

1 Samuel

Degenerate Theocracy to Davidic Monarchy

Theocracy Ended (Decline of Judges)		Monarchy Established (Rise of Kings)		
Chapters 1–7		Chapters 8–31		
Samuel: “Heavenly King”		Saul: “Earthly King”		
Don’t Reject God as King		Accept God’s Rightful King		
Eli	Samuel	Saul	David	
Man After Man’s Heart	Man After God’s Heart	Man After Man’s Heart	Man After God’s Heart	
Paralysis	Prayer	Panic	Patience	
<i>Transition #1</i> Eli to Samuel (1–3)	Samuel & Ark’s Wanderings (4–7)	<i>Transition #2</i> Samuel to Saul (8–12)	Saul Rejected (13–15)	<i>Transition #3</i> Saul to David (16–31)
c. 94 Years				
Birth of Samuel (1105 BC) to Death of Saul (1011 BC)				

Key Word: Transition

Key Verse: “[The people] said to [Samuel], ‘You are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have’” (1 Samuel 8:5).

Summary Statement:

The reason God transitioned Israel from a degenerate theocracy to a righteous monarchy was to delegate his rule to Davidic kings.

Applications:

The ability to handle transitions comes from honoring God.

God raises or lowers us based upon whether we honor or dishonor him: “Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained” (2:30).

- 1) God blesses obedience: “to obey is better than sacrifice” (15:22).
- 2) God disdains mere show: “the LORD does not see as man sees” (16:7).

1 Samuel

Introduction

- I. **Title** "Samuel" (שמואל *semuel*) means "name of El [God]" or "his name is El [God]" (BDB 1028d 1) from the compound of שם, "name," and אל, "El," the singular form of אלהים, "Elohim." It also sounds like the Hebrew for "heard of God" (from שמע; cf. 1 Sam. 1:20). The Books of Samuel in the earliest Hebrew manuscripts formed one scroll entitled "Samuel" after the first significant character in the account. The Septuagint was the first translation to divide the book into the two titles, First Kingdoms and Second Kingdoms. After this came 1 Kings and 2 Kings with the titles Third Kingdoms and Fourth Kingdoms.

II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** The Jewish Talmudic tradition ascribed authorship of 1-2 Samuel to Samuel, but he could not have written past 1 Samuel 25:1, as this verse records his death. First Chronicles 29:29 notes "the Book of Samuel the Seer," "the Book of Nathan the Prophet," and "the Book of Gad the Seer." This may be a reference to the threefold authorship of the Books of Samuel that may have been compiled in their final form by a member of the prophetic school. Since First and Second Samuel originally formed a single scroll entitled "Samuel," this may account for his name being attached to both books.
- B. **Internal Evidence:** The author refers to Samuel's written record of the regulations of the kingship (1 Sam. 10:25); so writing a book was not unusual for Samuel. As head of a company of prophets (1 Sam. 10:5; 19:20), he is the most likely candidate to author the first book up to chapter 25.

III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** Although 1 Samuel 1–24 was recorded by Samuel at the end of his life (born ca. 1105 BC, died ca. 1015 BC), the rest of the Books of Samuel must have been written over 85 years later, after Israel and Judah divided in 931 BC. This is shown by references to the divided monarchy (1 Sam. 11:8; 17:52; 19:16; 2 Sam. 5:5; 11:11; 12:8; 19:42-43; 24:1, 9) and the reference to Ziklag, a Philistine city that the writer says, "has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day" (1 Sam. 27:6). Regarding the *latest* possible date of composition, the absence of reference to the fall of Samaria in 722 BC is notable. Therefore, the time of final composition most likely falls between 931 BC and 722 BC.
- B. **Recipients:** Since the first author of 1-2 Samuel (Samuel himself) records the start of Saul's rule, all the readers of 1 Samuel 1–24 must have been Jews at the time of the monarchy. However, those who read the books in their final form had already experienced the division of the empire.
- C. **Occasion:** Judges 17–21 and Ruth both supplement the primary account of the judges period, so the Books of Samuel continue the story from Judges 16:31. First Samuel concludes the period of the judges with the final two judges not mentioned in Judges (Eli and Samuel) and introduces the monarchy of Israel with the reign of Saul, Israel's first king. Even though Israel's desire for a king to be "like all the other nations" (1 Sam. 8:5, 20) was a carnal plan by rejecting the LORD as king, God planned for human royalty even as early as the time of the patriarchs (Gen. 17:6, 16; 35:11; cf. Deut. 17:14-20). As to what motivated the authors to record this transitional history from theocracy to monarchy, perhaps it was the desire to defend the Davidic dynasty (cf. 2 Sam. 7).

IV. Characteristics

- A. First Samuel is the first book in Scripture to use the word *Messiah* ("anointed," 2:10) and the first to refer to God as "the LORD of hosts" (e.g., 1:3).
- B. Two of the three significant characters in 1 Samuel are types of Christ: Samuel as prophet and priest, and David as the shepherd-king born in Bethlehem.
- C. The Book of 1 Samuel introduces the first of the prophets of Israel in the person of Samuel (Acts 3:24), who also served as the last judge. The keyword for this book is *transition*.

Argument

The Book of 1 Samuel traces the transition from Israel's theocracy in which Samuel serves as the last judge (1 Sam 1–7) to the nation's beginnings as a monarchy under the kingship of Saul (1 Sam 8–31). Within this overall design are three transitions of leadership: from Eli to Samuel (1 Sam 1–3), from Samuel to Saul (1 Sam 8–12), and from Saul to David (1 Sam 16–31). The intervening sections maintain that while Samuel filled a much-needed place of leadership among the people (1 Sam 4–7), the best replacement for him was not Saul, the people's choice as king whom God rejected (1 Sam 13–15), but instead David, a man after God's own heart.

Therefore, the theological design of 1 Samuel is not only to trace the history of Israel's change of government. Instead, it shows that God delegated his sovereignty through David's line.

Synthesis

Degenerate theocracy to Davidic monarchy

1–7

Theocracy ended

= 3 Leadership transitions

1–3	#1: Eli to Samuel
1	Samuel's birth
2:1–11	Hanna's prayer
2:12–36	Eli's house rejected
3	Samuel's call
4–7	Ark = Samuel needed
4	Captured
5	With Philistines
6	Returned
7	Restored

8–31

Monarchy established

8–12	#2: Samuel to Saul
8	King demanded
9:1–10:16	Private anointing
10:17–27	Public coronation
11	Jabesh Gilead/reaffirmation
12	Samuel retires as judge
13–15	Saul rejected
13:1–22	Presumptuous sacrifice
13:23–14:52	Food prohibition
15	Amalekites spared
16–31	#3: Saul to David
16–17	Friends
18–27	Enemies
18–20	David's flight
21–27	David's exile
28–31	Saul abandoned, David blessed
28	Saul at Endor
29	David refused battle
30	David destroys Amalekites
31	Saul's death

Outline

Summary Statement for the Book

The reason God transitioned Israel from a degenerate theocracy to a righteous monarchy was to delegate his rule to Davidic kings.

I. The reason God prepared Israel for a king in the transfer of leadership from Eli to Samuel was because the nation did not know God's character (1 Sam 1–7).

- A. Israel's first national leadership transition from Eli to Samuel came by Samuel's birth, call, and acceptance over Eli's wicked house to prepare for the prophesied monarchy (1 Sam 1–3).
 - 1. Samuel's unique birth and childhood show that God saw that Israel needed a new leader due to the pathetic state of the era of the judges (1 Sam 1).
 - 2. Hannah's prophetic prayer praised God's attributes and his future provision of kings (2:1-11).
 - 3. Eli's wicked priesthood by his sons' immorality with tabernacle women like the priests of Baal contrasts with Samuel's holy lifestyle to show the need for a new leader for Israel (2:12-36).
 - 4. Samuel's call by the LORD and acceptance by the people verified the leadership transition from Eli to Samuel (1 Sam 3).
- B. Israel showed its need for Samuel's leadership in their ignorance of the character of God, evident in their superstitious use of the ark to fight the Philistines (1 Sam 4–7).
 - 1. The Philistines taking the ark and the deaths of Eli and his sons fulfilled God's prophecy against Eli, showing the need for Samuel by denying God's omnipresence (1 Sam 4).
 - 2. The ark's superiority over Dagon in the Philistine camp showed God's omnipotence over all gods and grace even in Israel's disobedience (1 Sam 5).
 - 3. The ark's return to Beth-Shemesh prompted sacrifices and 50,070 Israelite deaths by high-handedly looking into the ark to display God's sovereignty and holiness (1 Sam 6).
 - 4. The ark's restoration to Kiriath Jearim and Israel's victories over the Philistines showed God's presence with the nation and its need for Samuel, a new leader (1 Sam 7).

II. The reason God led a leadership transfer from Samuel to Saul to David despite their evil motives was to show that he delegated rule to Davidic kings (1 Sam 8–31).

- A. The second transition of national leadership from Samuel to Saul marked the start of the monarchy due to Israel's evil motives (1 Sam 8–12).
 - 1. Israel's demand for a king due to national rejection of the LORD as King showed the nation's evil motives for the monarchy, despite future oppression by its kings (1 Sam 8).
 - 2. The transition from Samuel as judge to Saul as king marked the beginning of the monarchy in opposition to God's desire (1 Sam 9–12).
 - a) Samuel privately anointed Saul as king to prepare him for public coronation (9:1–10:16).
 - b) Samuel publicly made Saul king as an official declaration of God's displeasure with the nation's decision (10:17-27).
 - c) Saul's rescue of Jabesh Gilead and confirmation at Gilgal confirmed him as king in Israel's eyes (1 Sam 11).
 - d) At Samuel's retirement as judge (but not prophet), he reminded Israel of their sin of asking for a king to motivate them to live based on the Mosaic covenant (1 Sam 12).
- B. The LORD rejected Saul as king for his many failures to obey God, showing Israel's need for a righteous king (1 Sam 13–15).

1. Saul's *impatience* and fear of the Philistines, by having priests sacrifice before the required seven days, resulted in Samuel hinting that God had already chosen a godly king (13:1-22).
 2. Saul's *rashness* by keeping his men from food so they soon ate unlawful blood shamed him in his vow to kill the "disobedient" Jonathan and showed his godless rule (13:23-14:52).
 3. Saul's *disobedience* by not destroying the Amalekites was his last rebellious act before the LORD rejected him as king to show Israel's need for a righteous king (1 Sam 15).
- C. The third national leadership transition from Saul to David recorded their deteriorated rapport, showing God rejecting Saul and anointing David and his line (1 Sam 16-31).
1. Saul and David were friends while David rose as his musician and warrior (1 Sam 16-17).
 - a) After David was privately anointed king, he received valuable instruction in royal matters as Saul's personal court musician and friend (1 Sam 16).
 - b) David's victory over Goliath won Saul's approval as one of his warriors (1 Sam 17).
 2. Saul and David were enemies when Saul exiled him and attempted to kill him, thus teaching him valuable lessons that would enable him to rule righteously (1 Sam 18-27).
 - a) David's flight from Saul evaded his jealous, murderous efforts to reveal God's choice of David as founder of the messianic dynasty of kings (1 Sam 18-20).
 - (1) Saul burned with envy over David's greater popularity in Israel and thus revealed God's choice of David as the founder of the messianic dynasty of kings (18:1-9).
 - (2) Saul attempted to kill David out of jealousy over God's blessing on his life as a carnal response to God's revealed will (18:10-20:42).
 - (a) Saul tried to kill David by throwing a spear at him (18:10-16).
 - (b) Saul tried to kill David by tricking him into fighting the Philistines (18:17-30).
 - (c) Saul tried to kill David by commanding his servants to kill David (19:1-7).
 - (d) Saul tried to kill David by throwing a spear at him again (19:8-10).
 - (e) Saul tried to kill David by sending messengers to kill him (19:11-17).
 - (f) Saul tried to kill David by seeking his life at Samuel's house (19:18-24).
 - (g) Saul tried to kill David by commanding Jonathan to betray him (1 Sam 20).
 - b) David's exile taught him values he would need as king (1 Sam 21-27).
 - (1) At Nob, David ate the consecrated bread and learned the concession that the Law permitted—that life is more holy than bread (21:1-9; cf. Matt. 12:7-8).
 - (2) At Gath, David feigned insanity before Achish and learned not to go to his enemies for protection (21:10-15).
 - (3) At the cave of Adullam, David gathered 400 "down-and-outers" and learned compassionate leadership (22:1-2).
 - (4) At Mizpah, David left his parents at Moab—kin of his great-grandmother Ruth—and learned the need to care for his family (22:3-4).
 - (5) At Hereth, David learned of Saul's slaughter of 85 priests and all of Nob because Abimelech helped David, which taught him the perils of jealousy (22:5-23).
 - (6) At Keilah, David delivered the town from both the Philistines and Saul, which instructed him to consult the LORD in decision-making (23:1-12).

- (7) At Horesh in the Ziph desert, Jonathan encouraged David, but Ziphites betrayed his spot to Saul, teaching David to find strength in God when betrayed (23:13-23).
- (8) In the Maon desert, David barely escaped Saul, who broke his pursuit to rout the invading Philistines, teaching David that his life is in God's hands (23:24-28).
- (9) At En Gedi's cave, David spared Saul due to his authority as God's chosen king, teaching him to use his future kingly authority only for godly ends (23:29-24:22).
- (10) In the Maon desert, David learned not to act rashly like Saul through Nabal's wife Abigail, who honored David as God's anointed and soon married him (1 Sam 25).
- (11) On the Hakilah hill, David again spared Saul's life as God's chosen king, again showing David to use his future kingly authority for godly purposes (1 Sam 26).
- (12) At Gath and Ziklag, David developed his leadership and combat skills by carrying out raids against people south of the Philistines (1 Sam 27).

Application: How do you respond when an oppressive superior mistreats you (like Saul mistreated David)? If you do not learn submission and brokenness, eventually, when you get into a position of authority, *you too could become a "Saul"* who grasps for power! Learn the lesson of David. As we will see in 2 Samuel, David eventually had plenty of opportunities to imitate Saul, especially when his son Absalom claimed to be the rightful "third king" after Saul and David. This decision of David *not* to become a Saul is well said in this modern classic for those in ministry transition: Gene Edwards, *A Tale of Three Kings: A Study in Brokenness* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1980, 1982). It's a fast-moving, stirring, and biblical account of only 98 pages.

- 3. God abandoned Saul in his final days but provided for David to show God's blessing on David's line rather than Saul's dynasty (1 Sam 28-31).
 - a) By God's intervention via the necromancer of Endor, the dead (resurrected) Samuel told Saul of his death the next day to end Saul's rebellion towards God (1 Sam 28).
 - b) God providentially spared David from fighting his people while en route to battle Israel, and was commanded by Achish to return to Ziklag (1 Sam 29).
 - c) David destroyed Amalekite raiders who had destroyed Ziklag and carried off the plunder to indicate God's providential dealings in his life (1 Sam 30).
 - d) The Philistines killed Saul as God's penalty for his rebellion and proof of David's virtue by not killing Saul himself to show God blessing David's, not Saul's, line (1 Sam 31).

Judges' vs. Kings' Leadership

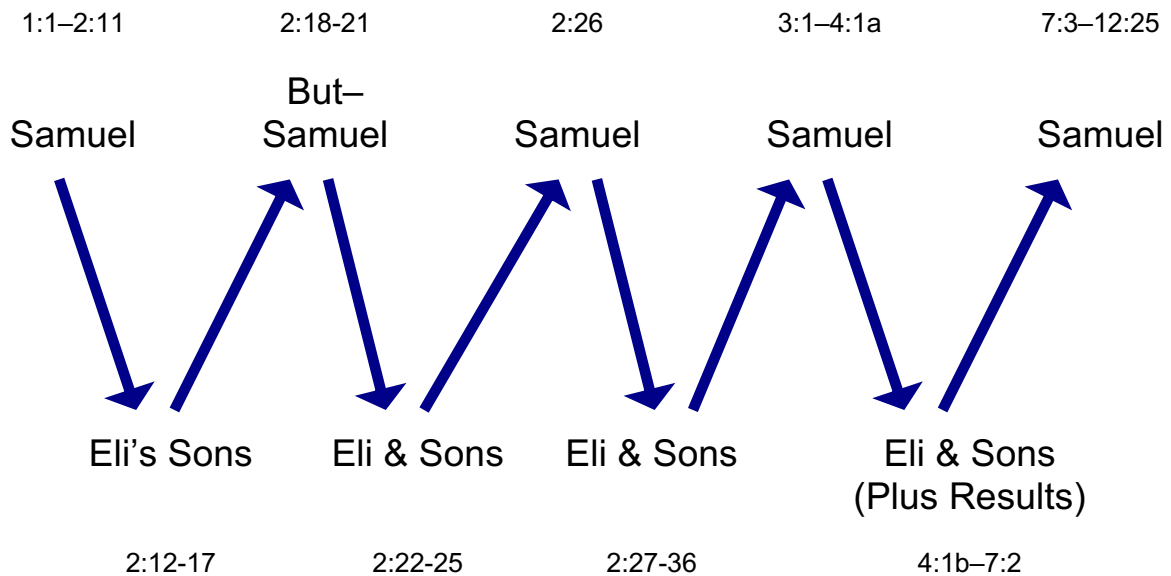
Adapted from Homer Heater, "A Theology of Samuel and Kings," in *A Biblical Theology of the OT*, ed. Roy B. Zuck, 139

	Judges	Kings
<i>Rule</i>	Local	Nation-wide
<i>Appointment</i>	Spontaneous	Planned
<i>Succession</i>	Not passed on to children	Dynasties
<i>Effect on Tribes</i>	Independent	Unified

Biographical Contrast by Interchange (1 Sam. 1–12)

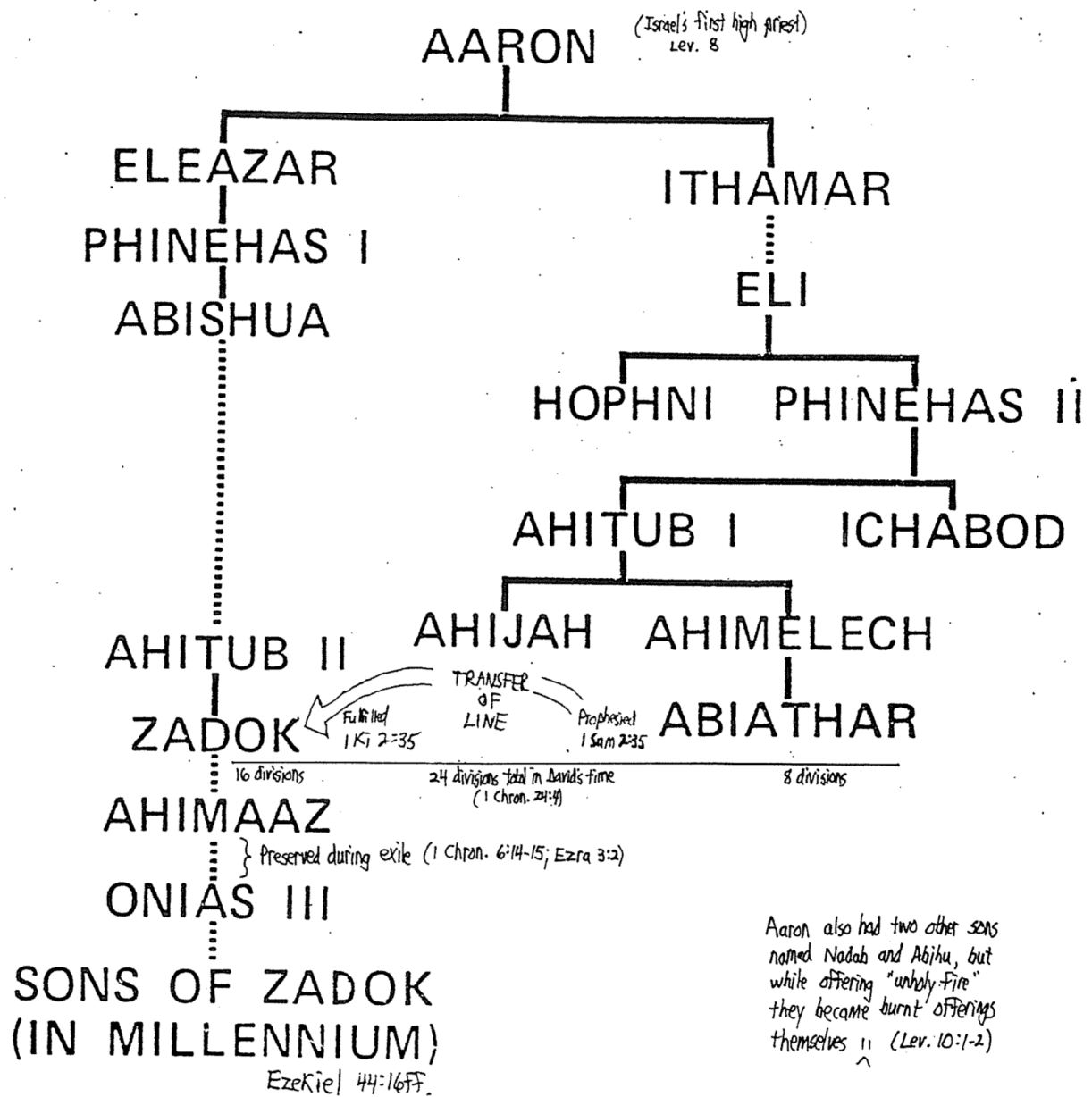
Donald K. Campbell, Dallas Theological Seminary (adapted class handout)

The beginning narrative of 1 Samuel repeatedly switches between the families of Eli and Samuel. This is designed to show that Eli was unworthy of the priesthood, whereas Samuel was spiritually qualified to be the priest who would bring Israel into a new era. This transition in the priesthood also hints at a national transition from a theocracy to a monarchy.



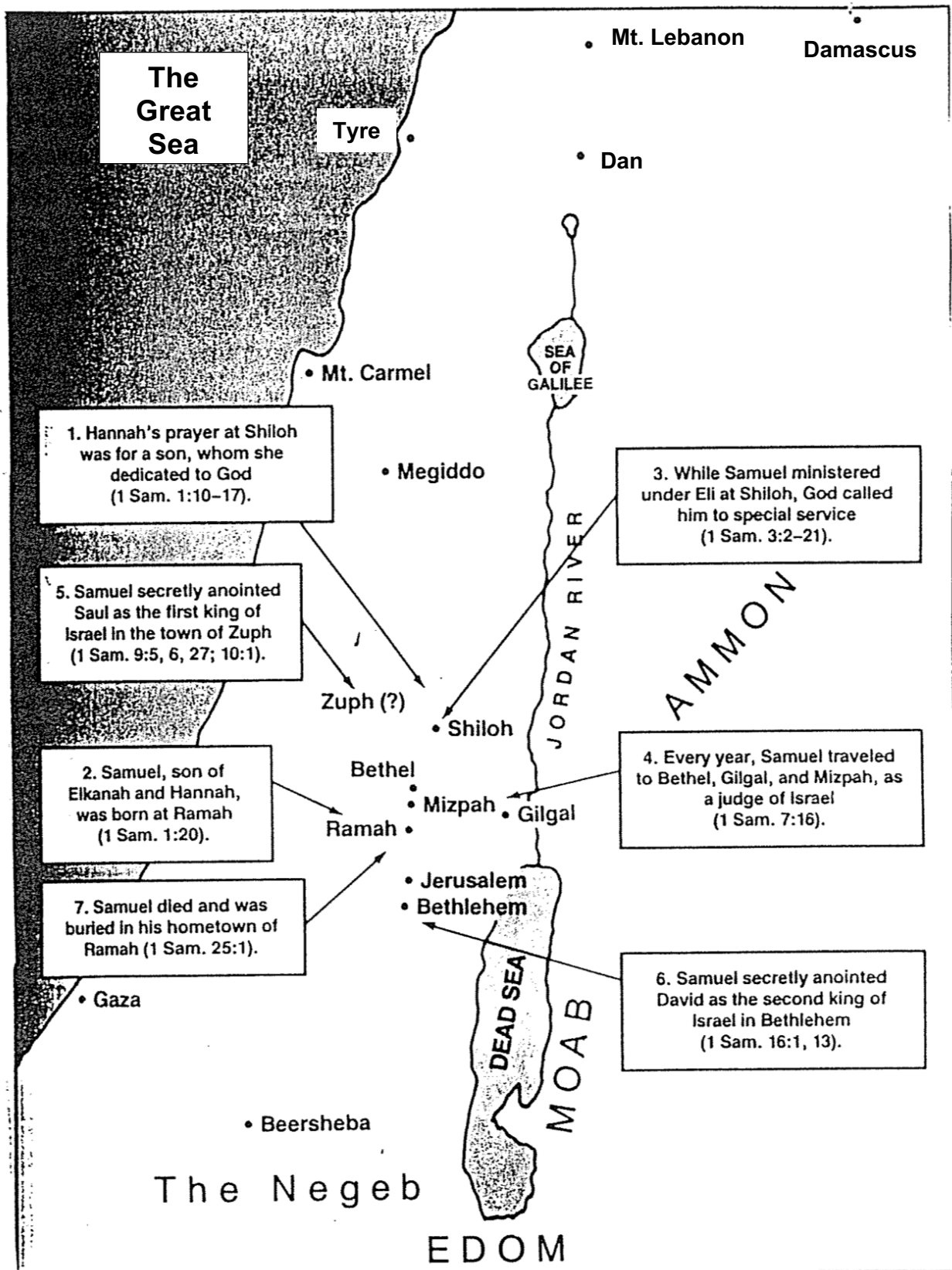
The Line of Aaron

Donald K. Campbell, Dallas Theological Seminary



The Life and Ministry of Samuel

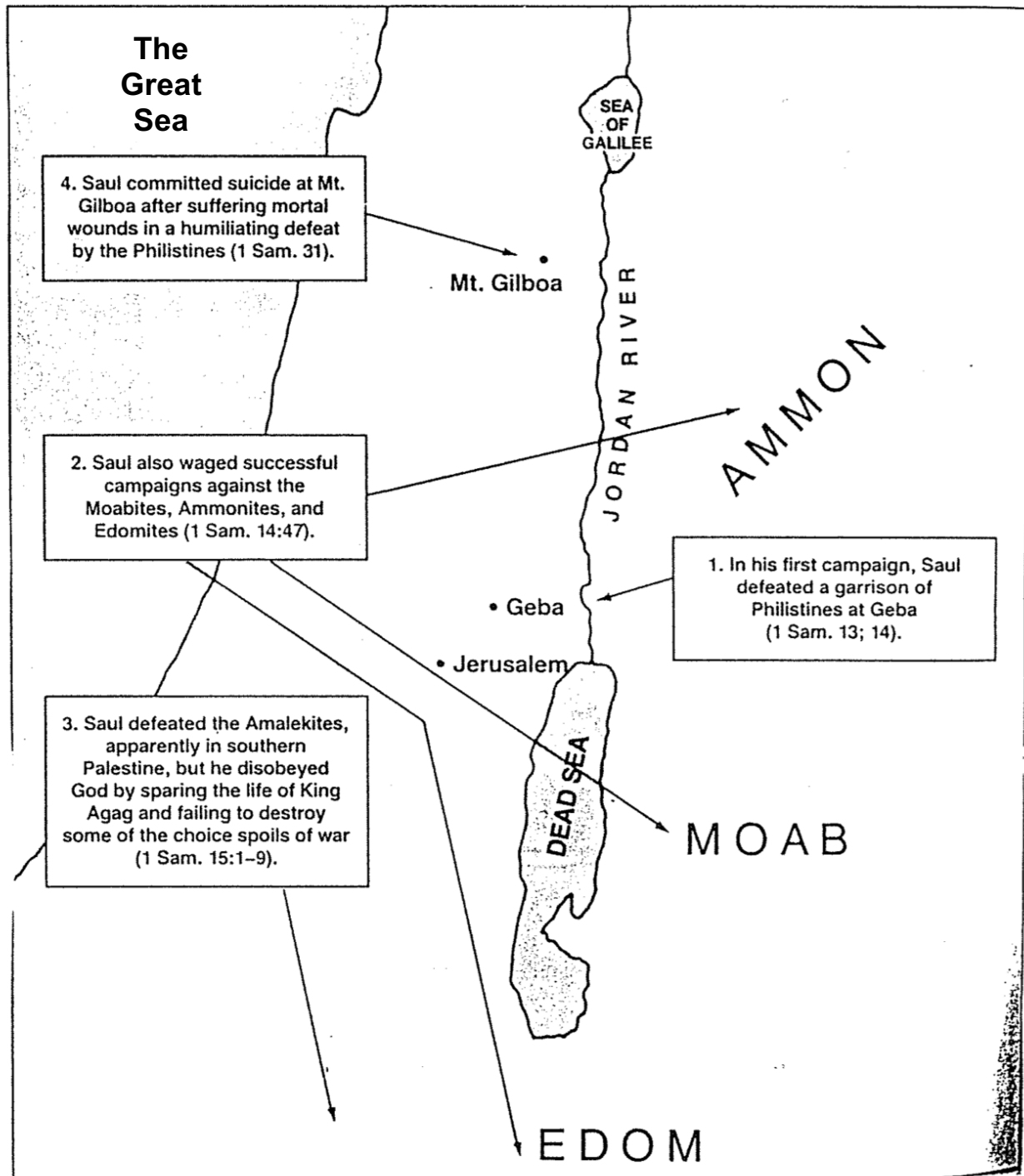
Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts



Saul's Military Campaigns

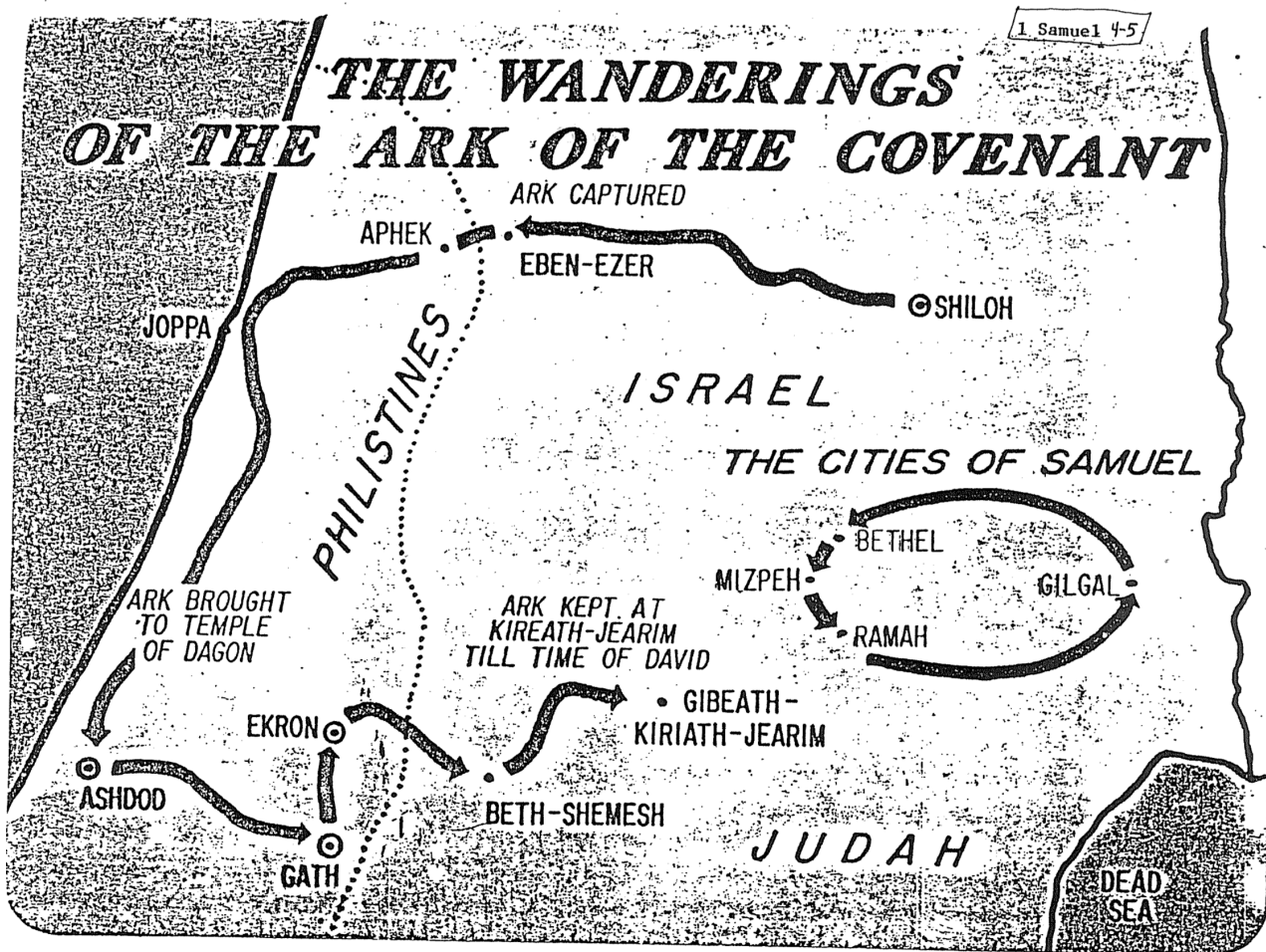
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As the first king of the united kingdom of Israel, Saul's major task was to subdue the nation's enemies. At first, he won several decisive battles. But his campaigns bogged down when he turned his attention to David, attempting to wipe out what he perceived as a threat to his power. Saul and his sons were eventually killed by the Philistines.



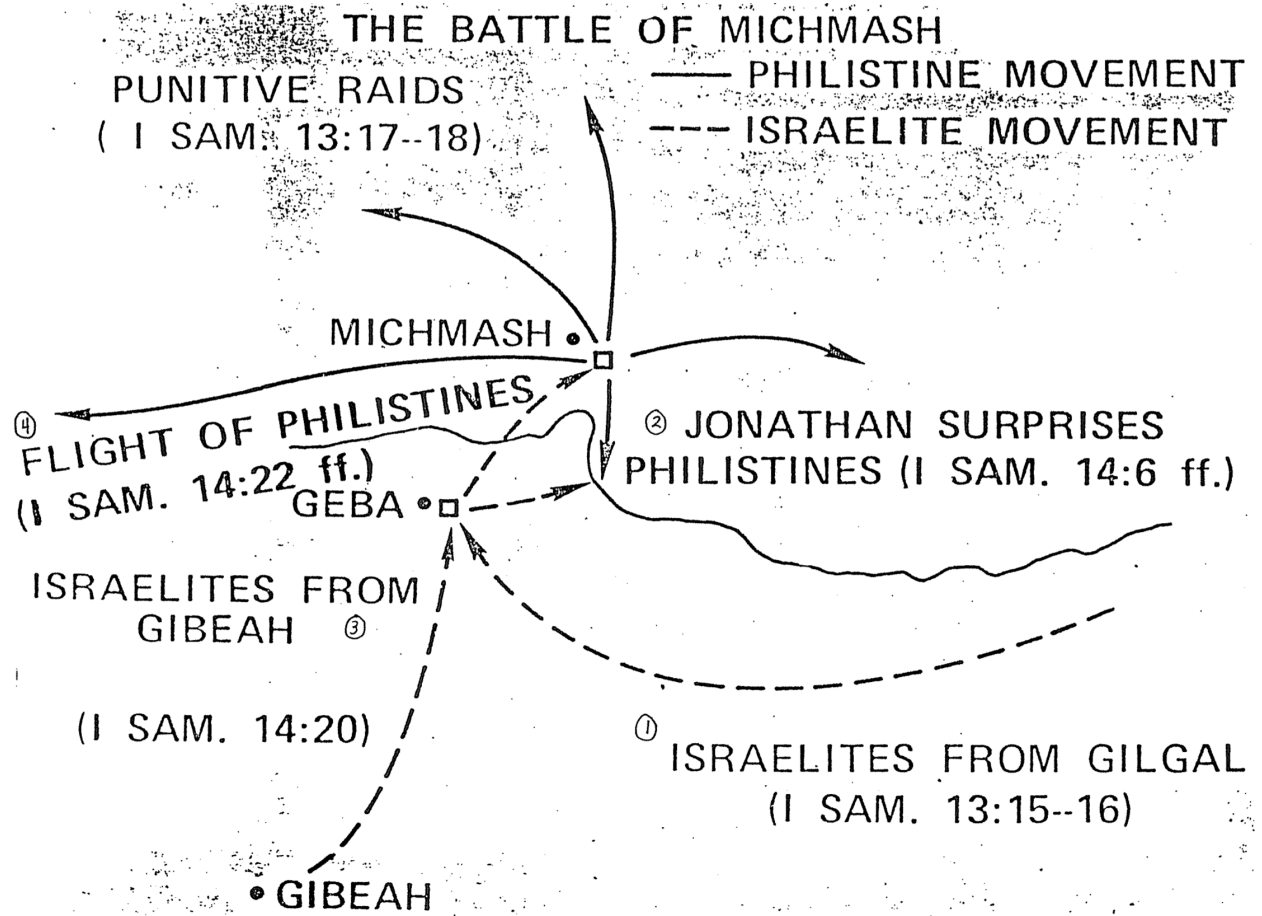
The Wanderings of the Ark of the Covenant

Donald K. Campbell, Dallas Theological Seminary

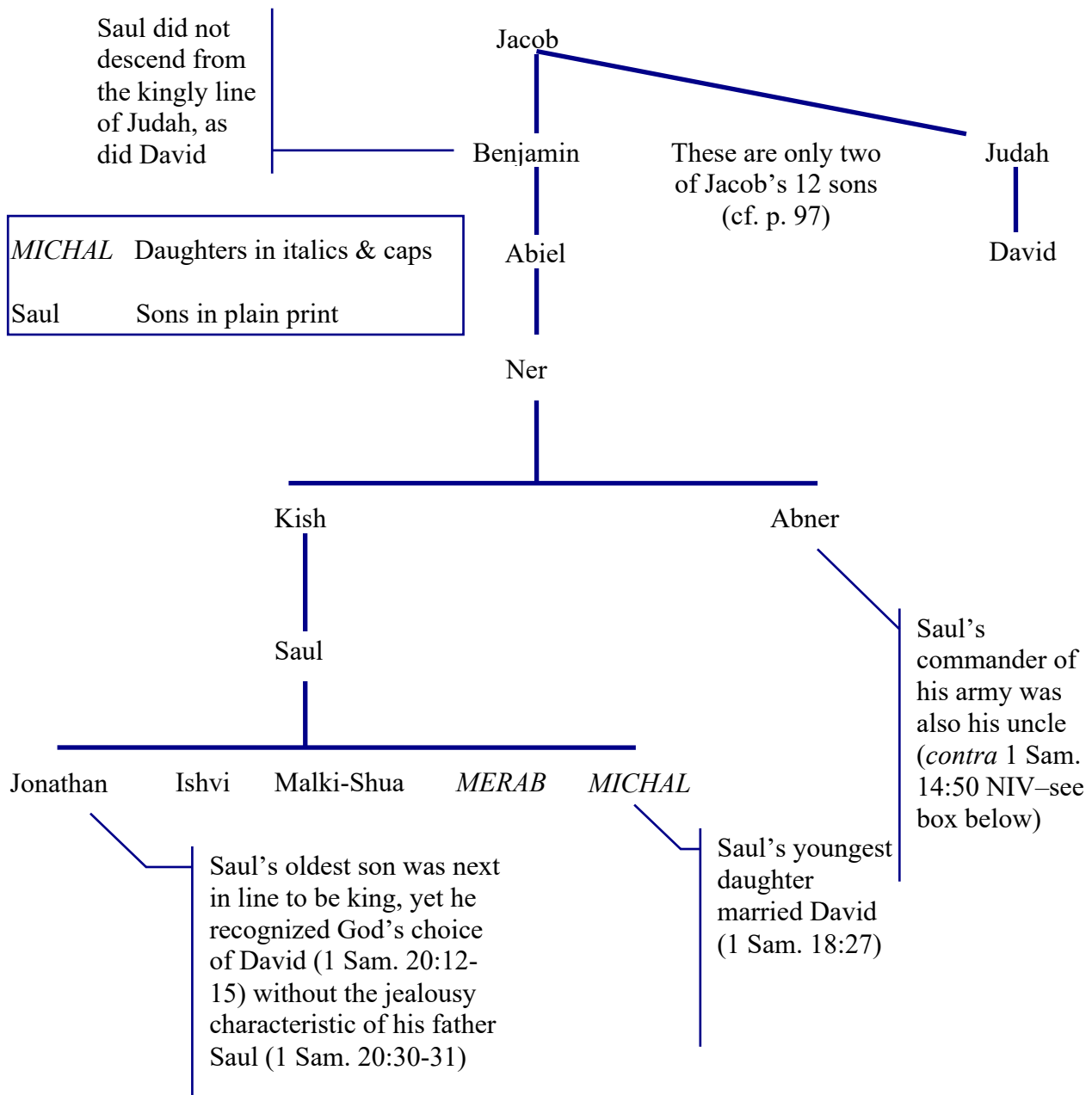


The Battle of Michmash

Donald K. Campbell, Dallas Theological Seminary (adapted)



Saul's Family Tree



Was Abner Saul's uncle or his cousin?

“According to 1 Chronicles 8:33 and 9:39 Ner was Saul's grandfather (Ner's son was Kish and Kish's son was Saul), but in 1 Samuel 14:50 Ner appears to be Saul's uncle and Abner his cousin. In 1 Chronicles Abner, though not mentioned, would be Saul's *uncle*, for Abner was Ner's son (1 Sam. 14:50). This seeming contradiction is eliminated by the Hebrew of 1 Samuel 14:50b, which says literally, ‘Abner son of Ner, uncle of Saul,’ with the understanding that the ambiguous ‘uncle of Saul’ refers not to Ner but to Abner” (Eugene Merrill, “1 Samuel,” *BKC*, 1:446-47, *italics* his). Thus the chart above is probably correct even though it disagrees with the NIV in 1 Samuel 14:50b.

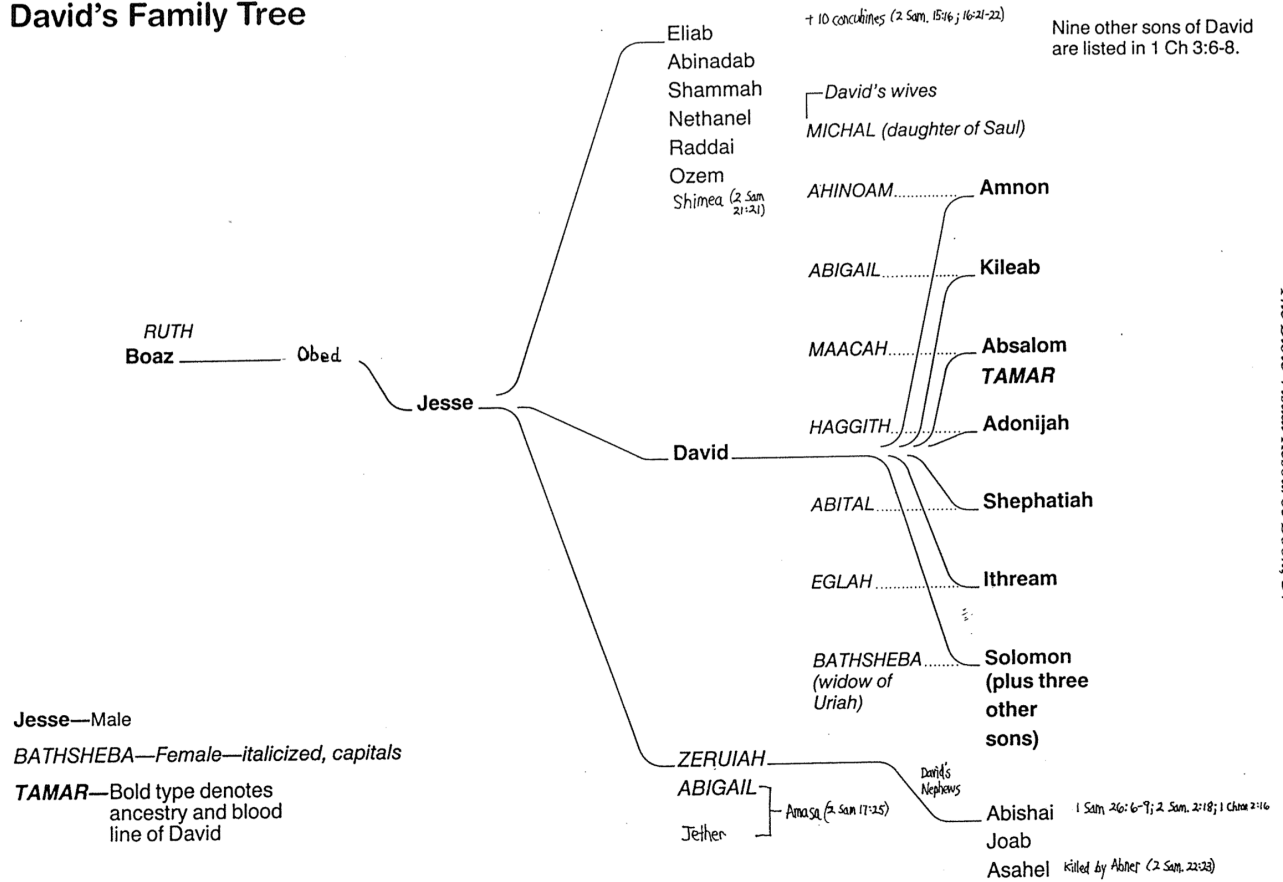
David's Family Tree

The Bible Visual Resource Book, 57

1 Samuel

57

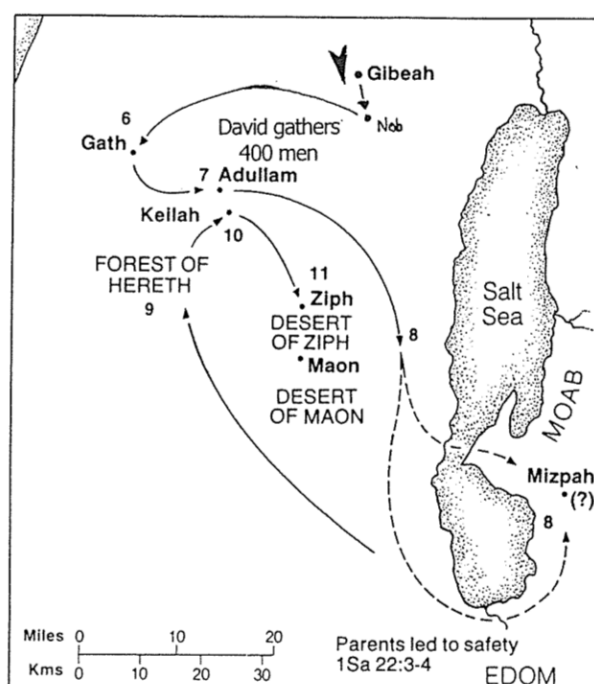
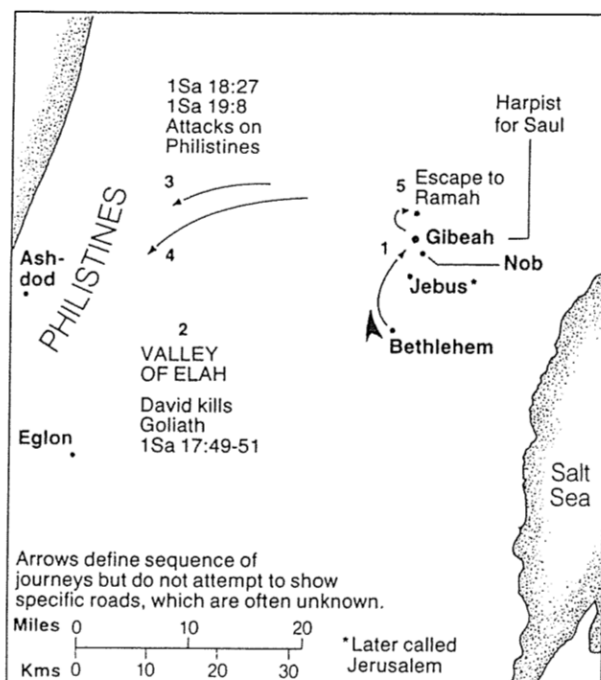
David's Family Tree



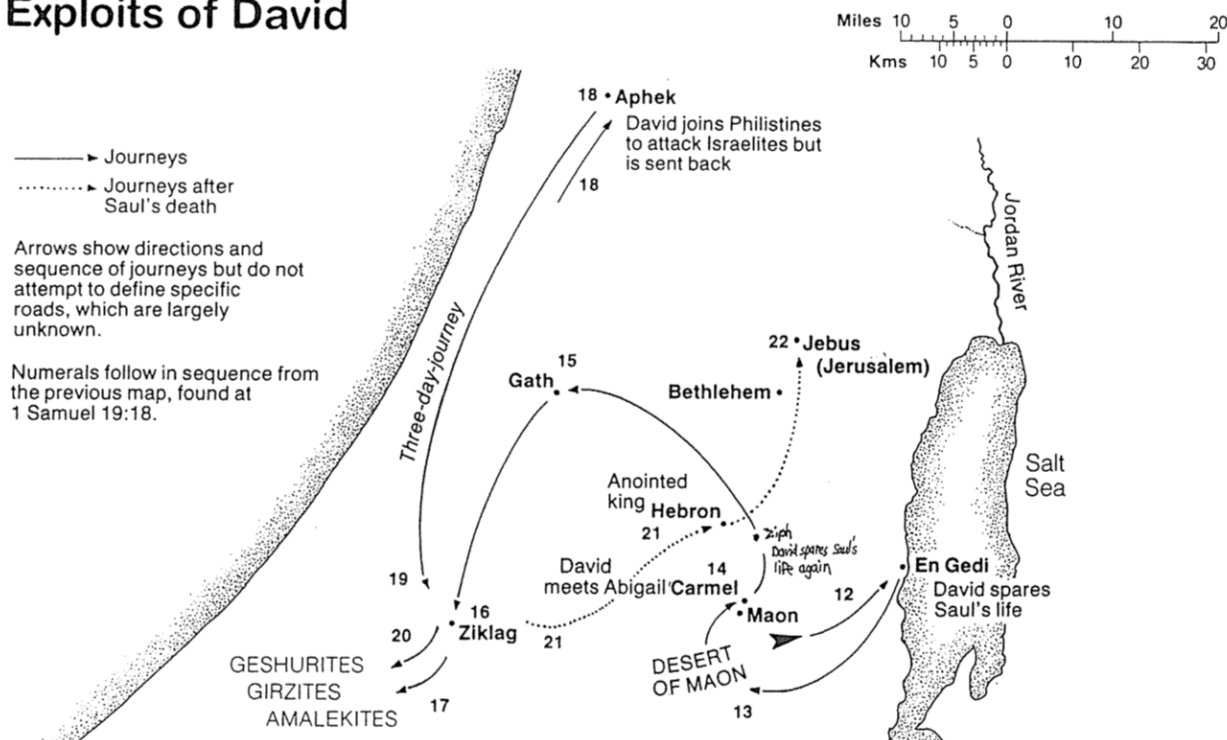
David as Fugitive and Warrior

The Bible Visual Resource Book, 59, adapted

David the Fugitive



Exploits of David

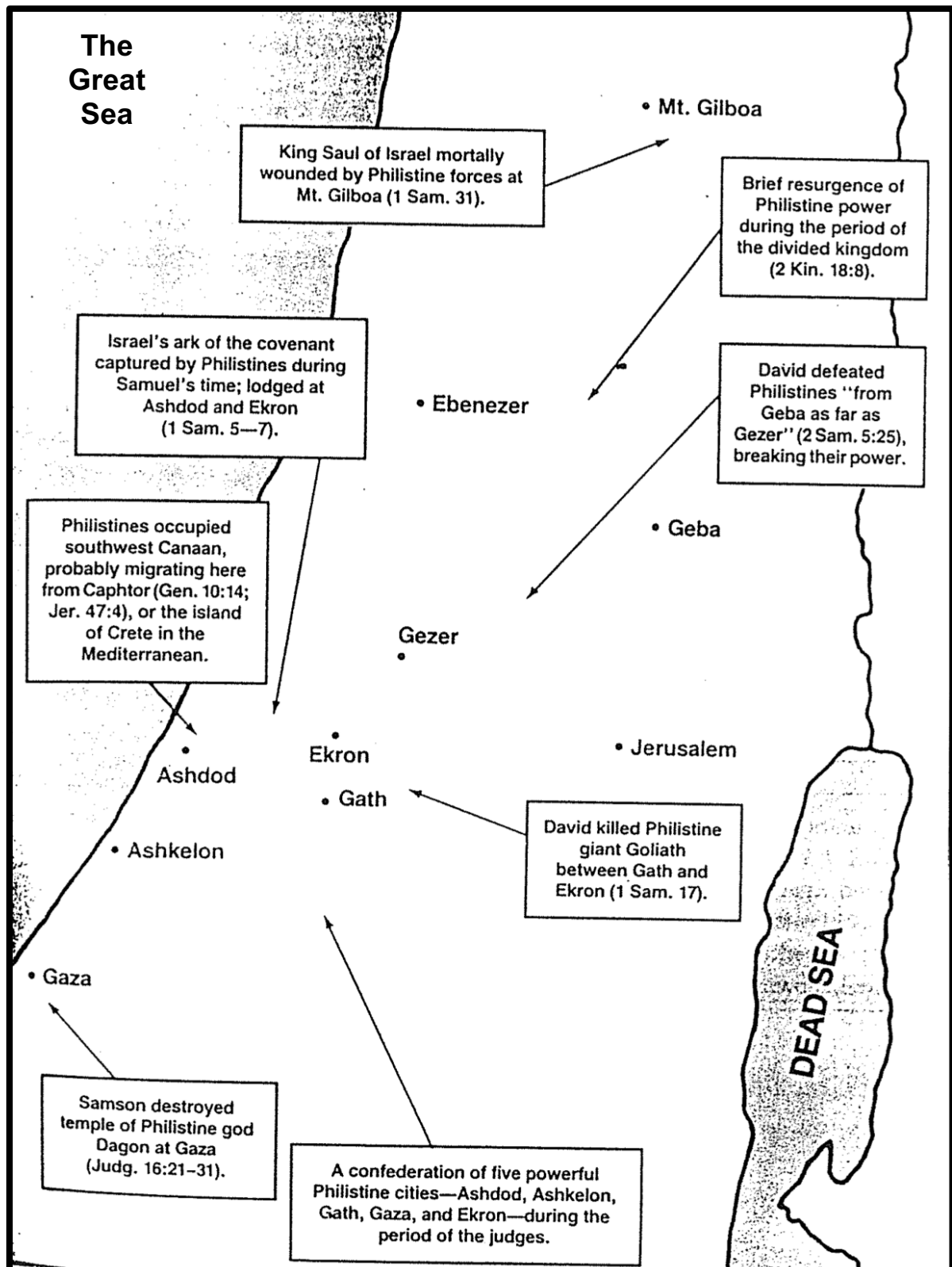


Saul and David Contrasted

	Saul	David
<i>Tribe/Lineage</i>	Benjamin	Judah
<i>Appointment</i>	People's choice	God's choice
<i>Warfare</i>	Fear: should have killed Goliath	Courageous: killed Goliath
<i>Spirit's Power</i>	Temporary	Permanent
<i>Emotions</i>	Paranoia	Trust
<i>Attitude towards Law</i>	Disobeyed	Obedied
<i>Attitude re: Anointed</i>	"Strike him!"	"Spare him!"
<i>Social Style</i>	Vindictive	Forgiving
<i>Followers' Motivation</i>	Fear	Respect
<i>Leadership</i>	Foolish	Wise
<i>Height</i>	Very tall	Shorter
<i>Age at Appointment</i>	Middle-aged	Teenager
<i>Response to Sin</i>	Regret	Repentance
<i>Marriage</i>	Monogamous?	Polygamist
<i>Philistine Subjugation</i>	Began	Finished
<i>Jerusalem Conquering</i>	Couldn't do it	Made it capital
<i>Size of Kingdom</i>	Small	Huge
<i>Covenant</i>	Rejected (1 Sam. 13:13)	Davidic (2 Sam. 7)
<i>Death</i>	Violent with disgrace	Peaceful with honor

The Philistine Threat

Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts



Controversial Issues

A Class Presentation Summary of Walter Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the OT*, and *More Hard Sayings of the OT* (1 of 5)

1. Did Samuel actually appear to Saul?

A. Different Interpretations:

1. *Saul and the witch under hallucination*

Response :

- ☒ Impossible for both to hallucinate the same vision at the same time.
- ☒ The witch did see Samuel and she was frightened at the sight of him.

2. *The witch deceived Saul into thinking that she called Samuel from the dead.*

Response :

- ☒ Impossible for Saul to be deceived, for he knew Samuel and his voice.
- ☒ The witch was frightened at what she saw
- ☒ The witch cannot give such accurate prophecy that is attributed to Samuel here

3. *A demon impersonated Samuel*

Response:

- ☒ Demons do not promulgate truth, but deception. The prophecy was proven true to the smallest detail

4. *Samuel actually appeared to Saul*

Support:

- ☒ Saul believed that the apparition was really Samuel
- ☒ The prophecy was in accord with what Samuel has said to Saul when Samuel was alive
- ☒ the prophecy was fulfilled literally

2. If Samuel really did appear to Saul, why would God allow ungodly woman to bring up a man of God and for what purpose?

to make Saul's sin of witchcraft an occasion of his punishment

to demonstrate that God has control over all the spirit world

to warn men of all time to stay away from spiritism

Regulations for monarchy in Deut. 17:14-20

The typology of Christ as King

But everything has to be done according to divine timing and in line with divine criteria

Controversial Issues (2 of 5)

A Class Presentation Summary of Walter Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the OT*, and *More Hard Sayings of the OT*

3. Was monarchy in Israel part of God's plan?

- Yes, God intended to establish kingship in Israel.
- God's promise to Abraham in Gen. 17:6,10 : "Kings will come from you.."
- Reaffirmation of the same promise to Jacob in Gen. 35:11
- Jacob's blessing records of this kingship (Gen. 49:10)
- Regulations for monarchy in Deut. 17:14-20
- The typology of Christ as King

But everything has to be done according to divine timing and in line with divine criteria.

4. If monarchy was part of God's plan for Israel, why was the demand for a king displeasing to Samuel and offensive to God?

- Because it was not done according to God's timing. God will give them a king in His own time (David?)
- Because their attitude was wrong: "... to be like all the nations.." - a statement of disbelief in the power and presence of God. (reasons for wanting a monarchy)

5. A chief objective to the view that God of the Old Testament is a God of love and mercy is the divine command to exterminate all men, women and children belonging to the seven and eight Canaanite nations. How, ask most serious readers of the text, could God approve of blanket condemnations, of the genocide of an entire group of people?

- God had dedicated these people to destruction because they violently and steadfastly impeded or opposed his work over a long period of time. This act of destruction was reserved for the spoils of Southern Canaan (Num 21:2-3), Jericho (Josh 6:21), Ai (Josh 8:26), Makedah (Josh 10:28) and Hazor (Josh 11:11)
- The reason for the delay in the act of destruction was is that "the sin of the Amorites [the Canaanites] has yet reached its full measure.] (Gen.15:13-16)
- These nations were cut off to prevent the corruption of Israel and the rest of the world (Deut 20:16-18). When a nation starts burning children as a gift to the gods (Lev. 8:21) and practices sodomy, bestiality and all sorts of loathsome vices (Lev. 18:25, 27-30), the day of God's grace and mercy has begun to run out.
- God was dead against the Amalekites because while the Israelites were struggling through the desert toward Canaan, the Amalekites picked off the weak, sick and elderly at the end of the line of the march and brutally murdered these stragglers (Deut 25:17-18) They were attacking God's chosen people to discredit the living God.

Controversial Issues (3 of 5)

A Class Presentation Summary of Walter Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the OT*, and *More Hard Sayings of the OT*

6. 1 Samuel 15:14:14-15,22 [..to obey is better than sacrifice...] and a few other texts appears to repudiate all sacrifices. Though some texts call for burnt offerings to God (e.g. Ex 29:18, 36; Lev. 1-7), others appear to disparage any sacrifices, even as our text in 1 Samuel 15:22 seems to do. How do we reconcile this seeming contradiction?
- ☒ Perfunctionary acts of worship and ritual, apart from diligent obedience, were basically worthless to God and the individual. Prophet Isaiah rebuked the nation for their empty ritualism (Is.1:11-15); what was needed was a new heart attitude as the proper preparation for meeting God (Is.1:16-18). Jeremiah records the same complaint (Jer. 6:20).
 - ☒ God does approve sacrificing, but he does not wish to have it at the expense of full obedience to his Word or as a substitute for a personal relationship of love and trust. Sacrifices, however, were under the Old Testament economy. As for us, Christ was our sacrifice, once for all (Heb. 10:1-18). Nevertheless the principle is still the same : True religious affection for God begins in the heart and not in acts of worship or the accompanying vestments and ritual.
7. What, then , was the nature of the change in God that 1 Samuel 15:11 talks about, when he says. "I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions?" If God is unchangeable, why did he "repent" or "grieve over" the fact that he had made Saul king?

God is not a frozen automation who cannot respond to persons; he is a living person who can and does react to others as much, and more genuinely, than we do to each other. Thus the same word repent, is used for two different concepts both in this passage and elsewhere in the Bible. One shows his responsiveness to individuals and the other shows his steadfastness to himself and to his thoughts and designs. Hence, this text affirms God as remaining true to his own character and essence. Repentance in God is not, as it is in us, an evidence of indecisiveness. It is rather a change in the other individual. The change, then is in Saul. The problem was in Saul's partial obedience, his wayward heart and covetousness. While God repented *that* he had given Saul the kingdom along with its honour and power, he did not repent giving him wisdom and grace or his fear and love; the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.

Controversial Issues (4 of 5)

A Class Presentation Summary of Walter Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the OT*, and *More Hard Sayings of the OT*

8. King Saul became bereft of the Spirit of God and as a result fell into ugly bouts of melancholia, which was attributed to an evil spirit sent from the Lord (1 Samuel 16:13-14). Saul's bouts of melancholy were attributed to the Lord, what explanation can we give for such a radical shift and reversion of Saul's personality?

Possible answers:

- ✎ 'Keil and Delitzsch attributed Saul's problem to demon possession. They specify that this "was not merely an inward feeling of depression at the rejection announced to him... but a higher evil power, which took possession of him, and not only deprived him of his peace of mind, but stirred upon the feelings, ideas, imagination, and the thoughts of his soul to such an extent that at times it drove him even into madness. Jehovah sent this evil spirit as a punishment."
- ✎ The evil spirit was a messenger, by analogy with the situation in 1 Kings 22:20-23. This unsuspected messenger did his work by the permission of God.
- ✎ This evil spirit was a 'spirit of discontent' created in Saul's heart by God because of his continued disobedience.

9. Saul's question about the identity of David in 1 Samuel 17 create a rather difficult problem in light of 1 Samuel 16, especially verses 14-23. It would appear from chapter 16 that by the time of David's slaying of Goliath Saul had already been introduced to David and knew him quite well.

Possible answers:

- ≈ These two accounts stem from independent traditions. Thus the confusion over whether David's debut at court preceded his conquest of the Philistine is unnecessary, since the stories come from different sources and do not intend to reflect what really happened so much as teach a truth.
- ≈ Some blamed Saul's diseased and failing mental state. On this view, the evil spirit from God had brought on a type of mental malady that affected his memory.
- ≈ The hustle and bustle of court life, with its multiplicity of servants and attendants, meant that Saul could ^{have} easily forgotten David, especially if the time was long between David's service through music and his slaying of Goliath.

Controversial Issues (5 of 5)

A Class Presentation Summary of Walter Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the OT*, and *More Hard Sayings of the OT*

- Saul was not asking for David's identity, instead he was attempting to learn what his father's social position and worth were, for he was concerned what type of stock his future son-in-law might come from.
- The most favoured answer by older commentaries is that the four events in the history of Saul and David in 1 Samuel 16–18 are not given in chronological order. Instead they are transposed, by a figure of speech known as hysteron proteron, in which something is put last that according to the usual order should be put first (e.g. Gen 10).² E.W. Bullinger suggested that the text was rearranged in order to bring together certain facts, especially about the Spirit of God.

¹ Johann Karl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1950) . p.170

² E.W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech (1898; reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), pp.706-7



SOURCES :

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