 Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" 1Sam 1:5-8

The bitter sorrow and loss of her situation finally led her to a vow. God even wanted it known that Eli was present when she had made the vow and because of a misunderstanding, she would have stood out in his memory.

And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. 11 Then she made a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head." 12 And it happened, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli watched her mouth. 13 Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. 14 So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!" 15 But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. 16 Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now." 1 Sam 1:10-16

After learning his mistake, Eli blessed Hannah and prayed that God would answer her petition. This brought joy and peace to her heart as she now had hope.

Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him." 18 And she said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. 1 Sam 1:17-18

Sometime during that next year, Hannah conceived and informed her husband that she would not return to Shiloh with him until the child was weaned and she could fulfill her vow.

Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and his vow. 22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "Not until the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the Lord and remain there forever." 23 So Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the Lord establish His word." Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him. 1 Sam. 1:21-23

It was at least three years before she returned to Shiloh with Samuel and met again with Eli.

Wean (*gāmal* from the *completion* of the infant at that time) Most Oriental mothers suckle their children much longer than is usual in Europe, and the same custom seems to have prevailed among the ancient Hebrews. When Samuel was weaned, he was old enough to be left with Eli for the service of the tabernacle (1 Sam 1:24). As no public provision was made for the children of priests and Levites until they were three years of age, it is probable that they were not weaned sooner (2 Chron 31:16; 2 Macc 7:27). ..." (McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia)

As noted above, both the word itself (*completion*) and that fact that Hannah felt comfortable to leave her son with the old man Eli makes it evident that the child was no longer an infant or toddler.

Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh. And the child was young. 25 Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. 26 And she said, "O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the Lord. 27 For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. 28 Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord." So they worshiped the Lord there. 1 Sam 1:24-28

Again the godly and devout nature of these two people becomes even clearer. They have both agreed to fulfill the vow and even though it means the loss of her only son, there is no hesitation. Even in the act of this sacrifice, there is worship and joy over God giving Hannah a son. Her prayer is not inspired, but rivals any of the songs we sing in our songbooks today. A prayer of praise, thanksgiving and adoration.

"My heart rejoices in the Lord; My horn is exalted in the Lord. I smile at my enemies, Because I rejoice

in Your salvation. 2 "No one is holy like the Lord, For there is none besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God. 1 Sam 2:1-2

After this act of devotion, sacrifice and praise, God blessed Hannah with more children:

And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile the child Samuel grew before the Lord. 1 Sam 2:21

Eli and His Sons

While the sons were introduced first, it was Eli who is actually the main character with Samuel for the first few chapters. Eli was old and had judged the people faithfully for forty years.

And he had judged Israel forty years. 1 Sam 4:18

Although Eli was never called the High Priest, there are several inferences that lead one to conclude that he might have been and the probability is strong that he was.

1st Eli, Hophni and Phinehas are the only ones mentioned as priests who are ministering at the tabernacle in Shiloh. It is to them that the people brought their sacrifices.

This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there. 1 Sam 1:3-4

2nd God held Eli solely responsible for their wickedness. If there had been another High Priest, he too would have been accountable.

For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. 1 Sam 3:13-14

3rd Eli and Samuel are sleeping near the tabernacle and Samuel is the one who opened the doors (1 Sam 3:15).

So Samuel lay down until morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. 1 Sam 3:15-16

4th They are direct descendants of Aaron through Ithamar.

Eli... the high-priest of the Jews when the ark was in Shiloh (1 Sam 1:3,9). He was descended from Aaron through Ithamar, the youngest of his two surviving sons (Lev 10:1,2,12), as appears from the fact that Abiathar, who was certainly a lineal descendant of Eli (1 Kings 2:27), had a son Ahimelech, who is expressly stated to have been "of the sons of Ithamar" (1 Chron 24:3; compare 2 Sam 8:17). With this accords the circumstance that the names of Eli and his successors in the high-priesthood up to and including Abiathar are not found in the genealogy of Eleazar (1 Chron 6:4-15; compare Ezra 7:1-5). As the history makes no mention of any high-priest of the line of Ithamar before Eli, he is generally supposed to have been the first of that line who held the office (McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia)

6th God tied Eli directly to his father Aaron and called him a priest.

"Thus says the Lord: 'Did I not clearly reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? 28 Did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? 29 Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?' 30 Therefore the Lord God of Israel says: 'I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the Lord says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Sam 2:27-30

Eli's sons were exceedingly wicked men.

(1) They were corrupt and did not know the Lord

Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the Lord. 1 Sam. 2:12

(2) In their selfish desire for the meat, they ruined the sacrifices of those who came to sacrifice. They became so disgusting to Israel that they began feeling an abhorrence to sacrificing the Lord at all.

And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged flesh hook in his hand while the meat was boiling. 14 Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's

servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw." 16 And if the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force." 17 **Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.** 1 Sam. 2:13-17

- (3) They committed adultery with the women who were there to minister to the Lord(2:22)

Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 1Sam. 2:22-23

- (4) They refused to listen to their father's rebuke(2:25).

So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. 24 No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the Lord's people transgress. 25 If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?" Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the Lord desired to kill them. 1 Sam 2:23-25

Eli's Sins Regarding His Sons

When the man of God was sent to Eli God revealed to him the terrible punishment that would be given first to Eli, then to his two sons, and finally to all their posterity Eli had no defense since for whatever reason Eli did not have the courage, strength, wisdom, or devotion to God to do anything about it.

Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?' 30 Therefore the Lord God of Israel says: 'I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the Lord says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Sam 2:29-31

For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. 14 And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." 1 Sam 3:13-14

This passage is a classic example of Jesus warning to His own disciples

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. Matt 10:34-38

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it — 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, Luke 14:25-30

There is always a grave danger when children and parents are concerned. Many children accept what their parents believe without question. They refuse to even consider anything other than what they have been taught. Those who do this will be condemned because they are placing their parents above the truth.

The danger to parents comes when the children grow up and choose evil paths. In order for the parents to maintain a relationship with the children and grand children they compromise on truth and morality. Many a godly man has changed a position on doctrine or morality based on decisions of their children. After the decisions, a man must decide if he loves Jesus and the truth or his children.

Samuel's Childhood.

Samuel is raised by Eli and from the earliest times, in spite of the wickedness all around him is a servant ministering and serving the LORD.

But Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod. 19 Moreover his mother used to make him a little robe, and bring it to him year by year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 1 Sam 2:18-19

Like Jesus after him, Samuel grew in stature and in favor with God and man.

And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the Lord and men. 1 Sam 2:26

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Luke 2:51-52

This encompasses the physical, spiritual, and mental and emotional (personality) elements of one's character. Luke adds wisdom to what he said about Jesus. These are the areas each parent / grandparent, and teacher / guide must be vitally concerned with and overseeing. Most parents are concerned about their stature and care for their physical needs. But the true mark God is concerned with is the favor they seek to instill within the child. This would include training them to love, be devoted toward and submissive to the Lord. To trust in Him with all their heart and not lean upon their own understanding.

Samuel's First Prophecy

While Hannah made the vow to give Samuel to the Lord all the days of his life, and Samuel had been ministering to the Lord, God had not yet made know the role Samuel would have. Samuel never received a formal call. God simply began speaking to Samuel and used him as a prophet.

As the scene unfolds, it is a normal evening in every respect. Eli was preparing for his sleep, but special emphasis is made about his blindness which was now far advanced. Samuel had also prepared and has laid himself down for the night to sleep. We also are told that the light of the tabernacle was still lit, which might infer Samuel was inside the tabernacle, or only be recorded to reveal the time of day. The fact that God's word was rare (meaning He was not revealing himself to prophets), probably explains why it took Eli so long to understand what was happening.

Now the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation. 2 And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, 3 and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down, 4 that the Lord called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" 5 So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." And he said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down. 1 Sam. 3:1-6

All of this sets the stage. Samuel did not know who was calling him, and Eli did not quickly realize the full significance because it hadn't happened before. Samuel could only think of one person who would be calling him so he kept returning to Eli to see what he needed. The first time, Eli simply sent him back to bed thinking he had imagined someone calling him.

God again called out to Samuel and Samuel again went to Eli. It was not until the third time that Eli understood what had occurred and gave Samuel the advice that would begin the conversation.

Then the Lord called yet again, "Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 (Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him.) 8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 1 Sam 3:6-9

As soon as God called the fourth time, Samuel spoke the exact words Eli had told him to speak. With no explanation or preface, God simply revealed Eli's fate and its reason. Samuel may have already heard some of these things from Eli, or from the man of God who spoke similar words to him (2:27-36).

Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." 11 Then the Lord said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. 14 And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." 1 Sam 3:10-14

Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the news, but Eli was able to get the information from him and humbly accepted God's words.

Although we are given a small glimpse into the type of revelations Samuel received, we do not see it again until the his dealings with Saul and David. Yet God made it clear that He continued to reveal things to Samuel in Shiloh and all that God revealed to Samuel came to pass.

So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord. 21 Then the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord. 1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. 1Sam 3:19-21; 4:1

Death of Eli and His Sons

The opening words of the fourth chapter are a clear indication of how much time had passed. As the chapter opened Samuel was then the established prophet and Judge of Israel, and it was the word of Samuel that was coming into all Israel. Eli's life and influence are clearly over, and at this time in Eli's life, he is completely blind and has lived to the age of 98.

Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were so dim that he could not see. 1 Sam 4:15

The fulfillment of God's word to Samuel regarding the house of Eli is then fully revealed. A battle between Israel and the Philistines ends badly for Israel with the loss of 4,000 men. The elders of Israel ask the right question, but come up with a completely wrong answer. The superstitious nature of the age is clearly revealed by Israel's foolish notion that the ark itself had some power that would force God to act. That notion hasn't left the earth yet as it is still on display in such movies and Raiders of the lost ark. Instead of reasoning as the Law had revealed that when God was not with them it was because they were unfaithful and in need of repentance, they reason that we just need to have the ark here to solve everything.

And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies." 4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. 1Sam 4:3-4

They sent word to Shiloh which brought Eli's two sons to the battle zone. With the arrival of the ark, Israel's misdirected zeal leads them to shout with great enthusiasm. Within the Philistines words we find how rumors had changed the truth into a myth.

So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp!" And they said, "Woe to us! For such a thing has never happened before. 8 Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. 9 Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, that you do not become servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Conduct yourselves like men, and fight!" 1 Sam 4:7-9

First, by using the term "gods," they have changed the greatness of the LORD God into the same type of deities that they worshiped. Second, they have the plagues coming upon the Egyptians in the wilderness and not in the land of Egypt.

But their superstitious dread was misplaced. God had no intention of honoring Israel. Not even the threatened loss of his ark could move God to act to help Israel. Subsequent events prove that God can take care of His ark without any human agency at all. Instead of the former 4,000, in this battle, 30,000 died along with Hophni and Phinehas and the ark was captured.

So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. 11 Also the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died. 1 Sam 4:10-11

Perhaps we again see the weakness in Eli's character or maybe just the weakness of his body, as his heart was trembling for the fate of the ark, but he did not have the strength to stop them from taking it. As the message of the battle is carried to the people, it is obvious that something terrible had happened. As he sought to find the reason, the messenger stands before him and revealed the terrible outcome of the wickedness of Israel and his two sons. Upon hearing this, he falls backward and dies.

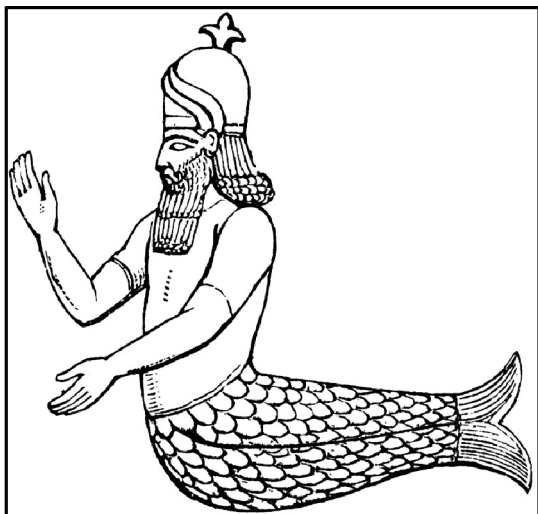
Later, when the wife of Phinehas heard the terrible news, it brought her labor upon her and soon after giving birth she died, but not before giving her son that name "no glory" or "inglorious."

God's Dealings with the Philistines – 1Sam. 5-6

The events in these chapters bring great joy and excitement to those who have a heart of faith. We all know God has this power, but it is thrilling to see God exert even a small amount of it in this manner. Though only a minor skirmish, this contest between God's ark and the idol Dagon of the Philistines left no doubt regarding God's power and majesty. The events in Chapter Five all occur

in a seven month period(1Sam 6:1).

One can easily imagine the initial enthusiasm in the hearts of the Philistines as they brought the proof of their great victory into Dagon's temple. But it only lasted for one night because the next morning when they entered into Dagon's temple in Ashdod, they found their idol fallen upon its face in seeming homage to the ark. By their own power they were forced to place Dagon back in his position.



And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again. 1Sam 5:4-5

The next morning not only is the idol fallen to the ground again, but the hands and head have been broken off and only the trunk is lying before the ark. If the evidence put forth from an image found in Assyria is correct then Dagon was the fish god and had a tail like a fish (like the picture on the left). With the hands and head broken off it would simply be the trunk with a tail.

And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's torso was left of it. 1Sam 5:3-5

It is highly unlikely that the head and hands would have landed in this position by chance. But the people had little time to ponder this by itself for this soon became the least of their worries. There was a plague, tumors, and other disasters that began immediately after the ark's arrival.

These events were too close together and obviously tied to the arrival of the ark of the LORD. The connection was obvious enough to the people of Ashdod that they wanted the ark removed from their city.

But the hand of the Lord was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory. 7 And when the men of Ashdod saw how it was, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god." 1 Sam 5:6-8

They call a counsel with the "Lord's of the Philistines" who are still in power to "so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war," as the Lord has said:

Now these are the nations which the Lord left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan 2 (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), 3 namely, five lords of the Philistines, Judg 3:1-3

From the outcome of the counsel it appears that most of the Philistines are not yet convinced that the God of the Hebrews had more power than their god, Dagon. So those in Ashdod are glad to be rid of it and those in Gath have not yet been convinced. But soon after the ark arrived in Gath the same things occurred there.

So they carried the ark of the God of Israel away. 9 So it was, after they had carried it away, that the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction; and He struck the men of the city, both small and great, and tumors broke out on them. 1Sam. 5:8-9

This time evidently some are convinced or some are not. At any rate with no council called, those in Gath send the ark to Ekron. But the people in Ekron immediately go into a panic. They send for all the Lord's of the Philistines and demand that the ark be sent back.

Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. So it was, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people!" 11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. 12 And the men who did not die were stricken with the tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven. 1Sam. 5:10-12

When we compare the facts about the three cities we get a clear picture of the death, havoc and destruction that had occurred.

Ashdod

hand was heavy
He ravaged them
struck them with tumors

Gath

Hand against the city
A very great destruction
Struck them with tumors

Ekron

hand of God was very heavy there
Deadly destruction throughout all the city
Men who did not die stricken with tumors

The fact that both tumors and rats are placed in the ark indicates the type of plague.

Then they said, "What is the trespass offering which we shall return to Him?" They answered, "Five golden tumors and five golden rats, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines. For the same plague was on all of you and on your lords. 5 Therefore you shall make images of your tumors and images of your rats that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand from you, from your gods, and from your land. 1 Sam 6:4-6

The panic in the three cities had led to a powerful suspicion that the God of Israel who dwelt above the ark had brought all these problems upon them. But there were still some who were skeptical and did not want to simply capitulate. They called together all the priests and diviners to discuss the best way to proceed.

They chose what we could call the "scientific method." But their method was still not completely fair since the mothers of the calves would not have willingly been separated from them. First, as noted above they made golden images of tumors and rats and since there were five Lord's of the philistines they made five of each.

Then they posed a question that revealed that even hundreds of years after the Exodus the historical account had not been forgotten.

Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart? 1Sam 6:6

Yet though they speak like this, there is still some skepticism in the minds of some. So they decide to force God to act and prove that it was truly Him who had done all these things.

Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. 8 Then take the ark of the Lord and set it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you are returning to Him as a trespass offering in a chest by its side. Then send it away, and let it go. 9 And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that struck us — it happened to us by chance." 1 Sam 6:6-9

After everything was done exactly as they proposed, the mothers of the calves were hitched and God left no doubt in their minds. For without any whip or urging left of their own accord, but lowing in pain and sorrow for the loss of their calves all the way from Gath to Beth Shemesh.

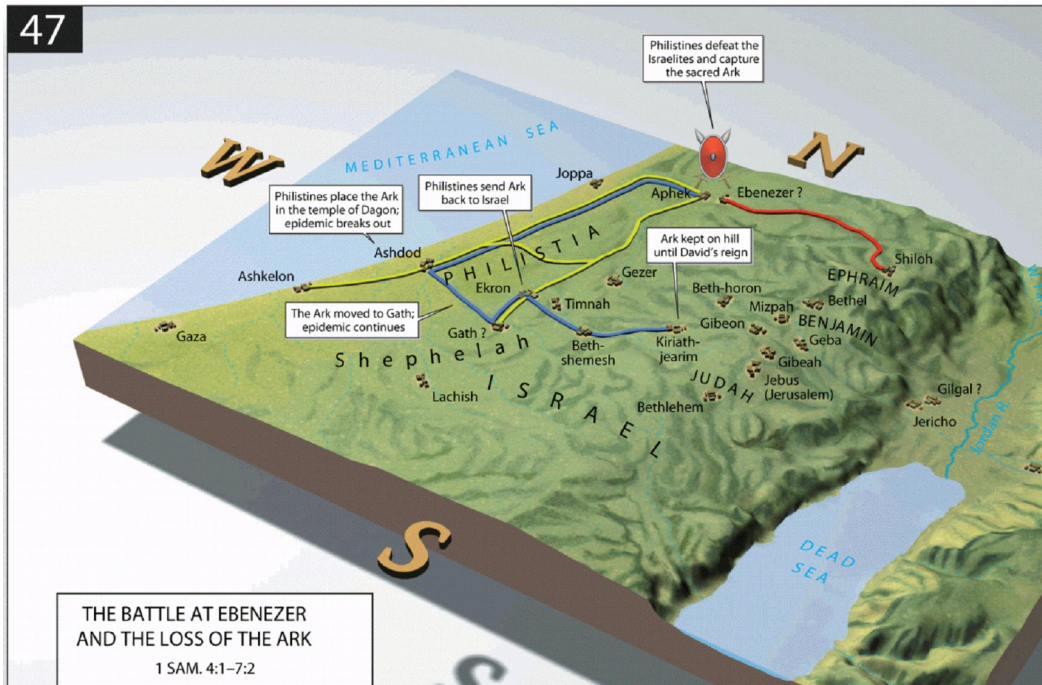
Then the men did so; they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. 11 And they set the ark of the Lord on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumors. 12 Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh. 1Sam 6:10-12

If anyone of the Philistines has any interest in truth, these events would have softened their hearts.

The Ark at Beth Shemesh

This was during the wheat harvest and when they saw the cows bringing the ark into their community, they rejoiced.

Now the people of Beth Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. 14 Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone was there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. 1 Sam 6:13-15



But their ignorance or presumption came out for instead of covering the ark and calling for Samuel, the people presume to open the ark even though they clearly know what it is. The Levites should have know better. The Kohathites were charged with carrying the ark, but God had made it clear that no one was to touch or look upon the ark.

But their ignorance or presumption came out for instead of covering the ark and calling for Samuel, the people presume to open the ark even though they clearly know what it is. The Levites should have know better. The Kohathites were charged with carrying the ark, but God had made it clear that no one was to touch or look upon the ark.

And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them; but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. ... 17 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 18 "Do not cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites; 19 but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task. 20 But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, lest they die." Num 4:15; 17-20

Because they did not follow these instructions God was forced to strike some of them dead. There is a textual problem here regarding the number. There is really no way to know which is the right number today. But whether it was 70, or 50,070, it was a terrible tragedy for Beth Shemish.

*Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. **He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people**, and the people lamented because the Lord had struck the people with a great slaughter. 20 And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? And to whom shall it go up from us?" 21 So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the Lord; come down and take it up with you." 1Sam 6:19-21 KJV*

*And he struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the Lord. **He struck seventy men of them**, and the people mourned because the Lord had struck the people with a great blow. 1Sam 6:19 ESV*

*And he smote of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of Jehovah, **he smote of the people seventy men, (and) fifty thousand men**; and the people mourned, because Jehovah had smitten the people with a great slaughter. 1Sam 6:19-20 ASV*

Shiloh was Forsaken

After the events at Beth Shemesh, They plead with the neighboring city of Kirjath Jearim.

So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the Lord; come down and take it up with you." 7 Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. 1 Sam 6:21; 7:1

No mention is made of Samuel, or whether Abinadab was a Levite or of the priesthood. Nothing

is stated about the worship of the Lord continuing during this time. It is all left in obscurity. But one thing is made clear. The ark never went back to Shiloh.

So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. 1Sam. 7:2

Ultimately it was David who brought the ark and other articles of the tabernacle to Jerusalem.

*and **let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we have not inquired at it since the days of Saul.** 4 Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. 1Chr. 13:3-4*

*And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to **Kirjath Jearim**, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the Lord, who dwells between the cherubim, where His name is proclaimed. 7 So they carried the ark of God on a new cart **from the house of Abinadab**, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. 1 Chron 13:6-8*

*So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and **brought it out of the house of Abinadab**, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. 4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. 2Sam 6:3-5*

The Importance of Shiloh

Even before Israel entered into the promised land, God had prophesied that He would choose a place for his tabernacle and that all the people would gather there for the feasts to offer sacrifices at the tabernacle.

***And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars,** and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. 4 **You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.** 5 "**But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses,** out of all your tribes, **to put His name for His dwelling place;** and there you shall go. 6 **There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.** 7 And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the Lord your God has blessed you. 8 "You shall not at all do as we are doing here today — every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes — 9 for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you. 10 **But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety,** 11 **then there will be the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you:** your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the Lord. 12 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you. 13 **Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see;** 14 **but in the place which the Lord chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.** Deut 12:5-14*

Although it is not openly stated, by putting together several passages it is evident that the place that was initially chosen for the place of the tabernacle was Shiloh.

*Now **the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh,** and **set up the tabernacle of meeting there.** And the land was subdued before them. Josh 18:1-2*

*Then the men arose to go away; and Joshua charged those who went to survey the land, saying, "Go, walk through the land, survey it, and come back to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord in Shiloh." 10 **Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord,** and there Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions. Josh 18:8, 10*

*These were the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel **divided as an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.** So they made an end of dividing the country. Josh 19:51*

*Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. 31 So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, **all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.** Judg 18:30-31*

*This man went up from his city yearly to **worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh.** Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there. 1 Sam 1:3-4*

Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him **to the house of the Lord in Shiloh.** 1 Sam 1:24

But when the ark was taken from Shiloh, not only was Eli and his house rejected, but so also was Shiloh.

So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. 1 Sam 4:4

For they **provoked Him to anger with their high places, And moved Him to jealousy with their carved images.** 59 When God heard this, He was furious, And **greatly abhorred Israel,** 60 So that **He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, The tent He had placed among men,** 61 And **delivered His strength into captivity, And His glory into the enemy's hand.** 62 He also gave His people over to the sword, And was furious with His inheritance. Ps 78:58-62

Moreover **He rejected the tent of Joseph, And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim,** 68 **But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved.** 69 And He built His sanctuary like the heights, Like the earth which He has established forever. 70 He also chose David His servant, And took him from the sheepfolds; Ps 78:67-70

"But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. 13 And now, because you have done all these works," says the Lord, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, 14 **therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.** Jer 7:12-15

So the ark was no longer at Shiloh for God had rejected that place. The period from that time until the ark was brought to Jerusalem, by David is left in obscurity. We simply don't know where Israel assembled for their feasts and to bring their sacrifices. The ark was in Kirjath Jearim. The rest of the tabernacle is not accounted for. Did it remain in Shiloh desolate? The altar, table of show bread, golden lampstand were left at Shiloh when the ark was taken, and we are not told what happened to all of it.

The closest thing we have to the tabernacle is at Samuel's home in Ramah.

He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. 17 **But he always returned to Ramah, for his home was there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the Lord.** 1 Sam 7:16-17

The next time the tabernacle is described it has been moved to Gibeon and David has again set up the service to the Lord there.

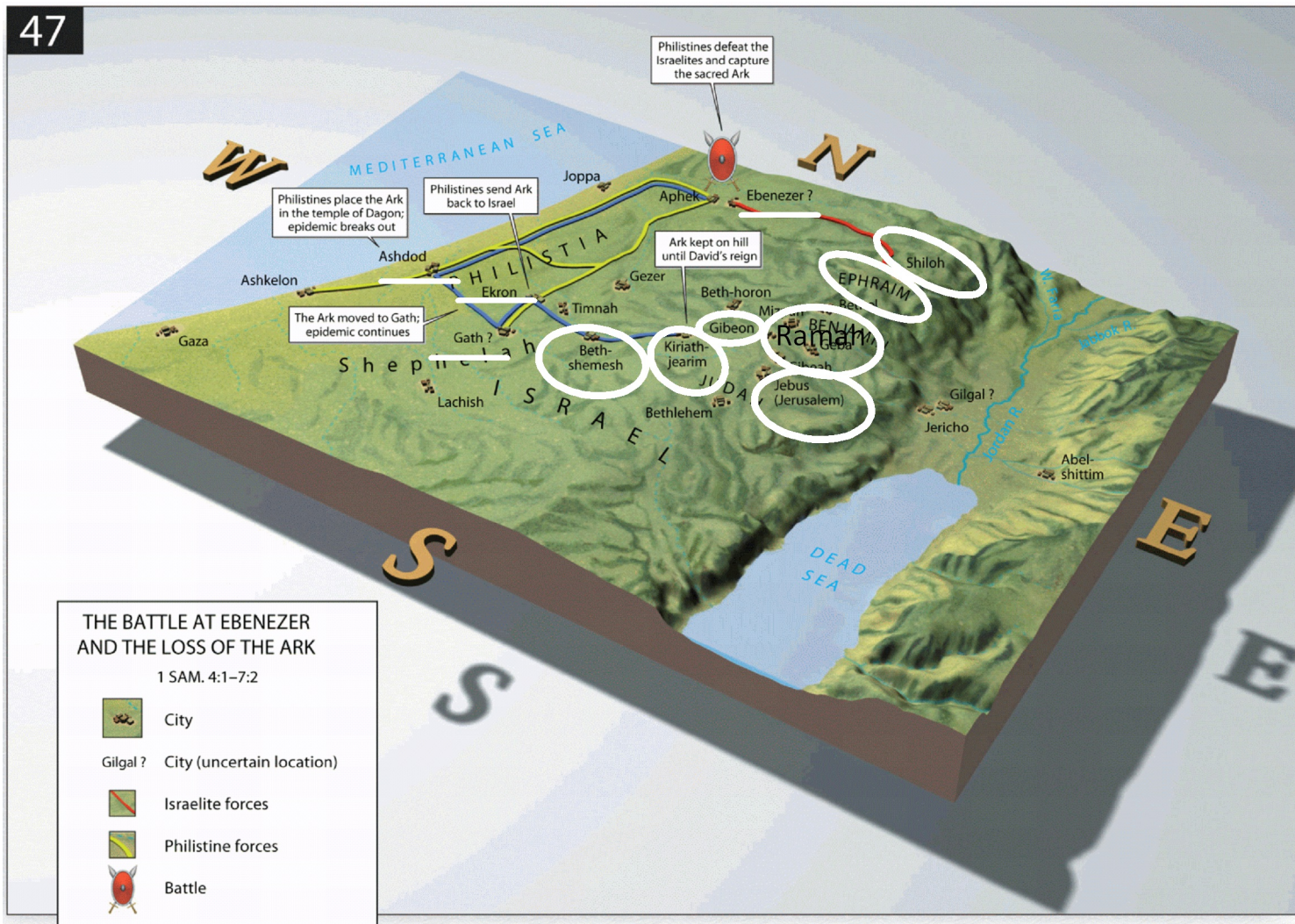
and Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests, **before the tabernacle of the Lord at the high place that was at Gibeon,** 40 to offer burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar of burnt offering regularly morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the Law of the Lord which He commanded Israel; 1 Chron 16:39-40

At that time, when David saw that the Lord had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there. 29 **For the tabernacle of the Lord and the altar of the burnt offering, which Moses had made in the wilderness, were at that time at the high place in Gibeon.** 30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the Lord. 1 Chron 21:28-30

Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" 1 Kings 3:4-5

During this period of time, the ark was at the house David had prepared for it in Jerusalem and the rest of the tabernacle was at Gibeon.

Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the Lord had made in the wilderness. 4 But David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim to the place David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. 5 Now the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the Lord; Solomon and the assembly sought Him there. 2 Chron 1:3-6



Here I lay my Ebenezer

As we noted in Jeremiah and again in the Psalms, God's worship at this time in the history of Israel was an abhorrence to God.

*For they **provoked Him to anger with their high places**, And **moved Him to jealousy with their carved images**. 59 When God heard this, He was furious, And **greatly abhorred Israel**, 60 So that **He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh**, The tent He had placed among men, 61 And **delivered His strength into captivity**, And **His glory into the enemy's hand**. 62 He also gave His people over to the sword, And was furious with His inheritance. Ps 78:58-62*

So as Samuel takes over after the terrible disaster at Ebenezer the first time, he begins with a call to r

Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." 4 So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served the Lord only. 1 Sam 7:3-4

The sermon accomplishes its purpose and the fruits of repentance are evident. Samuel chooses Mizpah as the place where Israel is to assembly and offer a great fast to the Lord.

And Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you." 6 So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the Lord. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the Lord." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah. 1Sam 7:5-6

They spend the day fasting and pleading for mercy(it could have been the day of atonement). As

they are gathered together in worship, the Philistines hear that Israel has assembled and decide to take action. It seems foolish for them to do this after the events with the ark, but the last time they had fought against Israel in Ebenezer, it had gone well so they decided to try again.

Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 So the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines." 1 Sam 7:7-8

There is one great difference this time. Israel has repented, they have a godly judge leading them and the Lord will now fight for them. Yet Israel is not feeling confident. They plead with Samuel to pray for them. He builds an altar and makes an offering.

And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. Then Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. 10 Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. 1 Sam 7:9-10

Samuel's offering of a burnt offering raises the question of the altar. If the tabernacle had already been moved to Ramah as it appeared it must have been later when Saul came in the next chapter, then Mizpah is only a few miles away and the altar could have been brought there. Or it may be they simply made an altar of stones as they had so many times before.

And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it. Ex 20:25-26

And there you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron tool on them. 6 You shall build with whole stones the altar of the Lord your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the Lord your God. 7 You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before the Lord your God. Deut 27:5-7

The glorious days of old return with great magnificence as God again fights with and for Israel.

But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car. 12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." 1 Sam 7:10-12

After this battle, Samuel set up the *Ebenezer* stone with the statement that the Lord (and not themselves) had helped them to that point

ebenezer = "stone of help" the memorial stone erected by Samuel to mark where God helped Israel to defeat the Philistines, north of Jerusalem..." (BDB #72)

After this defeat, the Philistines learned a valuable lesson that seems to have stayed with them for a short time.

So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14 Then the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered its territory from the hands of the Philistines. Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. 1 Sam 7:13-14

The End of the Judges

The end of this period of Israel's history is summed up with the final time that Samuel judged Israel.

And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16 He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. 17 But he always returned to Ramah, for his home was there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the Lord.

The cows take the ark back and the Philistines are taught an important lesson. **6:11-12, 16-18**

The people of Beth shemesh look into the ark and God strikes down 5,070 men. **6:19** The ark is then brought to Kiriath-Jearim where it remains for 20 years **7:1-2** Samuel now begins his work in earnest preaching to the people.

Remove all idols from your midst. **7:3-4**

Samuel wanted to meet Israel in Mizpah where he promised to pray for them. **7:5**

They fast and pray all that day. **7:6**

The Philistines heard and decided to come down to fight them. **7:7**

Israel begs Samuel to pray for them. **7:8**

Samuel offers a whole burnt offering and prays for them and the LORD answers. **7:9-11**

The Ebenezer stone(stone of help). **7:12**

All the days of Samuel there is no longer any problem with the Philistines. **7:13-17** But as Samuel grew old the people became very concerned. For as Samuel grew old, he decided to appoint his sons to be judges. **8:1-3** But unfortunately, Samuel's sons were also wicked and Israel did not want them as their rulers. It is difficult to know if this was a reason or an excuse, but Israel then asks for a king 1 Sam 8. This was something God had foreseen and even warned of (**Deut 17:14-20**).

The elders of Israel ask for a king at Ramah. **8:4-5**

Samuel is very displeased and prayed to the Lord. **8:6**

The LORD told Samuel not to take this personally. They were not rejecting Samuel as their leader, they were rejecting God as their King. He told Samuel to listen to their voice but to strongly warn them that having a king was not all pleasant. There would also be difficulties in having a king. **8:7-9**

Samuel carefully explained the nature of a king but the people still wanted one. **8:10-20**

God told Samuel to appoint a king. **8:21-22**

Saul Chosen and Anointed King

There is really no indication of what led them to make this request except for the one single statement: "like the rest of the nations."

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." 1 Sam 8:4-5

Thus this was peer pressure. The desire to be like the rest of the nations. They never really had the faith to understand that God was the source of their protection and guidance. They use the age of Samuel and the wickedness of his sons as an excuse. What do these two things have to do with God's providential care? Like so many, they have used the weakness of other people to justify turning against God.

Samuel is shocked! He spends the night pondering and considering the implications of what has been done and probably taking it very personally. God appears to him and comforts him by telling Samuel that the people have not in fact rejected him, but they had rejected God.

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the Lord. 7 And the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." 1 Sam 8:6-7

This was a continuation of the same unfaithfulness that God had tolerated since the very beginning of Israel's history. Although God is angry and hurt over this rejection, He still wants Israel to be warned of the terrible consequences of this act.

According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day — with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods — so they are doing to you also. 9 Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them." 1 Sam 8:8-9

The king they will choose will not be as fair or generous as God has been with them. God warns of taxation and servitude.

This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: 1Sam 8:10-18

- 1 Take your sons and appoint them for his chariots horsemen, run before his chariots.
- 2 Appoint captains over his thousands and his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.
- 3 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers.
- 4 Take the best of your fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his servants.
- 5 Take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants.
- 6 Take your male servants, female servants, finest young men, & donkeys, & put them to his work.
- 7 He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants.

And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

Even with this stern warning, the people once again can't see far enough ahead to be concerned about such things. Once again, the peer pressure of their day and desire to be like all the other nations takes precedence in their minds over the power God Himself could wield to help them.

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, 20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." 1 Sam. 8:19-20

In the end, Samuel returns to God with their message of unfaithfulness and rebellion. God then gives them a king, but not in joy and happiness but in anger and wrath.

And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the Lord. 22 So the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed their voice, and make them a king." And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city." 1 Sam 8:21-22

9 "O Israel, you are destroyed, But your help is from Me. 10 I will be your King; Where is any other, That he may save you in all your cities? And your judges to whom you said, 'Give me a king and princes'? 11 I gave you a king in My anger, And took him away in My wrath. Hos 13:9-11

Thus the chapter closes without any conclusion. God only told Samuel to make them a king. But whether Samuel told Israel of this, or simply dismissed them is not stated. Samuel knows that God has allowed their desire to be fulfilled, but not how it will be done.

The only thing revealed that explains Samuel's involvement in this process is found a day before Samuel anoints Saul.

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

We see several interesting points in this scripture. First, God expressly stated that it was He who sent Saul from the land of Benjamin. Second, this is the result of the cry that had come up from the people of Israel. Sometimes God will grant what his people pray for and request even if it is not in their best interests.

I Will Send you a Man

This is one of the most extraordinary ways that God has sent a man. Instead of directly revealing to Saul that God wanted him to go to the city where Samuel would be, a series of seemingly unrelated things actually brought Saul there. It all begins with Saul's father losing his donkeys and sending out Saul to find them.

Of all the tribes of Israel, the least likely tribe to contain the next king was Benjamin. At the end of Judges, all but a handful of the tribe of Benjamin was destroyed.

46 So all who fell that day of Benjamin were 25,000 men who drew the sword, all of them men of valor. 47 But 600 men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon and remained at the rock of Rimmon four months. ... 21:12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead 400 young virgins who had not known a man by lying with him, and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan. ... 21:16 Then the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since the women are destroyed out of Benjamin?" 20 And they commanded the people of Benjamin, saying, "Go and lie in ambush in the vineyards 21 and watch. If the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come out of the vineyards and snatch each man his wife from the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. Judg 20:46-47; 21:12, 16, 20-21

Yet from these 600 men, God chose the king requested by Israel. This man from Benjamin is identified by the wealth and might of his father and the quality of his stature and looks.

*There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, **a mighty man of power**. 2 And he had **a choice and handsome son** whose name was Saul. There was **not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel**. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people. 1Sam 9:1-2*

This seems to be an important fact since both the selection of David and the visage of Jesus were specified as not being important to their selection.

*But the Lord said to Samuel, "**Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature**, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1Sam 16:7*

*For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. **He has no form or comeliness**; And when we see Him, There is **no beauty that we should desire Him**. Isa 53:2*

The first king of Israel had physical power and beauty, and it all ended with sorrow. We must be careful that we do not allow such things to influence us either.

Saul's call and God's sending a man all began with the donkeys of Kish wandering away from home. Whether God caused them to wander or used this as the means by which He would lead Saul to where He wanted him to be is not revealed. But the fact that they were gone is what led Saul to begin this journey.

Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, "Please take one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." 1Sam 9:3

Our difficulty here is that God did not reveal where Saul's home was nor do we know where the land of Zuph is located. So the time he was gone and the distance he covered is impossible to find. We know he was gone long enough that Kish had begun to worry about the loss of his son.

When they had come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us return, lest my father cease caring about the donkeys and become worried about us." 1 Sam 9:5

The servant has knowledge that Samuel often frequented this city and at this time, they used the knowledge of the prophet to seek for things like the loss of donkeys.

And he said to him, "Look now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honorable man; all that he says surely comes to pass. So let us go there; perhaps he can show us the way that we should go." 1Sam 9:6

After they enter the city, in a way very similar to the meeting of the Philip and the eunuch, they meet at exactly the time that one is coming to find him and the other is going to the place where God had revealed Samuel would meet the next king of Israel.

So they went up to the city. As they were coming into the city, there was Samuel, coming out toward them on his way up to the high place. 1 Sam 9:14

While Samuel was expecting Saul, Saul had no idea what was transpiring. As soon as they meet, again just like Philip, God told Samuel that this was the man he was to work with and all the earlier preparations would be fulfilled.

So when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him, "There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people." 18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, "Please tell me, where is the seer's house?" 1Sam 9:17-18

While Saul was seeking the prophet to find the donkeys, Samuel had prepared for Saul's arrival.

NOTE: Saul did not even have the opportunity to ask about the donkeys, Samuel already knew.

Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart. 20 But as for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not be anxious about them, for they have been found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on you and on all your father's house?" 1Sam 9:19-20

Saul is amazed and perplexed at this greeting. He has no idea how he could be the one "on whom is all the desire of Israel." Saul speaks the truth in humility when he described his father's house:

And Saul answered and said, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?" 1Sam 9:21

But this greeting is only the first of several amazing things that occurred to Saul that day. First he is seated in the place of honor. Second, the food brought was specially prepared for him even though there was no way Samuel could have known he was coming.

*Now Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and had them **sit in the place of honor** among those who were invited; there were about thirty persons. 23 And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Set it apart.'" 24 So the cook took up the thigh with its upper part and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, "Here it is, what was kept back. **It was set apart for you. Eat; for until this time it has been kept for you, since I said I invited the people.**" So Saul ate with Samuel that day. 1Sam 9:22-24*

It is not until the next morning that Samuel revealed only to Saul what God had determined.

As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go on ahead of us." And he went on. "But you stand here awhile, that I may announce to you the word of God." 1Sam 9:27

Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: "Is it not because the Lord has anointed you commander over His inheritance? 1Sam 10:1-2

Although this is the noun form, it is the term used for the Messiah.

mashiach "anointed one; Messiah." Of the 39 occurrences of **mashiach**, none occurs in the wisdom literature. They are scattered throughout the rest of biblical literary types and periods. First, **mashiach** refers to one who is anointed with oil, symbolizing the reception of the Holy Spirit, enabling him to do an assigned task. Kings 1 Sam 24:6, high priests, and some prophets 1 Kings 19:16 were so anointed: "If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people..." Lev 4:3 — Second, the word is sometimes transliterated "Messiah." After the promise to David 2 Sam 7:13 **mashiach** refers immediately to the Davidic dynasty, but ultimately it points to the "Messiah," Jesus the Christ: (Vines 4889)

Saul is the first king and thus received the anointing just as the High Priests and many of the Once again, God's providence is revealed since everything that would occur to Saul that day was already known and thus prophesied(1 Sam 10:2-8).

- 1 When you have departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel's tomb
- 2 they will say to you, 'The donkeys have been found, now your father is worrying about you.
- 3 you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor.
- 4 There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine.
5. they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive from their hands.
- 6 After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is and you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying.
- 7 Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.
- 8 And let it be, when these signs come to you, that you do as the occasion demands; for God is with you.

After all these things, Saul's free will is to be exercised. The importance of this command will be seen later when it is given again and after ignoring it, Saul lost the right to be king.

You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do." 1 Sam 10:8

Later, when Saul met his uncle, he kept all these things to himself.

Then Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?" So he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that they were nowhere to be found, we went to Samuel." 15 And Saul's uncle said, "Tell me, please, what Samuel said to you." 16 So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, he did not tell him what Samuel had said. 1 Sam 10:14-16

Saul Proclaimed King

The day Samuel had told Saul of arrived, and the events transpired that made him king. It began with all the people being invited to this assembly.

Samuel made it very clear that this was not something God had planned but was the result of their rebellion.

*Then Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah, 18 and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.' 19 But **you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!'** Now therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your clans." 1 Sam 10:17-19*

The process is done in such a way that no one could claim God had not done the choosing. When they can't find Saul, God revealed the This location where he was hiding.

And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. 21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. 22 Therefore they inquired of the Lord further, "Has the man come here yet?" And the Lord answered, "There he is, hidden among the equipment." 1 Sam 10:20-22

After they find Saul and bring him before the people, his stature moves them to proclaim him king.

5823 So they ran and brought him from there; and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. 24 And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?" So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!" 1 Sam 10:23-24

The chapter closes with the mixed response from the people.

And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant men went with him, whose hearts God had touched. 27 But some rebels said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace. 1 Sam 10:26-27

Saul's First Battle

The brutality of the age is seen in the events that led up to Saul's first opportunity to show the value of Israel having a king. The king of Ammon comes up against the city of Jabesh Gilead. While the city is willing to surrender and become servants, Nahash puts a terrible condition on their doing so.

And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel." 1 Sam 11:2

The elders ask for seven days to see if someone will come and help them. Nahash either doesn't know about Saul, or is so confident that he doesn't care since he gives them this time.

Then the elders of Jabesh said to him, "Hold off for seven days, that we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. And then, if there is no one to save us, we will come out to you." 1 Sam 11:3

When Saul hears of this he musters Israel in a way reminiscent of the Levite in Judges. He cuts up a yoke of oxen, sent the pieces to all in Israel and threatened to do the same to their oxen if they do not come.

So he took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not go out with Saul and Samuel to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen." 1 Sam 11:7

The fear of the LORD comes upon all and soon 300,000 men from Israel and 30,000 from Judah have arrived and a message is sent to Jabesh promising deliverance.

When he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. 9 And they said to the messengers who came, "Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh Gilead: 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have help.'" 1 Sam 11:8-9

Israel is victorious and the people of Ammon are routed. Samuel then calls Israel to Gilgal to "renew" the Kingdom. We don't know anymore about this than can be gleaned from the account in the next chapter.

Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there." 15 So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. 1 Sam. 11:14-15

Renewing the Kingdom

By our standards, what occurs in this chapter would not be called a renewal, yet that is exactly how Samuel termed it. So we will look at these events as they are placed under this heading.

Samuel first proclaims his own innocence. He gives no reason for beginning this way, but it appears he is seeking to prove to them that they could not use him as an excuse for what they had done. No one could bring any accusation against him.

Here I am. Witness against me before the Lord and before His anointed: Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received any bribe with which to blind my eyes? I will restore it to you." 4 And they said, "You have not cheated us or oppressed us, nor have you taken anything from any man's hand." 5 Then he said to them, "The Lord is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they answered, "He is witness." 1 Sam 12:3-5

Samuel then gives a brief overview of the history of Israel beginning with Jacob going into Egypt and the oppression they had heaped upon Israel. He reminds them that God delivered them through the hands of Moses and Aaron. Skipping over Joshua and the conquest he moved to the time when Israel rejected God for idols and sent them judges.

Yet they in spite of all the times God had delivered them, they had rejected him in favor of a human king.

And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the Lord your God was your king. 13 "Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen and whom you have desired. And take note, the Lord has set a king over you. 14 If you fear the Lord and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the Lord your God. 15 However, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you, as it was against your fathers. 1 Sam 12:12-15

Through Samuel, God wanted it clearly understood that nothing had changed. If they continued to be rebellious, they would have the same trials and troubles they had before. If they were faithful, then they would have the same success as they had before. The king would gain them nothing in the sight of the Lord. It was always their faithfulness/unfaithfulness that led to all their troubles, not the lack of a king.

To prove his point, he calls upon God to do a mighty work that would not only prove God was behind these words but also punish them for their sins by compromising their harvest.

"Now therefore, stand and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes: 17 Is today not the wheat harvest? I will call to the Lord, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking a king for yourselves." 18 So Samuel called to the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. 19 And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves." 1Sam. 12:16-19

The purpose for this thunder and rain is for them to see that their wickedness was great in asking for a king. Even though God had granted their request, it was a terrible flaw in their character that they had so asked. The people were so moved by this sight that they repented and pleaded with Samuel to pray for them.

Samuel gives a dual answer. First, God was not casting them off for this sin. He will forgive them, but allow them to reap the terrible consequences of this sin. Second, Samuel would never stop praying for them as it would be a sin in the eyes of the Lord for him to do so.

For the Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you His people. 23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. 24 Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. 25 But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king." 1 Sam 12:22-25

Saul Fails his First Test

Two years came and went and the first real crisis occurred where Saul and the peoples faith in God was sorely tested. Jonathan destroys a garrison of the Philistines and the Philistines determine to retaliate with a massive army. When the children of Israel see the dire strait they are now in most of them simply bolt to the nearest cave, thicket, rock or pit

Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. 6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. 7 And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. 1Sam. 13:5-7

Saul goes to Gilgal to wait for Samuel in exactly the manner that Samuel had told him to do the previous time.

You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do." 1 Sam 10:8

As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. 8 Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. 1Sam 13:7-8

At this point, one can understand the fear and concern on the part of Saul. The Philistines have a mighty army which could come upon him at any time, the people are becoming increasingly distressed and more and more are leaving as the days pass, and still Samuel does not come. Saul allows earthly fears and concerns to sway him into disobeying a plain commandment of God.

With all these warnings, with all the signs God has given to Saul of His providential care and with the Spirit being mighty upon him, Saul failed at what Abraham had succeeded. God made him wait for Samuel up to the very last moment(13:5-8). But in the end something led Saul to lean upon his own wisdom and understanding and set aside the command of God.

Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin chose to offer the burnt offering that only the priest could do. It is obvious from the timing(as soon as he finished the offering), that God had tested him and he had failed it.

So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering. 10 Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him. 11 And Samuel said, "What have you done?" 1 Sam. 13:9-11

No amount of pressure nor human wisdom could justify disobeying a direct commandment of God. God could not overlook this act, and immediately sends the prophet to rebuke him and declare his fate as a result of the action. There is no remorse or repentance whatsoever recorded on the part of Saul. His excuse is so very sad, as is God's rebuke(13:13-14)

Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, 12 then I said, 'The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord.' Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering." 1 Sam 13:11-12

And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you." 1 Sam 13:13-14

What can we learn here?

Saul is like so many today who look out and survey the situation of the world determine that the commands of God must be modified to fit their assessment of how to make things work better. Today people do exactly the same thing Saul did when they change the conditions of salvation(baptism), worship, or church organization to make it more palatable to the world. What folly to follow in the steps of Saul! Saul was so convinced that the command to wait for Samuel was not as wise as leaning upon his own understanding. Instead of putting his total, complete trust and reliance upon God he relied upon his own wisdom.

God's similar warnings today. II Jn 9; Mt 15:8-9; Gal 1:6-9;

Saul Gains “sovereignty” and fights against the “Amalekites”

As Saul’s reign progressed, he gained further and further control over Israel until he “*established his sovereignty.*” This revealed itself in the fighting and winning against the various enemies of Israel. All the nations that had troubled Israel during the time of the Judges are now fought against. These opportunities seem to have arisen because these nations were still plundering even at that time. As each nation created a problem similar to what the Ammonites had done to them earlier (1 Sam 11:1-11), Saul fought against them and God gave him the victory.

So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he harassed them. 48 And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them. 1 Sam 15:1-3

Since the Amalekites will play such an important role in the outcome of Saul’s reign, it is important to review their dealings with Israel.

The origin of Amalek is nowhere mentioned. They are first mentioned in the time of Abraham along with the Amorites.

In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness. 7 Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar. Gen 14:5-7

While Balaam was under the influence of inspiration (Num 24:2), he spoke of the ultimate end of these people.

And Balaam raised his eyes, and saw Israel encamped according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him. 3 Then he took up his oracle and said: 20 Then he looked on Amalek, and he took up his oracle and said: "Amalek was first among the nations, But shall be last until he perishes." Num 24:2-3; 20

So although one of Esau’s sons was named Amalek, it is not possible their origin began at that time.

*And this is the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir. 10 These were the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. 11 And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. 12 Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore **Amalek** to Eliphaz. 15 These were the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn son of Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, 16 Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, and Chief **Amalek**. These were the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They were the sons of Adah. Gen 36:9-12, 15-16*

Our first real introduction to them as a nation occurred as Israel came out of Egypt. This account occurs just before Israel arrived at Sinai and therefore Rephidim is located somewhere near Sinai. Why Amalek was so far South is not revealed. But they chose to attack Israel and God revealed to them that without his help they could not be victorious. Only while Moses held up his staff did they prevail.

1 Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. ... 8 Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Ex 17:1, 8-13

After the defeat, God did something unique. He was so angry with Amalek for what they had done that He placed them in the same category as the seven nations of Canaan.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner; 16 for he said, "Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Ex 17:14-16

God wanted this written in a book and when Moses later wrote Exodus, he placed these words as a memorial that God will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek. He is threatening them with the

same type of destruction that He did with the flood and Sodom & Gomorrah. This would be a divine judgment.

When the 12 spies came out of the land of Canaan, they listed Amalek as one of the nations living in Canaan that would make it impossible for them to take the land. They obviously remembered their last encounter with these people. They are identified as living in the land of the Negev which is located near the bottom of the Dead Sea.

*"Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified {and} very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. **Amalek** is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan." Num 13:28-29*

The last words spoken about Amalek are delivered by Moses in his final address. It is a call to never forget what Amalek did in that battle. This time it is specified that they waited until the strength of Israel went past and attacked the stragglers at the rear when they were tired and weary.

"Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, 18 how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God. 19 Therefore it shall be, when the Lord your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget. Deut 25:17-19

God then inspires Moses to give a prophecy. After Israel has finished conquering Canaan and they have rest from their enemies then at that time they must "*blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.*" Even though it may be a long time, God solemnly charged them "**You shall not forget.**"

Saul's Second Failure to Serve God

It is with all these things clearly in our minds that the event that changed the course of Saul's life occurred. Samuel was charged by God to give Saul the mission to blot them out. It is amazing that due to Israel's unfaithfulness it had taken about 400 years to fulfill this command. Since David reigned 40 years and Solomon only four, at the end of Saul's reign it was 436 years since they had come out of Egypt. This event occurred even before they got to Mt Sinai, so it was still the first year that they had come out of Egypt that this prophesy had been given.

*And it came to pass in **the four hundred and eightieth year** after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord. 1Kings 6:1-2*

How much of the above history Samuel told Saul is not indicated, but it was his duty to know it anyway. God had commanded in prophesy that all kings of Israel should "*write for himself a copy of this law in a book, and read it all the days of his life.*"

"When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' 15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' 17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. 18 **Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel. Deut 17:14-20**

Yet it is evident from how the events unfolded that Saul was not aware of these things as he should have been and it gravely affected the outcome. Since he did not take God's feelings into account, he thought lightly of the specific commands God had given to him about the exact way that this vengeance was to be meted out.

Heed the Voice of the Lord

First, Samuel reminded Saul that it was the Lord who had sent him to anoint Saul as King. Then he was very specific about what he said next. The term "*heed*" could also be translated hear and obey, or give careful consideration to what you are hearing and do well.

Samuel also said to Saul, *The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD.* 2 Thus says the LORD of hosts: *I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.* 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey. 1 Sam 15:1-3

Samuel then gave Saul the words he is to carefully heed and obey. The Lord has revealed to Samuel and now Samuel to Saul that the time has come for Amalek to be punished. As noted above, God had been very specific about what was to be done even before these words were given to Saul.

This is not Saul, but God who is punishing. This was a Divine judgment! Saul is to be God's instrument just as the flood(ancient world) and the brimstone(Sodom & Gomorrah) were. He is to carefully heed and do exactly what God says to do because He is that instrument.

The punishment & command is clear and explicit:

1. Attack Amalek.
2. Utterly destroy all they have.
3. Not to spare them.
4. Kill man and woman, infant and nursing child.
5. Kill ox and sheep, camel and donkey.

With such a clear and specific command, it is hard to understand how Saul could fail to fulfill it, but that is exactly what happened.

It was revealed that Saul had no difficulty defeating the Amalekites. The battle was won and there was no reason that God's commands could not be carried out. Actually it is obvious that the command could have easily been fulfilled when it is revealed "*everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.*" They were able to utterly destroy what they chose to destroy and they were able to spare what they wanted to spare.

And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. 1Sam. 15:7-9

The account is clear and forceful. It was not in the will of Saul and the people to fulfill the command. They chose to modify the command in order to make it more pleasing and more logical. Why waste all that is good. They destroyed what was worthless and then like Achan before them chose to ignore the clear instructions and keep "*the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good.*" This is clearly stated with the words "*were unwilling to utterly destroy them.*" It was a problem of will and heart.

'ābā ... I, accede to a wish, accept (a reproach), want to, be willing, consent to ... The primary meaning of this root is "the willingness (inclination) to do something under obligation or upon request." (TDWOT # 17)

It was not their will, so they would not consent or accept what God asked them to do. Though obligated and under request from God they were unwilling to do it. This is always the problem when with itching ears, they seek for teachers after their own lusts. Whether Saul was the driving force or just the one who allowed it to happen is not revealed.

They loosely fulfilled God's command, but did not do exactly what God demanded that they do. God's reaction is important for it has never changed since the garden of Eden.

Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, 11 I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands. And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night. 1Sam. 15:10-11

God was so disappointed in Saul's decision that he regretted ever making him king. He revealed that the manner in which Saul had fulfilled the command could only be summed with: "*He has turned back from following Me.*" This is how God sees man's efforts to serve Him substituting their own will for His. Though Saul had accomplished most of what God asked, the subtle changes led God to charge Saul with: "*He has not carried out my commands.*" Half hearted service was seen as open rebellion. Samuel was deeply grieved by Saul's disobedience and its consequences.

But what about Saul? He was so pleased with the way things turned out that he had actually built a monument to himself so everyone would remember it.

So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." 1Sam. 15:12

When Samuel met up with him at Gilgal, Saul can hardly contain himself he is so excited about the way everything had turned out, and immediately proclaimed "I have carried out the command of the LORD."

And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD. 14 But Samuel said, What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed. 15:13-15

Samuel doesn't argue with Saul or even charge him with rebellion. He asked a simple question that had great bearing on what was about to be said. If they had utterly destroyed the animals(God's mission) it would have been completely silent.

Saul is unconcerned with this question. He already has an explanation that he believes will relieve him of all responsibility and guilt. For him it is simple. As Adam in the garden, he blamed it on some one else. The fact that he was the king and the leader who was responsible does not seem to trouble Saul. To Saul it was simple. God gave them a mission, they changed that mission to suit their own will and then perfectly fulfilled that new mission. Instead of utterly destroying the Amalekites and all they had, they destroyed some of the Amalekites and brought the rest back to offer in sacrifice. Though Saul was quite pleased with the results, God was not!

The Lord sent Saul "on a Mission"

Then Samuel said to Saul, Wait, and let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night. And he said to him, Speak!... 18 and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated. 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD? 1Sam. 15:16,18-19

God viewed Saul's changes as doing *what was evil in the sight of the LORD*. Any change to God's instructions manifested a lack of faith and a lack of submission. Sadly, Saul was unconvinced with this reasoning. He still believed what he had done was better and began to argue with the prophet.

Then Saul said to Samuel, I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal. 1Sam. 15:20-21

Saul's point is based on seeing things as man sees them.

- ◆ All he did was try to make God's plan better.
- ◆ In his view, the Amalekites were still going to be killed,
- ◆ the possessions were still going to be taken away,
- ◆ no one in Israel was going to profit from them.
- ◆ God was going to get additional sacrifices
- ◆ and everyone was going to come out ahead.

The problem with this reasoning centers on two realms. First God doesn't see as man sees, hence such reasoning is full of grave danger. Even if a man was wise enough to take on such a thing as improving God's plan, If we missed even the tiniest thing, we would ruin everything. No one is wise enough to try to better God's missions. But the real issue is much deeper. Man can't improve on God's plan! God has never sought such advice and no would be capable to do it.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" 35 "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" 36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. Rom 11:33-36

Second, it destroyed the submissive walk of faith that God so strongly desires. In addition to how God dealt with Saul here, we have even more reasons not to attempt to do what Saul did.

Other reasons why God will not accept worship from those who rebel against His law:

1. We must worship in the truth of God's word. Without this we are not genuine worshipers.

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Jn. 4:23-24

2. Worship is vain when man's commands are used.

He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men — the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." 9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. Mk. 7:6-10

3. The work, worship and mission of the church were prepared in eternity.

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, Eph 3:8-12

Since the angels see God's manifold(many sided multicolored) wisdom in the church, how can any one think that making changes in "the eternal purpose" would please God? Imagine the wide eyed astonishment of angels when they see man dare to better it.

4. Man is to speak and to minister only with the strength God has supplied in His word.

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10-11

5. God has never sought a counselor! His ways are past tracing out.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" 35 'Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" 36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. Rom 11:33-36

6. God has placed throughout the Scriptures things "foolish" to man to test us.

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ... 26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 1Cor 1:21, 26-29

God chose "foolish things, weak things, base things of the world and things which are despised and things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are." The things man is tempted to make better to suit his own wisdom are the very things God placed in His word to test us. They are meant to screen out those whom God does not desire to have entrance. When a man changes them he literally screens himself right out of the picture. He may appeal to more people than otherwise, but ends up with his own perverted gospel and not God's (Gal 1:6-9).

This is what Samuel's final words reveal.

And Samuel said, Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king. 1Sam.15:22-23

Note the emphasis on obedience and heeding versus rebellion and insubordination. We can heed and submit to His missions, or we can rebel and become insubordinate by changing them. The real

punch in the verse is the comparison of Saul's changing God's mission with divination and idolatry. In God's eyes, elevating man's opinion to God's word is the same as idolatry. In failing to fulfill this mission God removed him from being king.

Saul has been blinded to the need of exact obedience by his pride and arrogance. None who truly loved and respected the power and glory of God would have reasoned as an equal and attempted to better the command of God. Only the most arrogant would have the audacity to bring anything back with them for whatever reason. Saul now falls into the same excuse making stance that Adam and Eve did when confronted with their sin. The people took the best, but again, he stresses they took it to offer as sacrifice to God. God was going to receive the glory in all this. He still does not see the nature of his transgression.

Saul "Repents"

It is important to carefully consider these words. We know God is no respecter of persons so if Saul had truly repented, he would have been forgiven. But the account does not deal with that here. It is only stated that the consequences of the sin could not be removed by forgiveness.

Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord." 26 But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel." 1Sam. 15:24-26

It is later revealed that God did not forgive Saul for this event, hence this was only worldly sorrow that led to death not godly sorrow leading to life.

So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the Lord, because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. 1Chron. 10:13-14

Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the Lord has departed from you and has become your enemy? 17 And the Lord has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18 Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day. 19 Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." 1Sam. 28:16-19

The final events of the chapter reveal this also. The way Samuel dealt with Agag revealed how this should have been done. Samuel showed no mercy, but God continued to regret He had made Saul king.

Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." 33 But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal. 34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel. 1Sam. 15:32-35

We will study the remainder of Saul's life as it relates to David since the beginning of the next chapter marks the turn from Saul to David. The remainder of Saul's life is focused on his dealings with David.

Now the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons." 1 Sam 16:1

David - The Man after God's Own Heart

After Saul "forced himself" to offer the burnt offering, which clearly revealed his inability to "trust in the Lord with all his heart and not lean on his own understanding"(Pr 3:5-7), God revealed immediately to Samuel that He would find "a man after his own heart:"

*But now **your kingdom shall not continue.** The Lord has **sought for Himself a man after His own heart,** and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you." 1Sam. 13:14*

Yet though God foretold it would occur, nothing more happened until Saul again rebelled when told to utterly destroy the Amalekites. When God saw his blatant disregard for His specific command, the consequences were immediate. First spoken to Samuel, the Samuel revealed them to Saul, and then Samuel cut off all ties and relationship with Saul.

*Now the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, 11 "**I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king,** for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." 1Sam. 15:10-11*

*Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also **has rejected you from being king.**" 1Sam. 15:23*

*And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and **the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.** 1Sam 15:35*

Whatever repentance Saul exhibited after this rebellion, it was not enough to remove these consequences. God had already made the decision after the burnt offering and moved to bring it about after the failure to obey in the matter of the Amalekites. He would not relent.

*Then Saul said to Samuel, "**I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words,** because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord." 1 Sam 15:24-25*

*But Samuel said to Saul, "**I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.**" 27 And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28 So Samuel said to him, "**The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours,** who is better than you. 29 And also **the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent.** For He is not a man, that He should relent." 1 Sam 15:26-29*

David Anointed King

At this point, the history of God's people changes. God has sought and found a man after His own heart and at this time makes His will known to Jesse and his sons.

*Now the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing **I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?** Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For **I have provided Myself a king among his sons.**" 1 Sam 15:35-16:1*

Samuel reveals his own fears regarding Saul's attitude's when he pleads with God revealing that he feared for his life if Saul were to find out.

And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." But the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' 3 Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you." 1Sam. 16:2-3

God gives Samuel a second reason to go to find Jesse. This offers us an insight into lying, since it is impossible for God to lie, and there was no reason for Saul to know the true reason. Obviously if Saul had asked Samuel would have told the full truth, but since he never asked, the second reason stood.

Before we look at what happened next it is interesting to see the genealogy of Jesse.

*And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; 19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; 20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; 21 **Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed;** 22 **Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.** Ruth 4:17-22*

David's genealogy first revealed in Ruth was that she was the grandmother of David. Boaz became Ruth's husband and her firstborn child was Obed. Obed then went on to have a son named Jesse who was the father of David. But the Holy Spirit wanted us to know more, so in the book of Matthew he adds that Boaz mother was Rahab the harlot.

Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. 4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 5 **Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth**, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king. Mt. 1:3-6

So David's great grandmother was Rahab the harlot and his grandmother was Ruth. One can't help but wonder if these two great women of faith had some influence on David's heart being after God's own heart. That was certainly the case with Timothy.

when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. 2 Tim 1:5-6

Samuel arrives in Bethlehem and after the sacrifice goes to the home of Jesse. Samuel made a classic mistake by moving just a little ahead of God in his reasoning which God quickly removed with a powerful statement that we should all ponder when seeking to judge righteously.

So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him!" 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1Sam. 16:6-7

God doesn't see as man sees because God can see something no one else can see. He looks directly into the heart. Because of that he rejected the one Samuel thought should be king and then in quick succession all the rest of David's brothers as well.

Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these." 11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." 1Sam 16:10-11

As soon as he arrived, God made known his choice.

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah. 1 Sam 16:13

At that time, God also gave David the Holy Spirit which Jesus later clearly revealed gave him the inspiration to write Scripture.

Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, "'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.'" Mk. 12:35-36

Later, in one of his Psalms, David captured these amazing and wonderful truths:

O Lord, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. 5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. Ps 139:1-6

King Saul meets David

After the events with the Amalekites, the Holy Spirit who had been given to Saul when he was anointed was taken from him.

But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him. 15 And Saul's servants said to him, Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. 1 Sam 16:14-15

The account is not very detailed so it is difficult to fully understand or explain exactly what occurred. We know the Holy Spirit had come upon Saul immediately after he was anointed and that he did prophesy at least that one time.

Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. ... So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. 10 When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. 1Sam. 10:6-10

But there is no further information as there is with David to guide us. While David wrote Psalms and used his inspiration, Saul did nothing later to help guide us. But whatever guidance had been provided, it was all taken from Saul at this time.

Some are ready to jump to the conclusion that the "distressing spirit from the Lord" was some kind of demon possession. But nowhere in Scripture has God been the author of sending demons, and there is nothing here to force us to conclude that this "distressing spirit" was a demon. It is just as possible that with the removal of the Holy Spirit and the realization that his kingdom was being

given to another, his descent into depression and madness was sown and increased over time. It was this problem that led to David's being introduced to Saul.

So Saul said to his servants, "Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring him to me." 18 Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the Lord is with him." ... 21 So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armorbearer. 1Sam. 16:17-18, 21

These early days show that Saul felt great affection for David, and that through David's skillful playing on the harp, Saul's sense of well being would return.

David & Goliath

While, English speaking people are always aware and concerned about chronology and time, the Scriptures often place them in a position of secondary importance. Such is the case here. The chapter records the events as they occurred but with no concern to fit them into what had been recorded in the previous chapter. It is up to us to fit David as a harp player who became Saul's armor bearer with David the slayer of Goliath.

The chapter simply opens with a description of a battle between Israel and the Philistines(17:1-3). Before the battle begins, a champion, Goliath throws down a challenge to Israel. Before the challenge, a brief description of Goliath(17:4-7):

- ◆ Height was six cubits and a span. ≈ 9' 9"
- ◆ Helmet of brass upon his head
- ◆ A coat of mail (rings or fish scales); 5000 shekels of brass. ≈125 lbs
- ◆ Greaves of brass upon his legs,
- ◆ Javelin of brass between his shoulders (either a lance/small spear or a shield).
- ◆ Staff of his spear like a weaver's beam;
- ◆ Spear head weighed 600 shekels of iron ≈15 lbs.

His appearance was so fearsome that none in Israel was bold enough to accept his challenge.

Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." 10 And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." 11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. 1Sam. 17:8-11

David is now introduced as though it is for the first time and the events surrounding how he providentially came to be there is described.

Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse, and who had eight sons. And the man was old, advanced in years, in the days of Saul. 13 The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. 14 David was the youngest. And the three oldest followed Saul. 15 But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. 1Sam. 17:12-15

David came and went from time to time, and just happened to arrive during that forty day period when Goliath made the same challenge every morning and every evening.

As he was seeing the confusion and the fear, someone happened to tell him of the offer Saul had made.

So the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be that the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption from taxes in Israel." 26 Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" 1Sam 17:25-26

The way David spoke these words created anger in the heart of his brother Eliab and confidence in the hearts of others that led them to repeat David's words to Saul who then sent for David.

Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, ... 31 Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported them to Saul; and he sent for him. 32 Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." 1Sam. 17:28, 31-32

When Saul sees David, his heart is troubled because of his youth, but some very important facts about David's character are then revealed. Though but a youth, during the time that he was caring

for his father's sheep, he had faced both lions and bears, and instead of fleeing, he had stood his ground and killed them. These events had given him the opportunity to face danger and through his trust in God's providence he had prevailed. He was confident what God had done to help him with the lion and bear would also bring him the victory over Goliath. His words convinced Saul.

And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, 35 I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 Moreover David said, "The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you!" 1Sam. 17:33-37

David's confidence is seen in what he chose to go into battle. Those who could sling stones in that day had refined it to an exact science. Yet it was also something God's providence can direct.

Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine. 1Sam. 17:40

Among all this people were seven hundred select men who were left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's breadth and not miss. Judg. 20:16-17

Goliath's confidence are seen in his scorn and disdain of David. His words had struck fear in the hearts of all Israel, but did not alter David's faith and confidence in God.

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands." 1Sam. 17:45-47

David took control over the battle by running toward Goliath, taking a stone and slinging toward Goliath. The stone hit just the right spot and knocked him unconscious. Then David took Goliath's sword and killed him.

So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. 50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. 1Sam. 17:48-50

Once the champion had been so easily vanquished, Israel became confident and the Philistines lost heart and the battle was quickly decided. The conversation between Saul and Abner, leave one wondering which came first, this event, then the harp playing, or a renewed interest that led Saul to ask these questions of someone he was already acquainted with, but did not know.

When Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know." 56 So the king said, "Inquire whose son this young man is." 57 Then, as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58 And Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" So David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." 1Sam. 17:55-58

The events move quickly. Saul's son Jonathan, feels a sense of friendship and brotherhood that led to a lifelong bond. The people begin to show their respect and love for David with a proverb that leads to Saul's anger and change of attitude toward David.

Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. 3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 1 Sam 18:1-3

So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. 1Sam. 18:5-6

So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." 8 Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have

ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" 9 So Saul eyed David from that day forward. 1Sam. 18:7-9

The “distressing spirit” leads to Saul’s need for David to play, but the difference in his attitude now leads Saul to seek to kill David and then to fear him.

And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand. 11 And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice. 12 Now Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, but had departed from Saul. 13 Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. 1Sam. 18:10-13

The rest of the First Book of Samuel reveals the sad chronicle Saul’s self-destruction. It is sad but instructive to note that Saul never thought of repentance and the desire to serve God faithfully. This would have solved his problems. Instead, like Judas his worldly sorrow led to continued treachery caused by his own jealousy, envy and fear.

Saul sought to kill, Jonathan interceded	19:1,4-6
Saul used his spear but David escaped	19:10-12
Saul sought David at Naioth	19:19-20
Saul hoped to kill at his table.	20:5,24-25;30,33-34
Saul sought to kill David at Keilah.	23:7-9
Saul sought to kill him every day.	23:14
at Engedi	24:1-2
David spared Saul in the cave.	24:3-6
When Saul filled with remorse.	24:16-17
Death of Samuel	25:1-2
Saul sought to kill in wilderness of Ziph.	26:1-2
David spared Saul while he was sleeping.	26:6-11
Saul again filled with remorse.	26:21
David lives Philistines to escape Saul	27:1-2
David tried to help in battle of Philistines.	28:1-2
Saul brought Samuel back	28:8-12
Samuel told Saul he would die in battle.	28:16-19
David forbidden to go to this battle.	29:3-5
Saul and Jonathan are killed.	31:1-5
David punished man claiming to kill Saul	1:10-16
civil war between David and Saul’s heir.	3:1

But though Saul's attitude had hardened into hatred and a desire for his destruction, the rest of Israel had formed a different opinion.

And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him. 15 Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him. 16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them. 1Sam. 18:12-16

David - The Man after God's Own Heart 2

David Began to Reign

The second book of Samuel records how David received the news of Saul's death.

*Therefore David took hold of his own clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. 12 And **they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son**, for the people of the Lord and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. 2Sam. 1:11-12*

He did not rejoice at the fall of Saul. Contrary to the belief of the Amalekite who brought David the news, David grieved over the news and still believed that anyone who drew his hand against the Lord's anointed should not live.

And he answered, "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite." 14 So David said to him, "How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" 15 Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go near, and execute him!" And he struck him so that he died. 16 So David said to him, "Your blood is on your own head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the Lord's anointed.'" 2Sam. 1:13-16

David then asked the Lord whether he should return to Israel and where he should settle and God revealed to him that he should begin his reign in Hebron which is a little over 10 miles from Bethlehem.

His reign begins with Judah alone as the rest of Israel continues to follow Abner and Saul's son, Ishbosheth.

*But **Abner** the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, **took Ishbosheth the son of Saul** and brought him over to Mahanaim; 9 and **he made him king** over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel. 10 Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and **he reigned two years. Only the house of Judah followed David.** 11 And the time that **David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.** 2 Sam 2:8-11*

After both Abner(2Sam. 3:26-30) and then Ishbosheth(2Sam. 4:5-8) were murdered in separate incidents, the other tribes of Israel came to David and anointed him king over all Israel. He initially began his reign at the age of thirty and reigned the first seven years and six months in Hebron.

*Then **all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron** and spoke, saying, "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. 2 Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the Lord said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'" 3 Therefore **all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron**, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord. And **they anointed David king over Israel.** 4 David **was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.** 5 **In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.** 2Sam. 5:1-5*

The next thing recorded is that David conquered Jerusalem and built his house there.

*And **the king and his men went to Jerusalem** against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here." 7 Nevertheless **David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David)**... 9 **Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David.** And David built all around from the Millo and inward. 10 So David went on and became great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him. 11 Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons. And **they built David a house.** 12 So David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel. 2 Sam 5:6-7; 9-12*

Psalms 78 summarized the history of Israel from through the book of Judges until the time when David began to reign.

56 Yet they tested and provoked the Most High God, And did not keep His testimonies, 57 But turned back and acted unfaithfully like their fathers; They were turned aside like a deceitful bow. 58 For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, And moved Him to jealousy with their carved images. 59 When God heard this, He was furious, And greatly abhorred Israel, 60 So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, The tent He had placed among men 61 And delivered His strength into captivity, And His glory into the enemy's hand. Ps 78:56-61

The Psalm concludes with the period of time that began with David conquering Jerusalem.

Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, Like a mighty man who shouts because of wine. 66 And He beat back His enemies; He put them to a perpetual reproach. 67 Moreover He rejected the tent of Joseph, And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, 68 But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved. 69 And He built His sanctuary like the heights, Like the earth which He has established forever. 70 He also chose David His servant, And took him from the sheepfolds; 71 From following the ewes that had young He brought him, To shepherd Jacob His people, And Israel His inheritance. 72 So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, And guided them by the skillfulness of his hands. Ps 78:65-72

David Sought to Move the Ark to Jerusalem

The tabernacle, with its furniture and altar had been set up at Shiloh near the end of Joshua's life (Josh. 18:1-3). It was still in Shiloh in Judges 18:31 and Elkanah and Hannah went year by year to sacrifice there (1Sam. 1:1-7). Shiloh is where Samuel was taken after he was weaned (1Sam. 1:24). But the wickedness done at Shiloh led God to reject the place and he allowed the Philistines to take the ark. After terrible plagues the Philistines sent it back after seven months (1Sam. 6:1-2). It first arrived at Beth-Shemesh, but after many were struck dead for looking into the ark (1Sam. 6:19), the ark was taken to Keriath-Jearim and left in the house of Abinadab for 20 years (1Sam. 7:1). It was still in the house of Abinadab and David wanted to move it.

The accounts of this event are recorded in both Samuel and Chronicles and to get the full picture we must go to both places. It begins with David gathering together all the wise people of Israel to discuss with them moving the ark.

*Then **David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. 2 And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is of the Lord our God, let us send out to our brethren everywhere who are left in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites who are in their cities and their common-lands, that they may gather together to us; 3 and let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we have not inquired at it since the days of Saul."** 4 Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. 1Chr. 13:1-4*

After deciding to move the ark, he gathers the people to the house of Abinadab in Keriath-Jearim.

*Again **David gathered all the choice men of Israel, thirty thousand. 2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the Lord of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. 3 So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. 4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. 2Sam. 6:1-4***

It is evident from the account that everyone was very pleased and excited. They were doing something they believed was pleasing to God and David had carefully planned for all of it after consulting with all the leaders.

So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor in Egypt to as far as the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim. 6 And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the Lord, who dwells between the cherubim, where His name is proclaimed. 7 So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. 8 Then David and all Israel played music before God with all their might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets. 1 Chron 13:5-8

It is amazing that not one of those 30,000 people saw a problem with what they were doing. The Scriptures were very specific about how the ark was to be moved.

*17 These were **the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ...4 "This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of meeting, relating to the most holy things: 5 When the camp prepares to journey, Aaron and his sons shall come, and they shall take down the covering veil and cover the ark of the Testimony with it. 6 Then they shall put on it a covering of badger skins, and spread over that a cloth entirely of blue; and they shall insert its poles. ... 15 And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them; but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die..... So Moses took the carts and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites. 7 Two carts and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service; 8 and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. 9 But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because theirs was the service of the holy things, which they carried on their shoulders. Num 3:17; 4:4-6, 15; 7:6-9***

No one remembered this verse, or if they remembered they did not consider it important enough to stop what was being done. It was in all sincerity, and goodness of heart that they wanted the ark

brought to Jerusalem

God Stopped their Worship and Struck Uzzah Dead

Everyone was excited, sincerely worshiping, and praising God. There was celebration, joy, worship, praise, and songs! Everyone with all their might gave God glory. Yet in the midst of all these plans a tiny error was made. The ark was being carried in a manner different than God had specified. In the midst of their celebrations an unexpected event occurred. The oxen stumbled, the cart lurched, and the ark began to tip! Uzzah did what everyone would have expected, he reached up to steady it. At that moment everything came to a halt. It must have created great confusion and chaos as everyone watched Uzzah fall dead.

*And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. 7 Then **the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error**; and he died there by the ark of God. 8 And **David became angry because of the Lord's outbreak against Uzzah**; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day. 9 **David was afraid of the Lord that day**; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" 2Sam. 6:6-9*

*And when they came to Chidon's threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. 10 Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. 11 And **David became angry because of the Lord's outbreak against Uzza**; therefore that place is called Perez Uzza to this day. 12 **David was afraid of God that day**, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God to me?" 1Chron. 13:9-12*

The event is intentionally vague, but there was no doubt in anyone's mind that God had done this to Uzzah. Note the difference "**God smote him for his error**" and "**He smote him because he put out his hand to the ark.**" When Uzzah put his hand on the ark, he committed an error no one but God was aware of. Though he was sincere in seeking to save the ark, it was not supposed to be on a cart, and no one was ever to touch it.

We learn some very important lessons from this event.

1 Due to ignorance they had allowed lawlessness to creep into their worship. God had commanded them to carry the ark on the shoulders of the Kohath. When we compare this to the events with Nadab and Abihu, we see the similarity.

*Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and **offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them**. 2 So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'" So Aaron held his peace. Lev 10:1-3*

Just as Nadab and Abihu had brought strange fire God had not commanded them and they died, David and Israel were carrying the ark in a way God had not commanded them, and when Uzzah touched the ark he died. Since they were doing this outside of the Law, it was an act of lawlessness.

2 It was in all good conscience they were trying to do a good deed for God by moving the ark to its new home. Uzza was only trying to keep the ark safe. Yet in spite of all this they had violated the truth. The consequences of this event are important to see. God does not suspend truth and the consequences of its violation because of their sincerity. He does not accept it as the best they can do. Actually this violation of the truth made God angry, just as it had with King Saul.

*11 **"I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments."** 22 So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams**. 23 **For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.**" 1 Sam 15:9-11; 21-23*

The only difference between these is that Saul's was a sin of presumption, he knew what God wanted and rejected it. Israel's was a sin of ignorance, but still God's words ring out. "**To obey is better than sacrifice and to heed than the fat of rams.**" The passage of hundreds of years of time and the subsequent ignorance of those who were in violation did not change the outcome.

3 No one saw anything wrong with the plan or the method and not one person spoke against any part of their plan. They were sincere in their desire to please God and all wanted to be a part of that day. 'David and all Israel went up,' with the intent 'to bring up from the ark of God.' No one saw a problem that they 'carried the ark of God upon a new cart.' As the cart

moved the ark to Jerusalem, 'David and all Israel played before God with all their might' (1 Chr 13:6-8). Everyone was excited, sincerely worshiping, and praising God. There was celebration, joy, worship, praise, and song!

Yet a tiny error had crept into their plans and no one was aware of it. God's carefully drawn up pattern was being violated and his blueprint ignored. The ark was not being carried by the method God had specified in Moses' Law. They were 'blissfully ignorant!' In all sincerity and goodness of heart they were moving the ark in a 'lawless' manner. But 'when they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah put forth (his hand) to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen stumbled' (2Sam 6:6).

They put God into the position of rewarding their sincerity or punishing their rebellion. If sincerity and goodness of heart had any power against the violation of law (lawlessness), then this would be that time. This too is a classic illustration of Jesus words to the Pharisees.

He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men — the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." 9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. Mark 7:6-10

They were practicing a "doctrine of men." This had not come from God, it was a teaching of men. In ignorance they had rejected the word of God and were using man's ideas. Such worship was vain and God punished Uzzah.

- * In ignorance but all good conscience David and all Israel move the ark.
- * Uzzah, as one of the drivers felt responsible for the safety of the ark.
- * He reached out with every sincere desire to help save the ark.
- * the law of God was broken!

God's Options:

- * Allow disobedience because they were sincere and God is gracious and full of compassion.
- * Accept this as the best they could do since they are so sincere.
- * Allow it to happen and later send a prophet to reveal the error.
- * Stop it with miraculous intervention since He knows they are sincere and He is gracious.
- * Manifest His anger against Uzzah, because they did not seek him after the proper order.

Because God struck Uzzah dead, it is clear that obedience is more important to God than sincerity. It is also obvious that ignorance of law can not absolve one of consequences.

David was first Angry then Afraid

And David became angry because of the Lord's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day. 9 David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" 2Sam. 6:6-9

As so many in the past, David fell into the same trap that has ensnared many. When something goes wrong instead of humbly trying to figure out what we have done to cause the problem, we blame God. David's anger was misdirected as he would soon learn. The anger also led to fear. It seems the anger subsided and the fear led him to search the Scriptures. The ark remained there for three months while David pondered and figured out the problem and knew the solution.

So David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 14 The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months. And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that he had. 1Chron. 13:13-14

David Found the Answer

During that three month period, David searched the Scriptures seeking for an answer. When everything was fully understood he began making preparations. After preparing a place for the ark and pitching a tent, he revealed the truth.

David built houses for himself in the City of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it. 2 Then David said, "No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the Lord has chosen them to carry the ark of God and to minister before Him forever." 3 And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the Lord to its place, which he had

prepared for it. 1 Chron 15:1-4

The problem was not with God. The problem was their own lawlessness. David now understood that no one could carry the ark but the Levites. He discovered that passage in Numbers 3 and realized the error they had made.

*And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. 12 He said to them, "You are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel to the place I have prepared for it. 13 **For because you did not do it the first time, the Lord our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order.**" 14 So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel. 15 And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the Lord. 1 Chron 15:11-15*

*for that we sought him not **according to the ordinance.** ASV*

*for that we sought him not **after the due order.** KJV*

*We did not inquire of him about how to do it **in the prescribed way.**" NIV*

*because we did not seek Him **in the way He ordained.** AMP*

David realized that it was their fault. They had not consulted, sought, or inquired of God about the proper order, the ordinance, the prescribed way or the way He had ordained. After resolving the ignorance by studying the Scriptures, David set everything up so it would be done properly.

We Must Learn from this Event

As has been emphasized so many times in this study, the things that happened in the Old Testament must be studied, pondered and learned from.

Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor 10:11-12

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope. Rom 15:4

And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 Every scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. 17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. 2 Tim 3:15-17

Though so many today fall into the same trap that ensnared David and Israel in the matter of Uzzah, we must be admonished, learn from it, become wise unto salvation, and learn this reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness.

Nothing has changed today. True sincerity is prefaced by "knowledge and all discernment!"

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; 10 so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; Phil 1:9-10

A lack of love for the truth is often masked by a plea of a sincerity of ignorance. The Spirit reveals that there is no such thing as ignorant sincerity that mitigates and removes guilt. Such cannot be.

(even he), whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: 12 that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2Th. 2:9-12

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Mt. 7:21-23

7 Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain do they worship me, Teaching (as their) doctrines the precepts of men. . . . 13 But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. 14 Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit. Mt. 15:7-9, 13-14

These passages are clearer in light of Uzzah's death and express exactly the same principle. If ignorant sincerity had any value, God would have spared Uzzah. Since He did not, Paul's words become clear. In order to become sincere, we must first approve the things that are excellent.

David, The Man after God's Own Heart - 3

Worship Under David

The Ark enters Jerusalem

After the death of Uzzah, and the three months of study, contemplation and preparation, the ark is brought into Jerusalem on the shoulders of the Levites as the Law of Moses had commanded.

*14 So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel. 15 And **the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the Lord.** . . . 29 And it happened, as **the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the City of David**, that Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David whirling and playing music; and she despised him in her heart. 1 Chron 15:14-15 29*

After the ark entered the city of David (Jerusalem), it was taken to a tabernacle that David had erected for it. Once it had arrived, David set up the priests and the manner in which the worship would be conducted. These acts included the playing of music and the blowing of the trumpets.

***So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it.** Then they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. 2 And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord. 3 Then he distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins. 4 And **he appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise the Lord God of Israel:** 5 Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-Edom: Jeiel with stringed instruments and harps, but Asaph made music with cymbals; 6 Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests regularly blew the trumpets before the ark of the covenant of God. 1 Chron 16:1-6*

The Tabernacle is at Gibeon

We don't know if burnt offerings were also conducted there in Jerusalem, because throughout the entire reign of David, the ark was in a tabernacle in Jerusalem but the tabernacle of Moses remained in Gibeon. How it had found its way to Gibeon is nowhere revealed. It was in Shiloh with the ark during the days of Eli, but while Hophni and Phinehas took the ark and the Philistines captured it, the movement of the tabernacle are not recorded. But now it is simply revealed that this is where the tabernacle was during the days of David and the early days of Solomon.

So he left Asaph and his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord to minister before the ark regularly, as every day's work required; 38 and Obed-Edom with his sixty-eight brethren, including Obed-Edom the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah, to be gatekeepers; 39 and Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the Lord at the high place that was at Gibeon, 40 to offer burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar of burnt offering regularly morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the Law of the Lord which He commanded Israel; 41 and with them Heman and Jeduthun and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the Lord, because His mercy endures forever; 42 and with them Heman and Jeduthun, to sound aloud with trumpets and cymbals and the musical instruments of God. Now the sons of Jeduthun were gatekeepers. 43 **Then all the people departed, every man to his house; and David returned to bless his house.** 1Chr 16:38-43

The Place for the Temple Chosen

It is not until near the end of David's life that the place where the tabernacle and the ark would be reunited in the Temple Solomon would build was revealed. Hence all through the days of David, the ark was in Jerusalem and the tabernacle was in Gibeon.

After David's foolish sin of numbering the people led God to offer him three choices of punishment and he chose the plague. As the angel approached Jerusalem, God relented of destroying it, but David was commanded by the angel through Gad the prophet to erect an altar at the threshing floor of Onan.

And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man." 14 So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell. 15 And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it.

As he was destroying, the Lord looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And **the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.** ... 18 **Therefore, the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.** 1Chr. 21:13-15, 18

David did as he was commanded. First, he purchased the threshing floor, then he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings there. All of this was validated by God when he answered David's burnt offerings and calling on the Lord by sending fire on the altar of burnt offering David had built.

22 Then David said to Ornan, "Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar on it to the Lord. **You shall grant it to me at the full price, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.**" 26 **And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the Lord; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering.** 1 Chron 21:22. 26

The ark was then at the tabernacle David had built, the tabernacle was still at Gibeon, and the new altar commanded by God was at the threshing floor of Ornan.

At that time, **when David saw that the Lord had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there.** 29 **For the tabernacle of the Lord and the altar of the burnt offering, which Moses had made in the wilderness, were at that time at the high place in Gibeon.** 30 **But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the Lord.** 1Chr. 21:28-30

Later, when Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, it is made clear that the place where the threshing floor of Ornan was located was on Mount Moriah, and it was at this site that the temple was built and all the altars were combined, the ark and the other articles of the tabernacle that were still in Gibeon were brought and all was properly set up.

Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 2 **And he began to build on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.** 2Chr. 3:1-2

David Seeks a House for the LORD

Soon after David had brought the ark to Jerusalem, he made a decision to bring all the other articles of the tabernacle to Jerusalem by building a house of cedar for the Lord. At first Nathan thinks this is a great plan and as a man agrees that David should do it, but God had other plans.

Now it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord is under tent curtains." 2 Then Nathan said to David, "Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you." 3 But it happened that night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, 4 "Go and tell My servant David, **Thus says the Lord: "You shall not build Me a house to dwell in.**" 1Chr. 17:1-5

David was not allowed to build the temple. The account doesn't give any reasons here other than God never asked anyone to build him house.

For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought up Israel, even to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another. 6 Wherever I have moved about with all Israel, have I ever spoken a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying, "Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?" 1 Chr. 17:5-7

Later, it was also revealed that it also had to do with David's having to fight wars.

Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the Lord God of Israel. 7 And David said to Solomon: "My son, as for me, **it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the Lord my God; 8 but the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight.** 9 Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. 10 **He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.**" 1Chr. 22:6-10

God's Promise to David

Although God does not allow David to build a house for him, he reveals to David all that he has done for him and all that he will continue to do. God has been with David everywhere he has gone. God has cut off his enemies and made him a great name.

Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. 8 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a name like the name of the great men who are on the earth. ...1Chr. 17:7-8

God now gives David the great promise he had already given to Abraham. He promises that he will build David a house. It is impossible to determine if David understood everything that was implied in this promise, but we now understand and through later revelation, it was made clear to David that he would be in the lineage of the Messiah. David himself later called this son his Lord.

*Also I will subdue all your enemies. **Furthermore I tell you that the Lord will build you a house.** 11 And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 **He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever.** 13 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. 14 **And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever.**"" ... 16 **And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.**"" 1Chr. 17:10-14; 16-17*

*While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." 43 He said to them, **"How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 44 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?" 45 If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?"** 46 And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore. Mt. 22:41-46*

The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Ps 110:1-3

*"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: **'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'**" 36 **"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."** Acts 2:34-36*

David was deeply moved by these promises. He praises God for such a wonderful promise.

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord; and he said: "Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? 19 And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord God; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord God? 20 Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord God, know Your servant. 21 For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them. 2 Sam 7:18-21

Soon after this, David began writing the Psalms that are quoted by the apostles.

For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' 29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 3 Acts 2:25-32 25

"Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.' 27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. 2 Acts 4:24-29

And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give

you the sure mercies of David.' 35 *Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'* 36 *"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; 37 but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. Acts 13:34-38*

And David says: " Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them. 10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always." Rom 11:9-10

Again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts." Heb 4:7

David's Sin - Bathsheba and Uriah

David was 30 when he began reigning and remained in Hebron for the first 7½ years of that reign.

David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah. 2 Sam 5:4-5

So he was 37½ at the time he began reigning in Jerusalem. Then the following events are listed.

David took Jerusalem and began great building projects (2Sam. 5:6)
The king of Tyre sent materials for David to build his house(2Sam. 5:11-12)
A battle with the Philistines (2Sam. 5:17)
David gathered all Israel to move the ark to Jerusalem(2Sam. 6:1-11).
After three months, he completed the moving of the ark(2Sam. 6:12-15)
David attacked and subdued: the Philistines(2Sam. 8:1); Moab(2Sam. 8:2),
Hadadezer(2Sam. 8:3); Syrians(2Sam. 8:5);
Ammon(2Sam. 10:1-14), Syria(2Sam. 10:15-19)

How long this would have taken is pure conjecture, but it seems reasonable to conclude that David was between 40 and 50 when the events that forever changed his life and reign occurred. He had been reigning peacefully with God blessing him in every way for 10 - 20 years.

David wrote a Psalm at some time after God had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies.

*1 Then David spoke to the Lord the words of this song, **on the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies**, and from the hand of Saul. ... 2Sam 22:1*

This is an important Psalm and the date of its writing is also important. From what God said to him after he had wanted to build God a house in Jerusalem, it is evident it had already occurred.

*Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and **the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies all around**, 2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains." And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and **have cut off all your enemies from before you**, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. 2Sam 7:1-2,9*

When David wrote this Psalm, praising God, he spoke of this time of purity and holiness. A time when he could still feel innocent and clean.

*He also brought me out into a broad place; **He delivered me because He delighted in me**. 21 "The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. 22 For I have kept the ways of the Lord, And have not wickedly departed from my God. 23 For all His judgments were before me; And as for His statutes, I did not depart from them. 24 I was also blameless before Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity. 25 Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to my cleanness in His eyes. 26 "With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; 27 With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. 28 You will save the humble people; But Your eyes are on the haughty, that You may bring them down. 2Sam 22:20-28; Ps 18:19-27*

The Matter of Uriah the Hittite

At some time after this Psalm was written all of this changed. David had been pure and clean, righteous and godly up to the time that he witnessed a beautiful woman bathing, but that night everything changed when it became **the matter of Uriah the Hittite**

*Nevertheless for David's sake the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son after him and by establishing Jerusalem; 5 because **David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite**. 1 Kings 15:4-6*

Like all great changes in the lives of men and women, it began with everything being normal until the moment when it occurred. David was home in Jerusalem while his army was fighting Ammon at Rabbah.

It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. 2 Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. 3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 2Sam 11:1-4

After a mid day rest David arose at even time(near sunset) and was walking on the rooftop which was a common occurrence.

"When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it. Deut 22:8

But then something very uncommon occurred. As he was looking around, his eye caught on a woman bathing. This woman was exceptionally beautiful. What David was thinking when he inquired about the woman is not revealed. Perhaps he was hoping to add another wife. But the answer should have sobered David for two important reasons. First because she was someone's wife and the commandment should have stopped him in his tracks.

'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.' Deut 5:21

The second reason is that this was an important man in David's army and should have created respect and concern in David's heart.

8 These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: 39 and Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all. 2 Sam 23:8, 39

But these two things did not stop David. Unlike Joseph, David had not prepared his heart against this.

And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. 9 There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Gen 39:7-9

The lust had already conceived and these two things that had stopped others did not quench them.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no man: 14 but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then the lust, when it hath conceived, bears sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, brings forth death. Jas 1:13-15

His desire was too strong and he did not rule over it. He had already violated the 10th commandment and now the 6th is also violated.

'You shall not commit adultery. Deut 5:18

Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. 5 And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, "I am with child." 2 Sam 11:4-5

But a terrible unintended complication occurred. The women became pregnant, and the husband had been gone far too long for it to be concluded that it was Uriah's. David is not yet penitent, and resolves to continue his sin by hiding it.

David first simply brings Uriah home, hoping that the man would stop by his home and have relations with his wife. But Uriah has a greater sense of duty and pours coals of fire on David's head for what Uriah would not do David had done with the wife of another.

Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. 7 When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered. 8 And David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift of food from the king followed him. 9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. 10 So when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" 11 And Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and

as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.” 2Sam 11:6-11

David then resorts to making Uriah drunk, hoping that this would lead him to forget his duty. But it too failed.

Then David said to Uriah, “Wait here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 Now when David called him, he ate and drank before him; and he made him drunk. And at evening he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house. 2 Sam 11:12-13

These things took a few days and David’s tender conscience should have forced him to consider and repent, but it did not. Now along with the 10th and 7th, the 6th commandment is also violated.

*‘You shall not **murder**. 18 ‘You shall not **commit adultery**. 19 ‘You shall not steal. 20 ‘You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 21 ‘You shall not **covet your neighbor’s wife**; Deut. 5:17-21*

There is something despicable and disgusting about what David does next. He sends the letter of subtle execution in the hands of innocent Uriah. Uriah as a good servant, takes that letter to Joab who does what David asked him to do. Yet not only did Uriah die, but so also some other servants of David were also killed because of David’s desire to murder Uriah.

In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die.” 16 So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there were valiant men. 17 Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And some of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also. 2 Sam 11:14-17

Whether Bathsheba was ever aware of all these facts is not revealed. It only states that she mourned for Uriah, then became David’s wife.

When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. 27 And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord. 2 Sam 11:26-27

The Wages of Sin

After David took Bathsheba to be his wife, life seemed to proceed normally, until the child is born.

When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. 27 And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord. 2 Sam 11:26-27

But life was not proceeding normally. God had witnessed these sins and had chosen his own way to deal with them. He gave David time to repent, and confess those sins, but ever after then nine month period of the pregnancy David had still not done so. It appears from one of his Psalms that he was not enjoying the fruits of his sin.

When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Ps 32:3-4

That these things were happening even before the arrival of Nathan is clear from the fact that David acknowledged his sin the day Nathan arrived and these things occurred before he did that.

I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Ps 32:5

God sees these groanings of worldly sorrow. His agony and bitterness of heart over what he had done had been growing throughout that period of time. To lose God’s favor for such a momentary time of pleasure must have been a bitter experience to David, but he could not bring himself to repent. It is at this moment, that God chooses to send Nathan.

God Sends Nathan

This is the second of the four times that Nathan appeared as a prophet to David. The first time occurred when David sought to build the temple and after God forbid that, he revealed to David the eternal nature of the throne God had given to him(2Sam. 7:1-17). The third time was after the birth of Solomon, when it appears that God used him to name the child and reveal to David that God had truly forgiven him for taking Bathsheba and revealed that He truly loved this child(2Sam. 12:24-25). The final time occurred when Adonijah sought to wrest the throne from Solomon and take it for himself(1Kings 1:5-48).

After the birth of the child, God sent Nathan to rebuke David. He gives a parable designed to move the heart of a shepherd. Since David's began his early life as a shepherd, this parable will "cut him to the heart."

Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. 3 But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. 4 And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." 2 Sam 12:1-4

Because it was God who sent him, this parable is clearly inspired and not just an idea of Nathan's. It is also closely aligned with the true facts of the case between David (the rich man with many flocks and herds) and Uriah (the poor man with only one ewe lamb). Although the story diverges with arrival of the traveler, the basic idea is that the rich man did not take from his own flocks (his own wives), but instead stole the sheep from the poor man (Uriah's only wife).

David's anger comes from the righteous indignation of the unfairness of the theft. It was not just the stealing of the sheep, it was the fact that he could have chosen any from his own flocks. It was not simply the fact that the poor man's sheep was taken, but that he loved that sheep and cared for it as one of his children. The fact that this sheep had a long history with the family, had grown up with them at food with them, drank from his own cup, and lay in his bosom. How close this was to Uriah's actual history is impossible to determine, but could have very well been the case.

David is not content with the normal punishment for stealing a sheep. He also demands death.

"If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. Ex 22:1-2

So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! 6 And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity." 2 Sam 12:5-6

As far as David was concerned, this type of covetousness that showed such lack of compassion for the man's feelings for his lamb deserved much more than simple restitution. The relationship of this lamb to the family required the more severe punishment of death.

You are the Man!

How David's opinion of himself must have come crashing down upon him with these words.

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! 9 Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. 2 Sam 12:7-10

All the anger and righteous indignation poured out upon the man who had so unfairly treated his neighbor was now turned upon himself. The truth of exactly what David had done was far worse than that of the rich man above.

Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! 2 Sam 12:7-9

1 David was not only rich with the flocks and herds, but far more. He was king over all Israel because God had been with him and had delivered him again and again from Saul. After Saul's death, God had given him everything that Saul had possessed. Many have sought to unravel the words "I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping." David never took the wives or concubines of Saul. It doesn't actually say he took them to be wives, only that God had given them into his hands to do with as he pleased. The true reality of the situation is recorded with: "if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!" So much more than the rich man in the parable, David had everything with God's assurance that he could have much more. He was far above the rich man in the parable.

Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah

the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. 2 Sam 12:9-10

2 The crimes were also much worse than that of the rich man in the parable. First he had despised the commandment of the Lord. The truth is he had first violated the 10th commandment and “*coveted his neighbor’s wife*,” the 7th commandment and “*committed adultery*” and the 6th commandment when he “*committed murder*.” Truly he had despised the command of the Lord. God then accused David of the crime of murder by the hands of another.

Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ 11 Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.’” 2 Sam 12:10-12

3 God then revealed a punishment far worse than David had decreed for the rich man in the parable.

1. “*The sword shall never depart from your house.*” Since this referred to David’s house while he was alive, the forever simply means as long as you are alive. Yet it was literally fulfilled when Amnon was murdered by Absalom(2Sam. 13:29), Absalom his son was killed by Joab(2Sam. 18:14), and Adonijah was executed by Solomon(1Kings 2:24-25).

2. “*I will raise up adversity from your own house.*” This started immediately with the death of his son through Bathsheba. Then the rape of Tamar and not just the death of Amnon, but the fear that all his sons had died. Then the agony of Absalom’s loss due a murder that David felt somewhat responsible for. The anguish of the rebellion created by Absalom in which David had to flee for his life that culminated in the death of Absalom. The rebellion of Adonijah that led David to have to depose one in order to establish the other.

3. “*I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.*” A clear example of “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap*” (Gal. 6:7). David had stolen the wife of Uriah, now others will steal his wives. The difference is powerful since what David had done was somewhat private, while what would be done to David would be public.

I have sinned against the LORD

While many would have redirected their anger toward the prophet and lash out against them as so many had done and would do to other prophets. David did not do this, but meekly accepted the truth. As noted above, the sense of guilt had been growing in David’s heart.

When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Ps 32:3-5

The words of this parable and the revelation of how it would be punished brought the godly sorrow to fruition leading him to acknowledge his sin to Nathan. He refused to hide it any longer, but freely confessed to the LORD. At that moment, God forgave him, but forced him to reap as he had sowed.

And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. 14 However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.” 15 Then Nathan departed to his house. 2Sam. 12:13-15

Psalms 51?

While some have also ascribed the words of Psalm 51 to this same event, it is not universally agreed that this is the case. While Psalm 32 is quoted in the NT by Paul and ascribed to David by the Holy Spirit(Rom. 4:5-8), nothing is said about Psalm 51. Only the words of the Psalm can be used to determine this. The Introductions to all the Psalms were not inspired, only Jewish traditions added to the text. So the words “*To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.*” have no Scriptural authority and were not inspired.

So only the context of the words can be used. What does the Psalm say that would lead us to

believe David was the author? Since the words of the Psalm fit very well with the events in David's life, few have questioned it. Yet though it can be so stated that the words fit well, the next step that David was the author is only a guess. Two objections have been raised that David was not the author.

Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight — Ps 51:4

Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. Ps 51:18

First that the sin was not only against God but against Uriah. Second that the walls around Jerusalem needed to be built(hence had been torn down). Yet neither of these objections are strong. All sin in its most basic sense is against God. The walls of Jerusalem were not yet built until Solomon built them.

Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall all around Jerusalem 1 Kings 3:1

So the decision can only be based on the context. There is nothing to prove it was not David, but nothing to prove it was.

David Fasted for the Child

Although many children become sick, this illness is directly ascribed to God. It was not a natural occurrence, but a judgment against David. For those who are concerned for the life of this child, remember that God sees things in the context of eternity and of souls and not human life. For this child to die seems tragic to us, but it was also a blessing, for even David revealed that he too would someday be reunited with him after death.

David is not content to simply let this happen, but immediately seeks to influence God. His tools were fasting and prayer. Both together create a very powerful tool to "make our voice heard on high."

'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?' "In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, And exploit all your laborers. 4 Indeed you fast for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast as you do this day, To make your voice heard on high. 5 Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the Lord? Isa 58:3-5

David understood all this and used it in hopes of influencing God's decision. His servants did not understand this and thought the fasting was only for mourning and were afraid to tell him, but as soon as he realized the fasting was not going to change God's mind, he stopped fasting.

*David therefore **pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted** and went in and lay all night on the ground. 17 So the elders of his house arose and went to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them. 18 Then **on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died.** 2Sam. 12:16-18*

*So **David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes;** and he **went into the house of the Lord and worshiped.** Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they **set food before him, and he ate.** 21 Then his servants said to him, "What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food." 22 And he said, "**While the child was alive, I fasted and wept;** for I said, 'Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' 23 But **now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.**" 2 Sam 12:20-23*

Solomon is Born

God simply passes over the intervening years without even telling us how old Solomon was when Nathan came with his words of encouragement.

Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the Lord loved him, 25 and He sent word by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord. 2 Sam 12:24-25

Whether it was then or later that the events stated by Nathan occurred is difficult to determine.

Go immediately to King David and say to him, 'Did you not, my lord, O king, swear to your maidservant, saying, "Assuredly your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?' 14 Then, while you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words." 1 Kings 1:13-14

David's Final Years

Since we don't know how old David was when the events with Bathsheba occurred, it cannot be known how much of David's life was under this punishment. His first 7.5 years were in Hebron and at least 5-10 years have elapsed. So at least 15 years and possible as much as 25 years were not happy ones for David. As we evaluate his life we understand that he was persecuted and chased by Saul until he was 30 and died at 70 and the last 15 years of his life were also sorrowful. The punishment consisted of three things:

1. The sword shall never depart from your house.
2. I will raise up adversity from your own house.
3. I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor.

Amnon with Tamar(2Sam. 13:1-21)

How much of David's conduct led to this event is impossible to determine. It may have held Amnon in check if it hadn't occurred. But Amnon fell in love(or in lust) with Absalom's beautiful sister Tamar. Instead of asking the king for her as Tamar later requested he do, he took the advice of his cousin Jonadab who developed an elaborate plan to get the girl to come to his house.

So Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.'" 2Sam. 13:5

The plan began with Amnon pretending to be sick and David coming to visit him. He then asked for Tamar to come and feed him and David passed on the request. After Tamar cooked the food, Amnon asked everyone else to leave and sought to get her to consent to his fornication. When she refused and pleaded with him to do it properly, he forcibly raped her.

But she answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing! 13 And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you." 14 However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her. 2Sam. 13:12-14

After the rape, Amnon's emotions changed and he despised her and forced her from his room.

Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone!" 16 So she said to him, "No, indeed! This evil of sending me away is worse than the other that you did to me." But he would not listen to her. 2Sam. 13:15-16

She then took off the clothing of a virgin and wept for her plight. Although David was angry when he heard of this, there is no account of any discipline.

But when King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. 22 And Absalom spoke to his brother Amnon neither good nor bad. For Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar. 2Sam. 13:21-22

Absalom's Revenge(2Sam. 13:23-33)

Absalom's hatred of Amnon grew, but was carefully hidden. After two years when everything seemed to have been forgotten, Absalom also developed an elaborate plan. He had wanted even the king to be present for this revenge, but David would not go. *Then Absalom came to the king and said, "Kindly note, your servant has sheepshearers; please, let the king and his servants go with your servant." 25 But the king said to Absalom, "No, my son, let us not all go now, lest we be a burden to you." Then he urged him, but he would not go; and he blessed him. 2Sam. 13:23-25*

So Absalom contented himself that all David's sons would be present. He waits until the right moment and commands his servants to kill Amnon.

Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us." And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?" 27 But Absalom urged him; so he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. 28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, "Watch now, when Amnon's heart is

merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon!' then kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and valiant." 2Sam. 13:26-29

News of Absalom's act reached David but with an exaggeration. For a time David believed all his children had been murdered. Since this was within the punishment God had decreed, David believed it and agonized over it.

And it came to pass, while they were on the way, that news came to David, saying, "Absalom has killed all the king's sons, and not one of them is left!" 31 So the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn. 2Sam. 13:30-32

Once again Jonadab was involved and appeared to know all the details of Absalom's plan. He also knew that Absalom had been planning this since the rape of his sister Tamar. After the sons arrived, Jonadab again affirms what he had known to be the plan.

Then Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered and said, "Let not my lord suppose they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for only Amnon is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. 2Sam. 13:32-33

David is comforted by the return of his other sons, but agonizes over Absalom who has fled to the land of His grandfather (**2Sam. 3:3; 13:37**). Three years pass with David mourning and longing for Absalom. Absalom will become the greatest heartache for David even after his death many years later. It is not difficult to imagine David blaming his own conduct for the terrible things that were happening in his family.

But Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day. 38 So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years. 39 And King David longed to go to Absalom. For he had been comforted concerning Amnon, because he was dead. 2Sam. 13:37-39

Joab and Absalom(2Sam. 14)

Five years after Tamar's rape and 3 years after Absalom murders Amnon, Joab feels that something needed to be done. Instead of talking to the king, he chooses to have a woman come in and force David to decree his feelings in the similar case of another.

So Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was concerned about Absalom. 2 And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel; do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead. 2 Sam 14:1-2

He chose a wise woman who could carry out his plans to deceive the king. He then orchestrates a play in which this woman is to be the main actor. She is to present a case very similar to that of Absalom, but different enough to deceive the king.

She throws herself down in front of the king in clothing of mourning, acting distraught. Claiming to be a widow with two sons and agonizing over the loss of one son and the desire of others to put her last son to death. David's judgment is simple. The remaining son shall be spared and allowed to continue as her son.

The "wise" woman then makes the application. Whether this was her own idea or also engineered by Joab is not stated. But the woman shows David the inconsistency between his decree for her and his decree for his own son.

A suspicion has grown in David's mind as to Joab's involvement in these events, and the woman freely confesses that this was all Joab's plan.

Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide from me anything that I ask you." And the woman said, "Please, let my lord the king speak." 19 So the king said, "Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?" 2 Sam 14:18-19

Joab is called and David agrees to allow Absalom to return home. He still has one condition to his return and that is that Absalom would not be allowed into the king's presence.

Another two years pass and Absalom decides to act. He calls for Joab, but Joab is not interested in meeting with him so Absalom sets his field of barley nearing harvest on fire to compel him to come.

And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, but did not see the king's face. 29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. And when he sent again the second time, he would not come. 30 So he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." And Absalom's servants set the field on fire. 2 Sam 14:28-30

After he comes, Absalom pleads his case and Joab goes to David. David brings Absalom into his presence and forgives him.

So Joab went to the king and told him. And when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king. Then the king kissed Absalom. 2 Sam 14:33

Absalom Stoops to Treason

With these events, it is difficult exactly when Absalom's plans to destroy David began. Maybe it was the injustice that he had observed with Amnon and Tamar. Maybe it was the anger he felt after 5 years of waiting for the king to forgive him for what in Absalom's mind must have been a justified homicide. Maybe it was his sense of justice over what David had done with Uriah and Bathsheba, and perhaps the knowledge that her son Solomon was to be the next king. Whatever the reasons, Absalom embarks on his next plan for vengeance and a quest for power.

Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." 5 And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. 6 In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. 2 Sam 15:4-6

It was a simple plan. He will did what was necessary and soon "stole the hearts of men of Israel." This plan was allowed to grow and God did nothing to stop it. After Absalom is convinced he has their hearts and their backing, he goes to the king and gives a plausible lie that would keep the king satisfied as the last parts of his plan came into being.

As the conspiracy strengthened even David's most trusted advisory and counselor Ahithophel came to Absalom's side. One has to wonder how Absalom so easily changed the hearts of Israel. First, God had proclaimed that this would happen so He was behind the things that were happening, but more interesting, how did Absalom move the hearts of Israel. Remember it took several years before any tribe but Judah came to David after the death of Saul. So their loyalty to David was not as strong as that of Judah. The events with Bathsheba and Uriah had become known and perhaps many among the other 10 tribes were not truly convinced that David was the right man. At any rate, Absalom found it easy to sway and soon had everything he needed to start his plan.

Then Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom reigns in Hebron!'" ...12 Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city — from Giloh — while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number. 2Sam. 15:10, 12

David Escapes Jerusalem

Soon an insurrection gave Absalom control and David immediately saw his peril. **(15:7-14).**

So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword." 2 Sam 15:14

David quickly makes plans about who to take with him and who to leave. He left some of his concubines to keep house, and when they brought the ark to go with him he also sent it back with the promise that if the Lord brought him back, he would see it again and if not it was better to remain in Jerusalem.

14 So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword." ... 16 Then the king went out with all his household after him. But the king left ten women, concubines, to keep the house. ...25 Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place. 2Sam. 15:14, 16, 25

He also left behind one of his greatest counselors and allies. He hoped to thwart the wise counsel of Ahithophel

David said to him, "If you go on with me, then you will become a burden to me. 34 But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I was your father's servant previously, so I will now also be your servant,' then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me. 35 And do you not have Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? Therefore it will be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. 2Sam. 15:33-36

Absalom enters Jerusalem

Absalom arrives and using careful words convinces Absalom that he will do all he can to help “the king that God chooses.” While it is open to interpretation what Absalom hears is not what Hushai said.

Meanwhile Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem; and Ahithophel was with him. 16 And so it was, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!" 17 So Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?" 18 And Hushai said to Absalom, "No, but whom the Lord and this people and all the men of Israel choose, his I will be, and with him I will remain. 19 "Furthermore, whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so will I be in your presence." 2 Sam 16:15-19

Ahithophel's counsel fulfills God's threat to David. So Absalom lay with David's wives in the sight of all Israel.

And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong." 22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. 23 Now the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one had inquired at the oracle of God. So was all the advice of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom. 2 Sam 16:21-23

Ahithophel and Hushai give Advice

Ahithophel's advice would have been the end of David, but God did not want that to happen. After hearing Ahithophel's advice, they turned to Hushai, and he too gave advice that would bring the down fall of Absalom.

Moreover Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Now let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. 2 I will come upon him while he is weary and weak, and make him afraid. And all the people who are with him will flee, and I will strike only the king. 2 Sam 17:1-3

So Hushai said to Absalom: "The advice that Ahithophel has given is not good at this time. 8 For," said Hushai, "you know your father and his men, that they are mighty men, and they are enraged in their minds, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field; and your father is a man of war, and will not camp with the people. ... 11 Therefore I advise that all Israel be fully gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, like the sand that is by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in person. 2Sam. 17:7-8, 11

*So Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than the advice of Ahithophel." **For the Lord had purposed to defeat the good advice of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring disaster on Absalom.** 2Sam 17:14*

Hushai's counsel is followed and the battle between David and Absalom begins. Because of God's providence, David is victorious and Absalom is defeated.

So the people went out into the field of battle against Israel. And the battle was in the woods of Ephraim. 7 The people of Israel were overthrown there before the servants of David, and a great slaughter of twenty thousand took place there that day. 8 For the battle there was scattered over the face of the whole countryside, and the woods devoured more people that day than the sword devoured. 2 Sam 18:6-8

The death of Absalom is a sad example of the vicious nature of some people. Even with David's strong warning about Absalom, Joab kills him in cold blood as an act of murder while he is hanging helpless in the tree.

Then Absalom met the servants of David. Absalom rode on a mule. The mule went under the thick

boughs of a great terebinth tree, and his head caught in the terebinth; so he was left hanging between heaven and earth. And the mule which was under him went on. 10 Now a certain man saw it and told Joab, and said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree!" 2 Sam 18:9-10

Then Joab said, "I cannot linger with you." And he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom's heart, while he was still alive in the midst of the terebinth tree. 15 And ten young men who bore Joab's armor surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him. 2 Sam 18:14-15

David is Told of Absalom's Death

The news of Absalom's death brings David to great sorrow and mourning. His own responsibility in these events must have been heavy on his heart. Absalom was an evil man, but he was David's son and was fulfilling the very punishment God had sent on him. He bemoans his death, wishing he had died long before instead.

And the king said to the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" So the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!" David's Mourning for Absalom 33 Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: "O my son Absalom — my son, my son Absalom — if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!" 2 Sam 18:32-33

As his mourning over Absalom continued, the victory they had won began to feel like a defeat.

And Joab was told, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." 2 So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people. For the people heard it said that day, "The king is grieved for his son." 3 And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. 4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!" 2 Sam 19:1-4

Though Joab bore great guilt for these circumstances, his advice to David was sound.

Then Joab came into the house to the king, and said, "Today you have disgraced all your servants who today have saved your life, the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your concubines, 6 in that you love your enemies and hate your friends. For you have declared today that you regard neither princes nor servants; for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well. 7 Now therefore, arise, go out and speak comfort to your servants. For I swear by the Lord, if you do not go out, not one will stay with you this night. And that will be worse for you than all the evil that has befallen you from your youth until now." 2 Sam 19:5-8

David Returns to Jerusalem

After David returned to Jerusalem chaos reigned for a time. Those who had sided with Absalom were not yet loyal to David, and there was a quarrel between Judah and the other tribes.

Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. And all the people of Judah escorted the king, and also half the people of Israel. 41 Just then all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, "Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen you away and brought the king, his household, and all David's men with him across the Jordan?" 42 So all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king is a close relative of ours. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we ever eaten at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?" 43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, "We have ten shares in the king; therefore we also have more right to David than you. Why then do you despise us — were we not the first to advise bringing back our king?" 2 Sam 19:40-43

In this time of confusion and anger between Judah and the ten tribes, another rebel decided to divide Israel and led to the ten tribes leaving David.

And there happened to be there a rebel, whose name was Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet, and said: "We have no share in David, Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse; Every man to his tents, O Israel!" 2 So every man of Israel deserted David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah, from the Jordan as far as Jerusalem, remained loyal to their king. 2 Sam 20:1-2

David sends Joab to remove this threat and soon Sheba is killed and Israel is reunited, though grudgingly.

David Takes a Census

As David's life drew to its close, more sorrows came to David. His foolish desire for a census led to a terrible choice of punishment.

*And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly." 11 Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, 12 "Go and tell David, 'Thus says the Lord: "**I offer you three things; choose one** of them for yourself, that I may do it to you.'"" 13 So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, "Shall **seven years of famine come to you in your land?** Or shall you **flee three months before your enemies,** while they pursue you? Or shall there be **three days' plague in your land?** Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me." 14 And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please **let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.**" 2Sam. 24:10-14*

After David chose the three days of plague, the angel of the LORD was sent and 70,000 died. As the angel of the LORD stretched out his hand against Jerusalem he was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite and the LORD relented and stopped the slaughter.

So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died. 16 And when the angel stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. 2Sam 24:15-16

God then sent a prophet to sanctify that threshing floor which later became the site on which the temple would be built.

And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." 19 So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded. 20 Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. 21 Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people." 25 And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel. 2 Sam 24:18-21, 25

This closes the active part of David's life. As 1 Kings opens, David is old and infirm.

Now these are the last words of David. Thus says David the son of Jesse; Thus says the man raised up on high, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel: 2 "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. 3 The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me: 'He who rules over men must be just, Ruling in the fear of God. 4 And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, A morning without clouds, Like the tender grass springing out of the earth, By clear shining after rain.' 5 "Although my house is not so with God, Yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, Ordered in all things and secure. For this is all my salvation and all my desire; Will He not make it increase? 6 But the sons of rebellion shall all be as thorns thrust away, Because they cannot be taken with hands. 7 But the man who touches them Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, And they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place." 2 Sam 23:1-7

So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. 11 The period that David reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 12 Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established. 1Kings 2:10-12

King Solomon

The Transition from David to Solomon

The book of First Kings records the reign of Solomon, but began with David's decline and the attempt by Adonijah to steal the throne from Solomon. David's final years were spent in the infirmities of old age and a young woman called Abishag, who was a virgin, was chosen to minister to him.

Now King David was old, advanced in years; and they put covers on him, but he could not get warm. 2 Therefore his servants said to him, "Let a young woman, a virgin, be sought for our lord the king, and let her stand before the king, and let her care for him; and let her lie in your bosom, that our lord the king may be warm." 3 So they sought for a lovely young woman throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. 4 The young woman was very lovely; and she cared for the king, and served him; but the king did not know her. 1Kings 1:1-4

Even in the infirmities of his old age, he could not escape the consequences of his sin. His son Adonijah sought to use David's declining health as an opportunity to take the throne. Adonijah felt entitled to the throne.

Then he said, "You know that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel had set their expectations on me, that I should reign. However, the kingdom has been turned over, and has become my brother's; for it was his from the Lord. 1 Kings 2:15-16

Some think that after the death of Amnon and Absalom, Adonijah believed himself to be next in line and that certainly may have been true. Yet whatever the reason, "Adonijah exalted himself, saying 'I will be king,'" then devised an elaborate plan to become king and he found willing accomplices in Joab his general and Abiathar the priest, as the "followed and helped" him.

Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. 6 (And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, "Why have you done so?" He was also very good-looking. His mother had borne him after Absalom.) 7 Then he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they followed and helped Adonijah. 8 But Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and the mighty men who belonged to David were not with Adonijah. 1 Kings 1:5-8

The plans were well laid and were actually being carried out when Nathan arrived to warn Bathsheba that she and her son Solomon were in grave danger from these events.

And Adonijah sacrificed sheep and oxen and fattened cattle by the stone of Zohemoth, which is by En Rogel; he also invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants. 10 But he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men, or Solomon his brother.

11 So Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know it? 12 Come, please, let me now give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. 1Kings 1:9-12

All that God had planned for Solomon and the building of the temple were now being threatened by this rebellion of Adonijah. Although Nathan was a prophet, it is nowhere stated that God was behind this. He may have been or Nathan may have been acting out of concern alone.

Nathan's advice is probably based on Nathan's concern about David's ability to grasp the situation due to old age. So he wants Bathsheba to go in first and make the problem known to David and then Nathan would follow and confirm it.

Go immediately to King David and say to him, "Did you not, my lord, O king, swear to your maidservant, saying, "Assuredly your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?" 14 Then, while you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words." 1Kings 1:13-16

She immediately acts on Nathan's words and it is made clear by the account that David is now very old. David immediately recognizes that she had come with a purpose and asked about it.

So Bathsheba went into the chamber to the king. (Now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was serving the king.) 16 And Bathsheba bowed and did homage to the king. Then the king said, "What is your wish?" 1 Kings 1:13-16

Bathsheba then revealed to David what Adonijah was doing. She also revealed something nowhere else discussed in the Scriptures that David had felt the need to swear to her by the name of Jehovah that her son Solomon would become king.

Then she said to him, "My lord, you swore by the Lord your God to your maidservant, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.' 18 So now, look! Adonijah has become king; and now, my lord the king, you do not know about it. 1 Kings 1:17-19

As Nathan had promised he arrived just as she finished speaking and confirmed all that Bathsheba had spoken. He used powerful incentives to move David to action.

And Nathan said, "My lord, O king, have you said, 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne'? 25 For he has gone down today, and has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king's sons, and the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest; and look! They are eating and drinking before him; and they say, 'Long live King Adonijah!' 26 But he has not invited me — me your servant — nor Zadok the priest, nor Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, nor your servant Solomon. 27 Has this thing been done by my lord the king, and you have not told your servant who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?" 1 Kings 1:24-27

First, he asked if David had been the one behind Adonijah's actions. Second, he revealed that Adonijah was already invited all the kings sons, commanders of the army and a priest. Third Nathan expressed concern that they had not invited God's prophet, himself, Zadok or Benaiah who were very close to David and last of all he had not invited Solomon.

His final words will force David to take action. Nathan already knows this was not of David, nor was it part of God's plan. It was destined to ruin all David's plans regarding the house he wanted to build for God in Jerusalem.

As planned, David is deeply moved by these events and immediately takes action. First he assures Bathsheba that he would keep the oath he had sworn to her.

Then King David answered and said, "Call Bathsheba to me." So she came into the king's presence and stood before the king. 29 And the king took an oath and said, "As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life from every distress, 30 just as I swore to you by the Lord God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' so I certainly will do this day." 1 Kings 1:28-30

Then he calls his three most trusted advisers and sets out the plans that will thwart Adonijah's plans and set up Solomon as king.

And King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." So they came before the king. 33 The king also said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. 34 There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, 'Long live King Solomon!' 35 Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah." 1 Kings 1:32-35

The tumult this caused in the city led Adonijah's group to be concerned and after they find out what David has done, they realize the grave danger they are in. They had sought to defy God's will and David's oath and already knew what the consequences would be.

So all the guests who were with Adonijah were afraid, and arose, and each one went his way. 50 Now Adonijah was afraid of Solomon; so he arose, and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. 51 And it was told Solomon, saying, "Indeed Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.'" 52 Then Solomon said, "If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die." 53 So King Solomon sent them to bring him down from the altar. And he came and fell down before King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house." 1 Kings 1:49-53

David's Final words to Solomon

David was leaving everything in the hands of Solomon. The kingdom of Israel and the building of the temple. He was careful to help give Solomon the advice to succeed and be the kind of man necessary to continue receiving God's blessings. He knew the danger of power.

Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: 2 "I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. 3 And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; 4 that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' 1Kings 2:1-4

Note the emphasis. Solomon is to be strong and show himself a man by keeping the charge of Jehovah to walk in his ways, keep his statutes, commandments, ordinances, testimonies according to all that is written in the law of Moses. If he does so then he will prosper in all that he does and Jehovah will establish his word. In Chronicles a few more things are added to this.

As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. 10 Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it. 1Chr. 28:9-10

It is evident from these words that David is very concerned about two things. First the importance of Solomon's faithfulness, second, the proper discharge in building the temple of Jehovah. David knew that the future of Israel and the temple would be based on these two things.

However the Lord God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler. And of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make me king over all Israel. 5 And of all my sons (for the Lord has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. 6 Now He said to me, 'It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father. 7 Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.' 8 Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, be careful to seek out all the commandments of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land, and leave it as an inheritance for your children after you forever. 1Chron 28:4-8

David then instructed Solomon about dealing with some of the problems he had not completed and need to be done. First Joab was a wicked man and murderer and needed to be punished. Second Shemei had cursed David and needed to be dealt with for it. After these final words, David passed from the earth.

So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. 11 The period that David reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 12 Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established. 1Kings 2:10-12

Adonijah was still scheming to become king and in his attempt to set things up for himself he revealed his intentions and Solomon had him executed. He sought the young virgin who had been with David in his final years to become his wife. He therefore went to Bathsheba and asked her to request it of the king. While she did not see the problem with this, Solomon did and immediately had him executed.

Although David does not refer to it, the prophecy that Moses had given to Israel regarding the future kings of Israel is very important.

"When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' 15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' 17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. Deut 17:14-20

18 "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his

days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel. Deut 17:14-20

Note the important admonitions to the kings(Solomon ignored the ones in bold):

1. **Don't multiply horses** to himself. 16 (I Kings 10:26, 28; 2Chr 9:25)
2. **Don't multiply wives** for himself lest his heart turn away. 17 (I Kings 11:1-3)
3. **Don't multiply to himself silver and gold.** 17 (I Kings 10:27)
4. When sits on the throne, he shall write a copy of the law 18
5. It shall be with him and he shall read therein all the days of his life. 19
6. He must learn to fear the Jehovah, he will keep all the words of this law... to do them. 19
7. Heart must not be lifted up above his brethren, must not turn from the commands to the right or the left.
20
8. The end: That he may prolong his days in his kingdom. 20

Sadly many of the kings of Israel would have avoided serious problems if they had trusted in these words with all their heart and not leaned upon their own understanding of things(Pr. 3:5-7). Solomon was a great king, but would have been greater had he had taken to heart the things God had done to protect them from the dangers of being king.

King Solomon Worships at Gibeon

After the ark was taken by Hophni and Phinehas then captured by the Philistines, the tabernacle had been left without it. From that time until the middle of David's reign, there is no mention of it. But twice in David's reign and once here, it is revealed that the tabernacle had been relocated to Gibeon. David used this tabernacle to offer the burnt offerings that had been commanded both morning and evening.

*and Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests, **before the tabernacle of the Lord at the high place that was at Gibeon**, 40 to offer burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar of burnt offering regularly morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the Law of the Lord which He commanded Israel; 1Chr. 16:39-40*

*At that time, when David saw that the Lord had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there. 29 **For the tabernacle of the Lord and the altar of the burnt offering, which Moses had made in the wilderness, were at that time at the high place in Gibeon.** 30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the Lord. 1Chron 21:28-30*

***Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?"** 1 Kings 3:4-5*

How it came to Gibeon is something God did not choose to reveal to us. Nothing is mentioned in the life of Samuel or the reign of Saul. It simply appeared already in Gibeon where it remained until the temple was finished by Solomon.

Solomon asked for Wisdom

It was after Solomon was worshipping the LORD with his 1,000 burnt offerings that God appeared to him in a dream. Although it states that Solomon offered them, it cannot mean more than he brought them and stood nearby as they were offered. Since he was of the tribe of Judah and only a priest descended from Aaron could offer on the altar, he would be an onlooker, but not an active participant. Everyone learned a valuable lesson from Saul who lost his kingdom for actively offering a burnt offering (1Sam. 13:8-14).

*Then **Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon;** for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the Lord had made in the wilderness. 4 But David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim to the place David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. 5 Now the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the Lord; Solomon and the assembly sought Him there. 6 **And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the Lord, which was at the tabernacle of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.** 7 On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?" 2Chron. 1:3-7*

That evening, God appeared to Solomon with an amazing offer. Solomon can ask whatever he wants. God is giving him the opportunity to reveal his innermost desires.

God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" 6 And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. 8 And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. 9 Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" 1 Kings 3:4-9

Solomon's humility, submissive nature and faith are obvious. He calls himself a little child, states that in his present position, he doesn't even know the first things about going out or coming in. His position as king of God's people is a daunting task to him and he therefore petitions God. Chronicles adds:

***Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"** 2Chron. 1:10*

What Solomon sought:

- ① **Wisdom and knowledge**
- ② *An understanding heart to judge*
- ③ *Discern between good and evil*
- ④ **I may go out and come in before this people**(probably an idiom for a good example to them).

From the answer God gave, it is clear that He was testing Solomon.

Then God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life — but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king — 12 wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like." 2Chr. 1:11-12

God was very pleased with his answer:

The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, 12 behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. 13 And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. 14 So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." 1Kings 3:10-14

The speech pleased the LORD

- ① ***not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life***
- ② *not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor asked the life of your enemies*
- ③ ***asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people***
- ④ *asked for yourself understanding to discern justice,*
- ⑤ *I have done according to your words*
- ⑥ *I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.*
- ⑦ ***wisdom and knowledge are granted to you;***
- ⑧ *I have also given you what you have not asked*
- ⑨ *both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days.*
- ⑩ *if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.*
- ①① ***I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like."***

As we look at what God promised, it centers on what he did ask for and what he did not. Since he asked for wisdom, God gave him "a wise and understanding heart" and "wisdom and knowledge." God also gave him what he had not asked for, "riches, honor" and "riches, wealth, and honor."

"No one before him or after him" will have such a "wise and understanding heart." No one "like you among the kings in your days" will have "both riches and honor." "None of the kings" "before you or after you" will have "riches wealth and honor" as you do.

It isn't long before this new wisdom is revealed to Israel. Two harlots come for judgment. One is lying and the other is telling the truth, but from their affirmations nothing can be known. A lesser king or one without such wisdom would have been at a loss to know what to do. But with his wisdom, Solomon gives a decree he knows will reveal the truth.

Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king. 25 And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other." 26 Then the woman whose son was living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!" But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him." 27 So the king answered and said, "Give the first woman the living child, and

by no means kill him; she is his mother." 1 Kings 3:23-27

The full extent of his wisdom was first noted by the people and then fully revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice. 1 Kings 3:28

And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. 30 Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was wiser than all men — than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. 32 He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. 33 Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. 34 And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon. 1 Kings 4:29-34

Prosperity and Peace during Solomon's reign

For the second time in the history of Israel, All of God's promises are mentioned. The first one was in Joshua, when God did all he promised His people and left the rest to them, which they woefully failed to do.

So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. 44 The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. Josh 21:43-45

In this second fulfillment, every single thing God had promised Moses with the help of His people, all of it was not accomplished.

Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: 56 "Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses. 1 Kings 8:55-57

Some of the things that are under the blessings described above are:

Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. 21 So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life. 1King 4:20-21

24 For he had dominion over all the region on this side of the River from Tiphseh even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had peace on every side all around him. 25 And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. 1 Kings 4:24-25

21 All King Solomon's drinking vessels were gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. ... 24 Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 25 Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year. 27 The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland. 1 Kings 10:21; 24-25; 27

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">❶ Judah and Israel as numerous as the sands by the sea.❷ Eating and drinking and rejoicing❸ Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt.❹ he had peace on every side all around him.❺ Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree,❻ silver was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon❼ made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones,❽ and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores |
|---|

Solomon Built The House of the LORD

In the first three years of his reign, Solomon gained wisdom, wealth and peace. His next recorded act began in the fourth year of his reign when he began building the house of the Lord. Yet it was not only the 4th year of his reign, but also the 480th year since they had left the land of Egypt. The temple took seven years to build, so it was in the 11th year of his reign that the temple was dedicated.

*Now Solomon **began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah**, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 2 And he began to build on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign. 2Chr. 3:1-2*

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord. 1 Kings 6:1-2

In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid, in the month of Ziv. 38 And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its details and according to all its plans. So he was seven years in building it. 1 Kings 6:37-38

While Abraham also offered his Son on the mountains of Moriah and many commentaries are content to place it there, it can't be proved conclusively.

Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." Gen 22:2

Not only did Solomon build the temple, but he also started other large building projects as well. While Solomon took thirteen years to build his own house(1Kings 7:1-8)

- ⇒ He also built the **House of the Forest of Lebanon**;
- ⇒ He also made the **Hall of Pillars**;
- ⇒ Then he made a **hall for the throne**, the **Hall of Judgment**, where he might judge;
- ⇒ And the house where he dwelt had **another court inside the hall**, of like workmanship.
- ⇒ Solomon made a **house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter**, whom he had taken as wife.
- ⇒ The **house of the Lord**, his **own house**, the **Millo**, the **wall of Jerusalem**, **Hazor**, **Megiddo**, and **Gezer**. 1 Kings 9:15

All these buildings(including the temple) were built of large and costly stones of great size. Solomon had 70,000 to carry burdens, 80,000 to quarry stones and 3,600 to oversee the project.

All these were of costly stones cut to size, trimmed with saws, inside and out, from the foundation to the eaves, and also on the outside to the great court. 10 The foundation was of costly stones, large stones, some ten cubits and some eight cubits. 11 And above were costly stones, hewn to size, and cedar wood. 12 The great court was enclosed with three rows of hewn stones and a row of cedar beams. So were the inner court of the house of the Lord and the vestibule of the temple. 1Kg 7:9-12

Then Solomon determined to build a temple for the name of the Lord, and a royal house for himself. 2 Solomon selected seventy thousand men to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry stone in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them. 2Chron. 2:1-3

The Pattern for the House

Just as God had given Moses the pattern for the tabernacle, God gave the pattern for the temple to David. The term "pattern" means more than just plans or blueprints.

*According to all that I show you, that is, the **pattern** of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it. ... And see to it that you make them according to the **pattern** which was shown you on the mountain. Ex. 25: 6, 40*

tabnîṯ — a model, resemblance: KJV - figure, form, likeness, pattern, similitude. (Strong's #8403)

tabnîṯ a pattern, a plan, a form, construction, a figure (Brown Driver & Briggs #8403)

For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed

when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the **pattern** shown you on the mountain." Heb. 8:4-5

"tupos, ...1. the mark of a stroke or blow; print... 2. a figure formed by a blow or impression; hence univ. a figure, image:... 3. form... 4. an example; a. in the technical sense, viz. the pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made... b. in an ethical sense, a dissuasive example, pattern or warning... an example to be imitated: of men worthy of imitation, Phil. 3:17" (Thayer, p. 632; 5179).

David left Solomon the same type of pattern that Moses had been given on the Mountain.

Take heed now; for Jehovah hath chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it. 11 Then **David gave to Solomon his son the pattern ... 12 and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, ... 19 All this**, (said David), have **I been made to understand in writing from the hand of Jehovah, even all the works of this pattern.** 1Chr. 28:10-21

What David gave to Solomon was as detailed as the one Moses was given. God had given David, by the Spirit, the pattern, in writing from the hand of the LORD.

David gave to Solomon his son the pattern

of the porch of the houses of the treasuries of the upper rooms, of the inner chambers, of the place of the mercy-seat;

the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit

for the courts of the house of Jehovah, for all the chambers for the treasuries for the treasuries of the dedicated things; for the courses of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service for all the vessels of service of gold by weight for all vessels of every kind of service; of silver for all the vessels of silver by weight, for all vessels of every kind of service; for the candlesticks of gold for the lamps, of gold, by weight

for every candlestick and for the lamps for the candlesticks of silver, by weight for every candlestick for the lamps to the use of every candlestick the gold by weight for the tables of showbread for every table; silver for the tables of silver the flesh-hooks, basins, cups, of pure gold for the golden bowls by weight for every bowl for the silver bowls by weight for every bowl for the altar of incense refined gold by weight gold for the pattern of the chariot, the cherubim, that spread out (their wings), and covered the ark of the covenant of Jehovah.

All this, have I been made to understand in writing from the hand of Jehovah, even all the works of this pattern.

David Contributed to the House

David had spent much of his life gathering things that he would leave to Solomon to work with in building this house.

Then David said, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel." 2 So David commanded to gather the aliens who were in the land of Israel; and **he appointed masons to cut hewn stones to build the house of God.** 3 And David **prepared iron in abundance** for the nails of the doors of the gates and for the joints, and **bronze in abundance beyond measure**, 4 and **cedar trees in abundance**; for the Sidonians and those from Tyre brought much cedar wood to David. 1Chron. 22:1-4

5 Now David said, "Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries. **I will now make preparation for it.**" So David made abundant preparations before his death. 1Chron. 22:5

Indeed **I have taken much trouble to prepare** for the house of the Lord **one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver**, and **bronze and iron beyond measure**, for it is so abundant. I have **prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them.** 15 Moreover there are workmen with you in abundance: woodsmen and stonecutters, and all types of skillful men for every kind of work. 1Chron. 22:14-15

David then summarized all the things he had gathered in order to make it as easy as possible for Solomon to complete the house.

Now for the house of my God
I have prepared with all my might:
gold for things to be made of gold,
silver for things of silver,
bronze for things of bronze,
iron for things of iron,
wood for things of wood,

onyx stones, stones to be set,
glistening stones of various colors,
all kinds of precious stones,
marble slabs in abundance.
three thousand talents of gold of the gold of Ophir,
seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay
the walls of the houses; 1 Chron. 29:2-5

Solomon's Heart More Important

Yet though David believed the materials and building of the temple were important he made it clear that Solomon's heart was more important.

*"As for you, my son Solomon, **know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.** 10 Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it." 1Chron. 28:9-10*

*Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: 2 "I go the way of all the earth; **be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man.** 3 And **keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies,** as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; 4 that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' 1Kings 2:1-4*

As Solomon was finishing the temple and later when he dedicated it, God appeared to him and stated these words again.

*So **he built the temple and finished it,** and he paneled the temple with beams and boards of cedar. 10 And he built side chambers against the entire temple, each five cubits high; they were attached to the temple with cedar beams. 11 Then the word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying: 12 "Concerning this temple which you are building, **if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you,** which I spoke to your father David. 13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel." 1 Kings 6:9-13*

*Now **if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments,** 5 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' 6 But **if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes** which I have set before you, but **go and serve other gods and worship them,** 7 then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and **this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight.** Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 1Kings 9:4-7*

Solomon Finished / Dedicated the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles

Once the temple was finished, before Solomon brought the ark from its tabernacle, he assembled all the elders along with all the other men of Israel. He used the feast of the seventh month (the feast of tabernacles), since all Jewish males must gather together for this occasion.

Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord up from the City of David, which is Zion. 3 Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with the king at the feast, which was in the seventh month. 2Chron. 5:2-4

"You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. 14 And you shall rejoice in your feast, Deut. 16:13-14

"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. Deut. 16:16-17

The day began with the Levites carrying the ark and the mercy seat into the temple and placed under the new cherubim Solomon had built using the pattern God had given to him. The cherubim facing each other on top of the mercy seat are now placed under the newly built cherubim.

*Then **they brought up the ark of the Lord**, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. 5 Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. 6 Then **the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim. 7 For the cherubim spread their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles.** 1Kings 8:4-7*

Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they had come out of Egypt. 2Chron. 5:10

The moment the priests left the ark in the Most Holy place and came outside the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

*And it came to pass **when the priests came out of the Most Holy Place** (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without keeping to their divisions), 12 and **the Levites who were the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets — 13 indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever,"** that the house, **the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud,** 14 so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for **the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.** 2Chron. 5:11-14*

While this is happening inside the temple, Solomon begins to address the people and then offers a prayer.

*Then **the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing.** 4 And he said: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has fulfilled with His hands what He spoke with His mouth to my father David, 2Chron. 6:3-4*

***Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands** 13 (for Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven); 14 and he said: 2Chron. 6:12-14*

*"But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, **heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!** 19 Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O Lord my God, and **listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You:** 20 that **Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night,** toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. 21 And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. **Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive.** 2Chron. 6:18-21*

*when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul **in the land of their captivity**, where they have been carried captive, and **pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and toward the temple which I have built for Your name:** 39 then **hear from heaven Your dwelling place** their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You. 40 **Now, my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and let Your ears be attentive to the prayer made in this place.** 2Chron. 6:38-40*

After Solomon finished his prayer, the glory of the LORD again filled the temple and at the same time fire came down to devour the burnt offering.

***When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.** 2 And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. 3 When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed*

their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever." 2Chron. 7:1-3

After the seven days of the feast of the tabernacles was completed, the people returned to their homes filled with joy.

*At that time **Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him**, a very great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt. 9 And on the eighth day they held a sacred assembly, for they observed the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. 10 **On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their tents, joyful and glad of heart** for the good that the Lord had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel. 11 Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house; and **Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the Lord** and in his own house. 2Chron. 7:8-11*

God Appeared a Second Time to Solomon

When everything was complete and the temple was now the center of the worship of all Israel, God again appeared to Solomon.

Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 15 Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. 16 For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 2Chron. 7:12-17 see also 1Kings 9:1-9

1. I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.
2. if My people will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
3. My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.
4. I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

God also had some personal words for Solomon. Like all leaders of His people, God demanded that the leaders be more than just leaders in material matters, but much more importantly in spiritual matters.

As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, 18 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man as ruler in Israel.' 19 "But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, 20 then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 2 Chron 7:17-22

1. if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom,
2. If you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

The Wealth and Splendor of Solomon's Reign

Solomon reigned for a total of forty years(1Kings 11:42). It was in the 11th year of his reign that he finished the house of the Lord(1Kings 6:37-38). It took him 20 years to finish all his building other building projects(1Kings 9:10). We don't know how far into his reign these other projects started, but at the least, half his reign was over by the time he finished them. If he started the other projects the same time as the temple, then he only had about sixteen years left. So these final events sum up the last 16-20 years of his life.

1. Building a fleet of ships(8:17-18). Wealth came to Solomon which brought prosperity to all.

*Also, the ships of Hiram, which **brought gold from Ophir**, brought **great quantities of almug wood and precious stones from Ophir**. 1Kings 10:11-12*

*For the king had merchant ships at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing **gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys**. 1Kings 10:22-23*

2. The visit from the Queen of Sheba (10:1-13).

Although just a simple description of one of the many visitors who came to Solomon, this one event summed up what happened with others as well.

*Now **all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom**, which God had put in his heart. 25 Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses,*

and mules, at a set rate year by year. 1Kings 10:24-25

First, the fame of Solomon went out into all the earth (1Kings 4:30-31). She heard, but initially did not believe all that she had heard. Yet she came with great gifts, so her doubt was minimal. Yet she came to test him to see exactly what he did know.

Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. 2 She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. 3 So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her. 1Kings 10:1-4

After the visit, she was amazed at what she had seen and stated she hadn't heard the half of what was actually true.

Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 7 However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. 1 Kings 10:6-7

3. Descriptions of the prosperity of his reign

*All King Solomon's **drinking vessels were gold**, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. **Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon.** 1 Kings 10:18*

*And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had **one thousand four hundred chariots** and **twelve thousand horsemen**, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. 27 The king **made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones**, and he **made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores** which are in the lowland. 1 Kings 10:26-27*

4. The glory of his throne

Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. 19 The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round at the back; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. 20 Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom. 1 Kings 10:18-20

Solomon's Final Years

After completing the descriptions of all the wonder and splendor of His reign and the greatness of The last words recorded of Solomon's life are filled with sorrow and woe. Solomon did not remain faithful to God as his father David had done.

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites — 2 from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. 1Kings 11:1-3

In spite of God's clear warnings to Solomon, in regard to him remaining loyal and not worshipping other Gods, Solomon ignored some very important commands God had given in the Law of Moses.

*"When the LORD your God shall bring you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and shall clear away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, 2 and when the LORD your God shall deliver them before you, and you shall defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them. 3 "Furthermore, **you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons.** 4 "For **they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will quickly destroy you.** Deut 7:1-4*

*"When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' 15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 But **he shall not multiply horses for himself**, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' 17 **Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart***

turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. Deut 17:14-17

God had given Solomon the armor he needed to navigate through life. But even with all his wisdom and understanding, inspiration and knowledge, he could not rise above the principles God warned against. The fact that he ignored so many clear warnings illustrates the very pride Solomon himself had warned against in the Proverbs.

Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Prov 16:18

A man's pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor. Prov 29:23

Though Solomon thought he was strong enough to ignore or forget these commands, the very things God warned against were exactly what Solomon did and the very consequences God had warned would happen is exactly what happened to Solomon.

*And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that **his wives turned his heart after other gods**; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. 1Kings 11:3-4*

*Furthermore, **you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons.** 4 "For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; Deut 7:1-4*

*Set a king over you ... **Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.** Deut 17:14-17*

After his heart was turned, it wasn't long before his actions reflected his new heart.

*For Solomon **went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.** 6 Solomon **did evil in the sight of the Lord**, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David. 7 Then Solomon **built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon.** 8 **And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.** 1Kings 11:5-8*

It is amazing that the loyal king who built the temple to the Lord in Jerusalem and to whom the LORD had appeared twice could fall so low that he would also build temples to abominable idols in the same city of Jerusalem. Not only was it a sin, but it was also a terrible example to those in Jerusalem who now had a choice of where and whom to worship.

This created anger within the heart of the Lord.

*So the **Lord became angry with Solomon**, because **his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel**, who had **appeared to him twice**, 10 and **had commanded him concerning this thing**, that he should not go after other gods; **but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded.** 1 Kings 11:9-12*

God gave four reasons for this anger.

1. His heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel.
2. God had appeared to him twice,
3. had commanded him concerning this thing, that
4. but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded.

God then passed judgment on Solomon.

*Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "**Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes**, which I have commanded you, **I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.** 1 Kings 11:9-12*

God himself would tear the kingdom away from Solomon and give it to one of his servants. This is exactly what God had told David, and had warned Solomon against. God did manifest grace in two ways. First it would not happen in his days and second, his son would retain one tribe.

Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the

sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen." 1 Kings 11:12-13

God Raised up Adversaries

In quick succession, God lists the three adversaries that He raised up against Solomon and gave the power to work against him.

Now the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was a descendant of the king in Edom. 1 Kings 11:14

And God raised up another adversary against him, Rezon the son of Eliadah, who had fled from his lord, Hadadezer king of Zobah. 1Kings 11:23-24

Then Solomon's servant, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zereda, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, also rebelled against the king. 1Kings 11:26

So the final years of Solomon's reign were not enjoyed in peace. Solomon knew exactly why these adversaries had been allowed to grow in power. The final words concerning Solomon do not give much hope of repentance.

Solomon therefore sought to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. 41 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? 42 And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. 43 Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place. 1 Kings 11:41-43

We will finish the final things about Solomon's life when we speak of the reigns of Jeroboam and Rehoboam.