

BIBLE STUDY

9

FIRST SAMUEL

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INTRODUCTION

NAME

I and II Samuel were just one Book in Hebrew manuscripts. It may have received its name because Samuel is the main character in all incidents that took place in the first part of the Book. He is the first to anoint kings for Israel and the first to offer that type of prophetic historical writing inspired by the Holy Spirit. Samuel means "Name of God" or "His name is El (God)," and also means "God heard."

In the Septuagint, the Book was just divided into two for practical reasons; to use 2 scrolls and was considered part of the "Kingdoms' Books" (I and II Sam., I and II Kings) being Books that contain a full history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

In the Hebrew edition done by Daniel Bomberg in the year 1517, the Book was divided into two. Presently, the division is that from the Septuagint and the name follows the Hebrew.

AUTHORSHIP

According to Hebrew tradition the authors are the prophet Samuel, Gad and Nathan (I Chronicles 29:29-30).

TOPIC

Instituting a kingdom among the people: It tells of 115 years of history from the birth of Judge Samuel to the death of Saul. God was the King over the people; He chose their leaders as judges or prophets but the people wanted to emulate the Gentiles and requested an earthly kingdom. Here, for the first time, we see the expression "Lord of Hosts" 1:3, to emphasize the fact that God is their true Leader. For the first time we see "The anointed of God" as though the king is anointed by God; (symbolizing Our Lord Jesus Christ). The sequence of events in this Book is a preparation for David's becoming King and from whose line would come the incarnate King of Kings.

CONTENTS AND TRAITS OF THE BOOK

1. Both Books of Samuel are the first historical exposition of the history of humanity.
2. Both Books bring to light the most important religious basis at that time:
 - School of Prophets.
 - Clerical works.

- Messianism (Messiah or Christ).
- Emphasis on the work of the Spirit of God in inspiring prophecies (10:6).
- New heart (10:9).
- Constructive jealousy (11:6).
- Talents (16:13,18).
- Preserving humanity from evil spirits (16:14).

3. I Samuel is more like a publication on prayer (1:10-28; 7:5-10; 8:5-6; 9:15; 12:23; 28:6).

OUTLINE

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Samuel, the Prophet and Judge. | (1 - 7) |
| 2. King Saul. | (8 - 15) |
| 3. King David. | (16 - 31) |

UNITY OF THE BOOK

Some critics tried to prove that there were two different sources from two different periods for this Book. One of them favors that kingship was registered before captivity and the other opposes it by saying that it was during or after captivity. Many scholars confirm the unity of Book as I mentioned in my "Commentary on 1 Samuel" in Arabic.

COMMENTARY

The historical books portray Israel as God's people with a promise, and the Gentiles: Edom, Moab and the Philistines, as God's enemies; that is because Israel accepted the Divine promises while the Gentiles blasphemed against God by worshiping idols. Presently, the new Israel is the Church of the new Testament in the world, a church which has inherited the promises spiritually, not literally. As for the enemies, they are the hosts of darkness: Satan, his army and his works: love of the world, adultery and iniquities, etc... Consequently, it would not be right to put all that comes in the Books literally into practice, because Christ has come to elevate us over worldly thinking.

SAMUEL: THE PROPHET AND THE JUDGE

(I Samuel 1 - 7)

His life represents a transitional period through which the people went from the era of the Judges to the Royal regime. Samuel was instrumental in this. He was not comfortable with their request for a king like the Gentiles, but he had to obey a Divine order and Saul was anointed King. Saul was known for his spiritual and psychological insecurity and stubbornness.

BIRTH OF SAMUEL (1 Sam. 1)

1. Elkanah, a Levite, had two wives: Peninnah (=Pearl) and Hannah (= Tenderness, grace) Elkanah preferred Hannah, who was barren, and he gave her double of whatever he gave Peninnah, which, of course, made Peninnah very jealous. Peninnah, with her many children, represents the Church of the Old Testament, which enjoyed the pearls of the law, the Prophets and the Promise; while Hannah, barren as she was, represents the Church of the new Testament, proceeding from the Gentiles, resentful because of the Jews' sarcasm towards her.

2. Hannah's resentment did not keep her from taking part in the food offered to God. The partaking of believers in the midst of pain! After the meal, she got up and went to pray secretly before the Divine altar, in the house of the Lord, in Shiloh, and thus she became a symbol of quiet prayers which open up the heavens.

3. Eli did not have the sense to differentiate between a believer with a broken spirit and a drunken person. But the God of hearts can differentiate between them.

4. Together with her secret prayers, Hannah displayed meekness in her answer to Eli, the priest [15-16] and humility [18]; and her faith in God by going her way and her face was no longer sad [18].

5. The birth of Samuel was the fruit of Hannah's prayers and faith. She kept him for three years until she weaned him, and then she offered him to the Lord, saying to Eli, "Therefore, I also have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord" [28]. She loaned him to the Lord, that is, he remains her son whom she cherished, but she could not go back on her promise to God. God granted him to her, and she gladly loaned him back to the Lord, of her own accord, for the rest of his life, not just for a few years.

6. She offered sacrifices:

- 3 bulls, of which one was slaughtered as a burnt sacrifice (Samuel's life = burnt offering to show his love for God);
- 1 ephah of flour, i.e. 10 lbs (=10 commandments); and
- "a skin of wine" (= Happiness results from sanctifying one's heart and life).

SAMUEL'S UPBRINGING (1 Sam. 2)

1. Hannah's psalm is full of thanksgiving, not only for having Samuel as a son, but also because in him she saw the great gift of God, the Messiah, the salvation of His people. (Compare between Samuel 1:1-10 and Luke 1:46-55) : Hannah praises through symbolism and the Virgin Mary through Truth Himself.

2. What a big difference between Samuel and the two sons of Eli! Eli was too lenient in their upbringing and they in turn took advantage of their position as priests. Instead of being good shepherds, they were like two wolves devouring the flock. They did not know the Lord, they corrupted the women, they violated the holy of holies by eating parts of the offerings which did not belong to them. They had a right only to the breast and the right leg after burning the fat in sacrifice (Lev. 3:3-5)] and the rest should have been distributed among the family members who made the offering (Lev. 7:29-34). They took the rite and purity lightly, as well as rights of others, even those of the Lord.

3. Samuel began his service to the Lord as a young boy swathed in linen [18]. He wore it like a coat tied around the waste with a band, which was what the Levites wore, and not the priests. His mother gave him a new garment every year, as a renewal of family ties which were filled with love. This good family relations was probably the shield which protected him from the evil ways of the sons of Eli.

4. Eli admonished his sons with leniency, so God sent him a prophet to warn him, but his weak personality kept him from being more stern with his sons. God decided to discipline him; [shifting the priesthood from his descendants who died young; taking the ark away from them ; and his descendants would seek death in vain.] The prophet concluded his speech by foretelling of the coming of the Messiah, the faithful Priest, Who will do what pleases God [35-36].

THE CALLING OF SAMUEL (1 Sam. 3)

1. In the midst of the deep darkness outdoors, "...and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of Lord..." [3], the Lord called Samuel to set him as a light among his people, to proclaim the will of God, and witness to the truth. He was called before dawn and before the lamp went out, at a time when darkness settled on Israel because the "word of the Lord was rare" (1 Sam. 3:1; Ps. 74:1,9; Amos 8:11).
2. Samuel alone heard the voice, not Eli, because his heart was ready for it. Samuel was only 12 years old.
3. Samuel lived with Eli, serving him, obeying him and asking his guidance. Obedience is the shortest yet the most difficult route. Through Eli, Samuel came to know God; yet God came to Samuel calling him by name [10]. God condescends and stands by us and we come to know Him through guidance.
4. Samuel learnt that obedience is the essence of the prophecy... "Speak, for Your servant hears" [10].
5. Samuel was afraid of hurting Eli's feelings but he "...told him everything and hid nothing from him..." and Eli readily accepted God's discipline to him.
6. God laid the foundation for good works [Samuel's oneness with God [19]; his being accepted by the people; and God's appearance to him in Shiloh].

THE ARK OF GOD CAPTURED (1 Sam. 4)

1. Israel went out to battle against the Philistines without sanctifying themselves or conferring with God, so they were defeated at Aphek. They brought the ark of the covenant back from Shiloh and the two sons of Eli were with it. There was no repentance or remorse before they did that, so the ark of the covenant of God was taken from them and the two priests died together with 30,000 Israelites. When Eli heard that, he fell back from his chair, his neck was broken and died.
2. When the daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, heard what had happened to the ark of the covenant, to Eli and her husband, she went into labor prematurely, and gave birth to a son and called him Ichabod (=where is the glory?). She considered that the glory was taken away from Israel when the ark was taken away. Actually, Israel had fallen and lost its glory and she was upset about the ark and the glory of her people more than with the death of her husband and father-in-law, because she felt that God had forsaken His people.

THE FALLING OF DAGON (1 Sam. 5)

1. God allowed the Philistines to capture the ark of the covenant in order to discipline Israel. They were supposed to realize that because of their corruption, they had lost the presence of God in their midst. At the same time God showed His glory and power by causing Dagon to fall, [an idol whose head and hands were human and whose body was that of a fish], on the floor because they had placed the ark in his house, [as though Dagon was victorious over the God of Israel]. They did not realize that there should be no affiliation between God and idols. After insisting on keeping the ark, they came the following day and found their idol with its head and hands broken on the threshold, a sign that he had lost the power of thought and action and that he would be trodden upon.
2. The pagans did not learn their lesson, so the Lord struck Ashdod and its territory with tumors, and plagued them with rats, so they lost their health and nourishment. The ark is a blessing to believers and an aroma of death to blasphemers (2 Cor. 2:15- 16).
3. The ark was moved from Ashdod to Gath, one of the greatest cities of Palestine, and the plague was even more severe. Everybody was sick, old and young, and the whole city was disturbed.
4. The ark was then moved to Ekron, one of the five great cities of Palestine, and the plague was even greater. "...For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there... and the cry of the city went up to heaven" [11-12].

RETURN OF THE ARK (1 Sam. 6)

1. For seven months, the ark stayed in the hands of the Philistines. This was to show that what happened to the idol and the people was not by chance and also to give Israel a chance to repent.
2. The Israelites might have wondered at the ease with which the ark was taken from them, but God used the priests and diviners to witness for Him. They decided to return the ark with a "trespass offering," in acknowledgement of their sin, and as a means of compensation for what happened to His people. All five cities participated so that it would be a communal confession. It was the tradition of the pagans to offer an image of the plagued part to the idols.
3. The pagans realized two facts: God cannot be bribed with gold or silver, therefore they offered glory to God [5]; and also that it was useless to resist Him.

4. The ark was returned on a new cart (the Church of the New Testament carrying God). The cart was pulled by two milch kine on which there had come no yoke. (Some Jews and some Gentiles accepted to live a fruitful life without deviation from the right path, so that they did not carry the sour burden of sin together with the sweet easy burden of Christ). Going into the field of Joshua (= Jesus), represented the enjoyment of the Church with her Lord Jesus. as the secret of her power. The stone upon which the sacrifice was offered in the field of Josh ua, remained as a witness to God's work with His people [18].

5. The people did not receive the ark according to their traditions by sending for the priest and Levites to carry it... thus the men of Beth Shemesh were struck and the ark was taken up to Kirjath Jearim (city of forests) via the towns of Judah and Benjamin, estimated to be nine miles west of Jerusalem.

REPENTANCE IS THE MEANS TO VICTORY (1 Sam. 7)

1. The people of Kirjath Jearim realized that the presence of the ark in their midst represented a Divine presence, a blessing for those who loved Him. Therefore they went up to it with reverence and joy and brought it to the house of Abinadab (father of hospitality or nobility). There is no enjoyment of the Divine presence without the gift of giving.

2. After nearly twenty years of continuous work with the people, Samuel called on all the people to have a collective repentance saying: "If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoroth from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only..." [3]. During this time, Samuel had married and had Joel (Jehovah is God) and Abijah (God is my Father)...there was a need for a firm distinction between the two ways, either God or the foreign gods.

3. Inner, heartfelt repentance showed in outward actions:

- a. putting away foreign gods;
- b. their gathering together at Mizpah to worship with one spirit;
- c. Samuel praying for them;
- d. drawing water and pouring it out before the Lord (symbolizing pouring the heart to God);
- e. collective fasting;
- f. confessing their sins to God in Samuel's presence; and,
- g. offering a whole burnt offering to the Lord.

4. Because they offered a true repentance, their enemies rose against them, but the repentant people of God, defeated them. Their oppression became victory in the exact spot where they had suffered defeat before.

5. Samuel moved from one place of worship to another like Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah.

KING SAUL

(1 SAMUEL 8 - 15)

ISRAEL DEMANDS A KING (1 Sam. 8)

1. The people were taken in by the show of greatness that belonged to the kings of the nations surrounding them. They took advantage of Samuel's old age and used his sons' deviation from his ways, as leverage, and demanded a king to rule and judge over them as the other nations. There was nothing wrong with their demand except that they were speeding up the sequence of events because God had already prepared David to be their king from whose offspring would come the Incarnate Word of God Incarnated; and their desire to imitate the other nations showed the love of superficial pomp and glory.

2. Samuel took that request as an affront to his judicial office and God considered it an affront to Him, since He was King over His people (7). Samuel was not furious with them, but asked God's advice. God comforted him and told him to fulfill their request. God sanctifies human freedom and answers group prayer. At the same time, He shows them the reality of the situation, giving them very clear warnings.

3. Samuel warned the people and revealed to them the disadvantages of fulfilling their demand for a king. The disadvantages being:

- a. appointing their sons to serve him and his purposes;
- b. using their daughters to entertain him and his family;
- c. using them as perfumers, cooks and bakers;
- d. taking the best of their fields;
- e. using their manpower to cultivate his own lands; and,
- f. "... 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" [18].

When the people still insisted on a king, Samuel adjourned the meeting, and they were all satisfied that he would grant them their wish.

SAUL [=REQUEST] MEETS SAMUEL (1 Sam. 9)

1. When the people insisted on having their way, Saul, son of Kish, the Benjamite, was appointed king. He was taller than any of the people [2]. Kish's donkeys were lost and his son, Saul, and one of the servants went out looking for them. They searched the mountains of Ephraim and went through the lands of Shalisha, Shaalim, Benjamites, Zuph, but in vain. Three days had gone by without finding them, Saul decided to go back, fearing that his father would be worried, but the servant, who seemed to have

more faith than his master, advised him to meet the seer and ask him about the matter. Saul was not a religious man. He did not know of the existence of the prophet, but his servant did.

Saul's good qualities: He was anxious to find the donkeys; he worried about his father's feelings; consult with his servant, and he wanted to award the seer as a man of God.

2. This chapter gives us a clear picture of how God controls history. Any event is a result of a Divine plan:

a. the loss of the donkeys: [losing ignorance leads to royalty];

b. meeting the young women who were going out to draw water and who told them about the sacrifice of the people: [men of the old and the new Testaments who, through prophecies and evangelical witnessing, refer to Christ who preceded us to offer the sacrifice of the Cross for our sake];

c. seeing Samuel who came to meet them and to "go up into the high place" [12]: [Christ lifts us to Golgotha, i.e. the high place, so that we may enjoy the sacrifice and receive His Body which was given for our salvation];

d. Samuel reveals to Saul the fact that he would be anointed king and tells him not to worry about the donkeys for they had already been found: [We should not worry about worldly things in order to enjoy the kingdom of heaven];

e. "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

f. an intimate conversation between Samuel and Saul at dawn on the top of the house: [an intimate relationship with our Christ when we rise with Him into heaven].

SAUL ANOINTED KING (1 Sam. 10)

1. Saul was anointed king, and everything was made available to him so that he would live in the fear of God, a strong leader who would fulfill the Divine will, but is not obligated to do so. Despite the fact that Samuel was totally opposed to the idea of a king, once he anointed Saul, he accepted him with humility, thus teaching us to respect authority. It was also made clear to him that what Saul received was a Divine gift, "the Lord has anointed you" [1], and not a personal tribute.

2. Samuel foretold Saul what would happen to him:

a. his visit to Rachel's tomb when he would meet two men who would tell him that the donkeys had already been found; that he should be proud of his tribe despite its being the smallest of the tribes due to the massacre that was mentioned in Judges 20:46. Benjamin [= the son of the right hand] who was a source of pain to his mother became his father's pride, that is why it was important for Saul to enjoy sitting on the right hand of God even if that brought pain to others. However, Saul was more concerned with how to please people rather than God. His meeting with the two men only emphasized that it was no coincidence.

b. his meeting the three men at the " ... terebinth tree of Tabor another carrying three loaves of bread and another carrying a skin of wine; and they will greet you and give you 2 loaves of bread" [3-4] [God will provide for him and those who are with him.] They would not offer him the goats, because he was not a priest; nor the wine so that he would not seek after luxuries.

c. his going to the "...hill of God where the Philistine garrison is" [5]. He was to meet a group of prophets and then the Spirit of the Lord would be on him and he would be able to prophesy with them, that is, he would joyfully share with them in praising and worshiping, without allowing the royal duties to distract him from group or individual worship and seeking advice from the prophets. The Spirit of God turned him into another man [6]. There was also a need for inner change, a new heart [9].

3. Saul meets his uncle: Saul decided to keep the matter of the sovereignty from his uncle, thinking that it was a secret until he was instated.

4. Announcing his sovereignty at Mizpah: He had hidden himself among the luggage in fear of being refused by some as a king. In fact he was refused by some rebels who could not see him as their savior.

FIGHTING THE AMMONITES (1 Sam. 11)

1. One month after Saul was anointed and before he was given the kingship, Nahash (=serpent, symbolizing the old serpent, the devil; the Ammonites worshiped a serpent), the king of the Ammonites came and encamped against Jabesh-Gilead, east of the Jordan. He wanted to enslave them and when they accepted, he decided that he would put out their right eyes to bring reproach on all Israel. They asked him to give them seven days grace in which they would search for someone to help them against him. He agreed to give them the time believing in his heart that they were helpless and would not be able to find themselves a saviour. Putting out the right eye symbolizes the fact that the enemy would remove the spiritual vision towards heavenly matters.

2. "The messengers came to Gibeah of Saul," and were told of Nahash's threats. The people wept when they heard, and Saul, returning from the field where he tended his herd, heard the news and sympathized with them [there was a blood relationship between the Benjamites and the people of Jabesh-Gilead (Judges 21:2--4)]. He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent it with messengers to all Israel to prod them to war against the enemy. 300,000 men from Israel and 30,000 from Judah at Bazeck came together to fight the enemy from 3 different directions at the break of dawn; and the enemy was annihilated, because they were both sleepy and surprised.

The people asked Samuel to put to death those who originally made fun of anointing Saul king, but Saul did not want any sadness of vendetta to cloud their day of victory...

then his nomination was unanimous in Gilgal. "There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly" [15].

SAMUEL'S FARWELL ADDRESS AT SAUL'S CORONATION (1 Sam. 12)

1. Samuel the Prophet made a candid farewell speech, in which he asked the people to be his witnesses before God and His anointed one, Saul, that he had been always totally honest with them and never had taken advantage of them. [He was not defending himself against any fraud or dishonesty charges but his objective was to teach the new king important values.]

2. When the people witnessed for his honesty, he started to point out to them all the good things that God did for them: His taking care of them over the years, and how, in every generation, He had sent them a Judge (= savior). He questioned them about their request for an earthly king when God was and always will be their King. God granted their wish, therefore they should not be fearful, but should always walk in God's way: "Then Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your hearts. And do not turn aside; for then you would go after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they are nothing. 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" [20-22].

God, in His goodness, will transform even our misdeeds to the glory of His Holy Name and to our spiritual growth if we repent and return to Him... He is a jealous God.

The principle duty of a spiritual leader is prayer accompanied by teaching: "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" [23].

SAUL USURPS CLERICAL DUTIES (1 Sam. 13)

1. "Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba...then Saul blew the trumpet..." [3], to war, and they gathered together at Gilgal. The Philistines were insulted by Jonathan's action and they gathered 30,000 chariots and 6000 horse men, "and people as sand which is on the seashore in multitude" [5]. They set up camp at Michmash, to the east of Bethaven, in order to block the way to Gilgal perhaps to prevent Saul from coming to Jonathan's rescue.

2. Saul and the people, who were hiding in the caves and thickets, were terrified when they saw what was happening, and some crossed the river Jordan towards the east and Saul was left with 600 only [15].

3. When Saul saw that his people were scattered and that Samuel did not show up, he assumed clerical duties and offered a burnt sacrifice. In stupidity he dared to break divine commandment and used the immediate circumstances as an excuse. It appears that there was a priest in Gilgal, but Saul took advantage of Samuel's tardiness to usurp the clerical duty, for which he yearned and could not wait any longer for his due time.

4. Even when Samuel questioned him, he did not confess his mistake, but again made excuses for his actions; and because he did not condemn himself, God judged him and did not grant him to reign his kingdom over Israel.

5. God allowed the enemy to cause all the devastation and humiliation to His people to discipline them; but He did not allow them to go to Gilgal where they could have killed Saul, his son Jonathan, and whatever number of people remaining with them, because that would have meant a complete take-over.

JONATHAN'S VICTORY (1 Sam. 14)

1. Jonathan could not accept his people's humiliation, and because he believed that, "...nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few" [6], Jonathan and his armor-bearer alone, crossed the deep, narrow valley, climbed the steep mountain on the hands and knees, and showed themselves to the Philistines. They made fun of them, but as soon as they stood there they killed 12 men and God put terror in the enemies' hearts and they fled and scattered before the two men, thinking that the rest of the people would follow them out of their hiding places.

2. When Saul and his men noticed the scattering of their enemy, they took a roll call and discovered that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were the cause of the victory. Saul requested of Ahijah to ask God about this victory, but because of all the confusion and the noise they could not communicate, and impatient as he was, Saul rushed after the enemy with his men to complete the victory. He placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies" [24]. Saul again erred in jumping the gun, because he considered the victory to be the fruit of human effort, rather than faith. He also ignored the need for sustenance for his men, and counted the others as his enemies rather than God's or the people's; and thus he expected a personal victory, and his impatience could have caused his son's death. Jonathan had dipped his rod in a honeycomb and tasted it, and instantly, his eyes lit up and his energy was renewed after hunger and exhaustion. One of the men told him of his father's oath but he considered it rash and unfair for his father to prevent the people from eating.

3. Another fruit of Saul's rash decision was that his people became very weak, and out of exhaustion they raided the spoils of war and they took for themselves, "...sheep, oxen,

and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood" [32]. When Saul heard that, he ordered a large stone be brought to him immediately and an altar be built upon which the animals were slaughtered so that all their blood would run before the people ate of them. The people did according to his orders.

4. Saul built an altar for the Lord and he approached God, probably through a priest, asking Him if they should pursue the enemy. When God did not respond, Saul realized that a sin must have been committed, so he swore that whoever it was who committed that sin would die, even if it were Jonathan himself [39]. They cast a lot and it fell on Jonathan who, in turn, admitted his mistake with no fear of death, but the people insisted on his acquittal and they saved his life.

5. Saul enjoyed many victories over the enemies and his army grew continuously [48].

SAUL REJECTED AS A KING (1 Sam. 15)

1. Saul's army grew with the passage of years from 600 men to 200,000 men from Israel, and 10,000 from Judah. He achieved many victories over Moab, Ammon, Zobah, and against the Philistines. In the meantime his actions seem to deviate from the right path and God's commandments. And Samuel tried to caution him on several occasions but in vain, so now he came to him with Divine warnings for a last chance. Samuel told Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, hear the voice of the words of the Lord" [1] "...Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them" [3]. All that because that was a war in the name of the Lord, as was prophesied 400 years earlier" (Exod. 17:8-16). The Amalekites were like bandits, full of savagery, sinful, always raiding the surrounding nations, and they had no friends.

2. Saul advised the Kenites to "depart from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them" [6]. They were peace loving people from Midian (Exod. 18; Deut. 10:29-32; Jud. 1:16) and they lived among the Amalekites, south of Judah. Saul then attacked the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur. He came back victorious over the enemy but defeated by his ego; because he spared Agag, their king, and kept all their best cattle.

3. The prophet Samuel was annoyed that Saul did not take advantage of this occasion; "...and he cried out to the Lord all night" [11]. before he admonished Saul [love mixed with sternness.] When he continued grieving for Saul, the Lord said to him, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?" [1].

4. When Samuel rebuked Saul, he did not admit he was wrong, instead he shifted the blame to the people who spared the best of the cattle, and that they had done that not

out of greed but to sacrifice them to the Lord [15, 21]; and at the same time, he took the credit for any act of obedience [20-21]. He also added, "...to sacrifice to the Lord Your God" [15], not "<MI>our God" as though all that they had brought back was for "you and your God."

5. Samuel assured Saul that God delighted in obedience and listening to His voice much more than in any burnt offering [22-23]. God required obedience and mercy.

6. Saul did not admit he had sinned until he realized that Samuel would not accompany him. He said: "I have sinned, yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me..." [30]. So they did go together, and there Samuel killed Agag, who had been the cause for many to be childless mothers for no sin of their own.

The chapter ends with the following phrase : "...and the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel." He used a down-to-earth phrase that we can relate to.

KING DAVID

(1 SAMUEL 16 - 31)

The section devoted to king David, the prophet, exceeds those given to any other king or prophet. His life was marked with continuous growth, his honesty since his youth, in the house of Saul and in his kingdom. Even when he sinned and fell, he knew how to repent.

DAVID ANOINTED KING (1 Sam. 16)

1. God helped Samuel and took him out of his grief by sending him to Jesse the Bethlehemite to raise a king from among his sons. Samuel was afraid of Saul, and what he would do if he found out, because he knew his evil spirit. But God arranged for Samuel to take a cow to offer it as a sacrifice for the Lord, and to invite Jesse and his sons to attend. The sacrifice was offered publicly, but David was anointed secretly in the presence of his brothers. Thus, in the same way, Jesus died on the cross, sacrificing Himself publicly, but ruled secretly through His resurrection and ascension, which believers enjoyed. Let us sacrifice ourselves in Christ publicly, and receive His glory in us secretly!

2. David was anointed in Bethlehem (= House of bread). There the elders were worried when they saw Samuel, thinking in their hearts that he was there to punish them for a sin they had committed. The Son of David was born in that same city, being the Bread descending from heaven Who filled Herod's heart with fear, while the heavens, the shepherds and the Wise men celebrated.

3. David, the youngest of Jesse's children was chosen. Among the reasons for that choice were :

- he was faithful over a few things, i.e. in tending the sheep;
- he was the 8th child, [the number 8 symbolizes eternity or the heavenly life];
- his name is derived from "dod," which means "love," because no one without love can enjoy sovereignty;
- he was the youngest of all, because our Christ came as the least of all.

4. The Spirit of God descended on David as "It hovered on the face of the water" Gen. 1:2 to create a beautiful world, full of life, out of a deserted void. When the Spirit of the Lord deserted Saul, the evil spirit took advantage of that void, and filled Saul [14] because he subjected himself to sin and the Lord allowed that to happen (Rom. 1:24-28).

5. They brought the young David, "...a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the Lord is with him" [18]. He played on the harp

of the Word of God, the law and the prophecies skillfully, to grant Saul peace and tranquility.

DAVID AND GOLIATH (1 Sam. 17)

1. The tall, handsome king stood with his men, in awe and reverence before the mighty Goliath who was continuously demeaning the armies of the Lords of Hosts. That was the man whom the people with their human judgment considered their king. The two armies were standing facing each other on two mountains separated by a valley; each afraid to descend to the valley to fight the other. Goliath came up with a solution. Let one man of the Israelite army fight him, and the winner's army enslaves the loser's. He kept challenging the Israelites day and night for forty days.

2. Upon Jesse's orders, David came to visit his brothers Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah, who had gone to battle. He brought with him "...an ephah [3 measures] of this dried grain and these ten loaves...and ten cheese..." [17,18]. This symbolizes the coming of the son of David, who was sent by the Father to seek out humanity offering the sacrament of Trinity and the ten commandments to help them against the devil.

3. When David found his brothers in a crisis, he asked, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel?" [26]. Eliab, his brother, became very angry with him, and scolded him saying: "...you have come down to see the battle" [28]. David did not argue with him, because he realized that it was a time for action not words. In the same manner, the Jews belittled the Son of David, Who descended from heaven to battle Satan, and He did not resist them, but instead He carried His Cross and trampled the real, mighty Goliath (the devil).

4. David told Saul that he had previously killed a lion and a bear bare-armed : (symbolizing Christ, Who, salvaged His Church from the mouth of the lion and from the claws of the bear. (Ps. 18:17)

5. David took his staff (= the cross), smooth stones and his sling to strike the Philistine in the forehead, and kill him with his own sword. The stone represents Christ (Ps. 118:22), who kills the enemy.

David took Goliath's tools to his tent to change the energies that were used for the kingdom of Satan to work for the glory of the kingdom of God. David's tent is his body which carries energies sanctified for Christ.

6. The reason for Goliath's failure was that he burdened himself with arms and physical strength but one place was left vulnerable which he could not protect and that was his forehead. David's strength lies in :

a. his reliance on God to protect him [46-47];

- b. his honesty over a few things (keeping the sheep);
- c. his inner victory (his obedience to his father and looking after his brothers);
- d. he did not start the fight, it was Goliath who did in his arrogance.
- e. David gave himself for the people.

7. Saul renewed his acquaintance with David, (he had forgotten that it was David who used to come to soothe his nerves with his harp playing). Saul was suffering from a psychological disease that made him forgetful and made him unpredictable. It also could be that because of his jealousy, Saul pretended not to know David.

SAUL FEARS DAVID (I SAM. 18)

1. Saul, who had loved David to the extent that he made him his armor-bearer (16:21), became very jealous because of David's success in everything he tackled [5] and he was glorified more than him [7], because God was with him and had left Saul [12].

2. Because of jealousy, Saul broke his promise to David and gave his daughter, Merab, to Adriel, the Meholathite, as a wife instead of giving her to David; but God rewarded David doubly: Jonathan the son of Saul became very close to David and loved him like himself and thus he became his supporter in his father's court. He was all for David to take the throne after Saul instead of him; everybody admired David because whatever he tackled was a success [5]; women sang his praises more than they did Saul's [6-7]; even Saul needed him to alleviate the pain of the evil spirits that haunted him [10-12]; and Michal, Saul's other daughter, loved him and became his wife, she defended him against her own father. (18:20- 30; 19:12-17).

3. Jealousy worked on Saul's soul to the extent that he could not bear to see David, so he tried twice to hit him with his spear but the Lord saved him, then he sent him away from court to be a centurion in the army so that he would be killed at war.

4. Michal loved David, so Saul took this as an opportunity to put David in danger. He sent word to him, saying: "The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies" [25]. David came back to him with two hundred instead, and he married Michal, and Saul feared him and hated him even more.

MICHAL SAVES DAVID (I SAM. 19)

1. Saul began to break down and he talked to Jonathan, his son, and his servants to kill David [1]. But Jonathan spoke in David's defense and convinced his father that he should not kill David, and Saul swore that David would not be killed. David's victory over

the enemy agitated Saul, and thus he again threw his spear to attack David who ran away and escaped.

2. Saul sent messengers to David's house to spy on him and kill him in the morning. (Here David sang Psalm 59). This incident reminds us of the time when the Jews paid off the soldiers to abolish the news about Christ's resurrection; meaning to break whoever believed in Him, but they failed.

3. Michal heard of the conspiracy and because she loved her husband so much, she let David down through a window and he fled outside the city. She then brought a statue, which she kept at home as a symbol of fertility, laid it in bed, covered it and said that David was sick in bed. When her father found out the truth and reprimanded her, she lied to him and said that David threatened her saying: "Let me go! Why should I kill you?" [17].

4. When David ran away to Ramah, he joined Samuel at Naioth, at a house for prophets. When Saul followed him, he was touched by the spiritual atmosphere, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he prophesied with them. He removed his military garb and spent his days and nights praising and prophesying. Those present around him were astonished and wondered, saying: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" [24]. David was also touched by Saul's dedication which made him forget his jealousy and resentment.

[Thus did Jonathan, Michal and prophets hindered off Saul's conspiracies to kill David.]

JONATHAN SAVES DAVID (I SAM. 20)

1. David ran away from Naioth to his dear friend, Jonathan, who was the chief soldier in his father's court, to talk to him of his father's hatred towards him (David). In Jonathan, David found fidelity and love. David asked Jonathan candidly, saying: "What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?" [1]. He asked Jonathan to do the killing himself if he saw any injustice or infidelity in him, because he would rather die at his friend's hand if that were justified more than by Saul's when there was no justification for his death [8-20]. David was known for his honesty, yet he was faced with a lot of problems, which he spoke about in Psalm 7; he felt that death was getting closer to him: "...there is but a step between me and death."

2. Jonathan expressed a sincere desire to help David, who suggested that he be away for three days during the king's monthly banquet, and that Jonathan would be on the lookout to see what effect this would have on the king, and report to David about Saul's feelings. Jonathan agreed to do that and to tell him. If it were safe, he would send a messenger, but if it were evil, then he would go himself so that David's life would not be

endangered. In the meantime, David would be hiding in a field awaiting the signal agreed upon.

3. David's place was empty on the first day of the banquet, and Saul said to himself: "Something has happened to him; he is unclean, surely he is unclean" [26]. When his seat remained empty on the second day, Saul asked Jonathan about him, Jonathan said that David's elder brother asked him to come to his father's house to take part in the annual sacrifice and Jonathan had granted him permission. When Saul heard that, he became extremely angry with his son, and hurled insults at him, saying: "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman ... For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die" [30-32]. When Jonathan tried to defend David, Saul aimed his spear at his own son to hurt him. This made it clear that Saul was definitely going to kill David. Saul had no response but to try to kill his own son and insult him.

4. Jonathan set out with his arrows and he took his servant with him so that people would think he went to target-practice. Jonathan asked his servant to pick up the arrows that he threw out [36]. Once he threw the arrow well beyond the boy and he called to him saying: "Is not the arrow beyond you ? ... Make haste, hurry, do not delay!" [37-38]. From his hiding place, David realized that he was in danger. When the servant gathered the arrows and took them back to the city, David came out of his hiding place and with humility he fell on his face three times before Jonathan in an expression of gratitude, then they cried together and said their farewells. They realized that, although they were going to be apart physically, their loyalty to each other could not be demolished, not even by death.

DAVID, THE FUGITIVE (I SAM. 21)

1. David came to Nob, city of the clergy at that time, because the ark came to it after the destruction of Shiloh. There he met Ahimelech, the priest, who was Eli's great grandson. He was a devout man and his son, Abiathar, shared him high-priesthood. Ahimelech was surprised to see David by himself without either followers or nobles to escort him.

2. David was not honest with Ahimelech and he made a false statement by saying that he was on a secret mission for the king and that he had directed his men to hide in different places. to err is human, and David, the pure-hearted, in his weakness, committed a sin. He asked for bread and the only bread available was the holy bread which was eaten only by members of the clergy. Ahimelech gave it to him on David's word that women have been kept from them about three days since they accepted the bread for reasons of hunger and urgency and not out of disrespect. He also asked for a sword or a spear and the only one available was Goliath's sword, and he took it.

Doeg the Adomite (means "whirl of dust;" "disruptive to the service of the Lord and enemy to His servants"), was there, "...detained before the Lord" either for purification or fulfilling a promised offering. He could have even been the one who went out looking for the donkeys with Saul earlier. David realized the danger, and fled the city, because Doeg was one of Saul's servants.

3. David fled to Gath, a city of the Philistines, and he was presented to Achish its king, as a spy. The king's servants recognized David as the slayer of Goliath at Gath and that because of him, many were widowed and orphaned. David pretended to be insane, scratching on the doors and letting his saliva run down his bread, which proved his insanity, because the bread was a sign of respect. The king threw him out. David considered himself a "silent dove in the distant lands" Ps. 56; but God saved him. He went through Gath as if he went through a press. All believers who pass through a press, produce useful juice, but had they stayed on the vine, the birds would have devoured them or they would have fallen to the ground and would have been trampled upon. Trials are good for us and for those around us.

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM (I SAM. 22)

1. When David departed from Gath, he proceeded cautiously towards Judah. He came to a cave close to Adullam. He was visited there by his parents, siblings and all those who were persecuted by Saul. He transformed their anger into energies by which he could build his future kingdom.

2. David's presence in the cave symbolizes Jesus Christ:

a. David was in the cave because of Saul who dominated the people.

Jesus came because of Satan who ruled humanity (John 14:30).

b. David was a king in disguise. He had been anointed without the knowledge of the people.

Jesus is the heavenly King of kings.

c. David was surrounded by the oppressed.

Jesus was surrounded by sinners and tax-collectors, so that He would sanctify them and pay their debts.

d. The people around David were hoping to see him made king.

The believers are waiting for the second coming of Christ as the Heavenly King.

e. Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, came to tell him his tragic story and David took him in.

Christ is the haven for anyone in pain.

f. David hid in the cave.

Christ took on our nature and our humanity as a cave in which He hid, He carried our earthly bodies. He came into the world as into a cave where its light was dimmed in comparison to His heavenly light.

g. David transformed Saul's powers of unrest into constructive <MI>energy.
Christ sanctifies our senses, emotions and our energy.

3. The Prophet Gad, who seemed to be Samuel's disciple, told David to leave his stronghold in Moab and to go to the land of Judah. he had to leave the temporary stronghold to face hardships for God's people. This proved to be beneficial both for him and for the people. David saved the people of Keilah from the Philistines (23:1-2); he defended the cities of Judah (27:8- 11); won the trust of Judah and when, eventually, Saul was killed, David was there to take his place. The route of tribulations is royal.

4. When Saul returned to Judah, David's news was broadcast and Saul thought that David's goal was to destroy him. He then told his men: "Hear now, you Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse give everyone of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds ?!" [7]

These words throw light on the following:

- Saul's hardened heart; he chose all his court from members of his own tribe exclusively.
- He lost his inner peace and couldnot trust his own men and considered them traitors.
- He was filled with hatred to the extent that he would not utter David's name but called him the "son of Jesse," meaning also to demean him.
- Because he himself was greedy he thought that his men were fleeting treasures. This paints a devastating picture of someone who lost all inner peace, and spiritual and human values.

5. Doeg, the Edomite, tried to exonerate himself and his colleagues from treason by unjustly blaming Ahimelech for it. Doeg said that Ahimelech gave the son of Jesse provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine. He marred the truth to hide from Saul the reasoning which led Ahimelech to act in this fashion. On the contrary, he showed him to be a traitor.

6. The king demanded the presence of Ahimelech and his household and spoke disrespectfully to him despite the honesty and reverence which the priest displayed. Ahimelech tried to defend himself saying: "And who among all your servants is faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law who goes at your bidding, and is honorable in your house ?" 22:14. He also told Saul that he had been ignorant of what had happened between him and David. The king's rash decision was an order of execution. The guards refused to kill Ahimelech so Doeg killed 85 priests and took off to Nob - the city of priests - to kill men, women, children, infants and even animals, with his sword. A horrifying scene which added more evil to Saul's nature and from which the other tribes shied away. [God's words to Eli, the priest, came true here (2:31).]

7. Abiathar, Ahimelech's son, who was standing guard, when he heard of the massacre, escaped, before Doeg got to him, and came to David with the sad news. David was

distressed by all the events and asked him to stay with him for safety. David now had Gad, the seer, and Abiathar the priest.

SAUL IN PURSUIT OF DAVID (I SAM. 23)

1. When the enemies attacked Keilah, the residents resorted to David with his few men rather than to Saul with his great army, whose sole preoccupation then was pursuing David. Saul could do nothing because he was not capable of guarding his own people. David, on the other hand, asked God for guidance, maybe through either Gad or Abiathar, and he asked again to reassure his people. He then proceeded and, "...went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah" [5].

Saul could have then sought the victorious David to strengthen his own situation, but instead he thought that David's entering Keilah (means "wall" or "citadel") was a sign that God was angry with him (David), and that God was delivering David into his hands in the city of bars and gates. Saul lost all sense of wisdom and prepared to trap David inside the city despite the fact that he did not raise a finger to defend the city when the enemy was trying to take it. He thought that God was delivering David into his hands. David asked God through the ephod which Abiathar had with him, if Saul would come after him and his men, and God told him that Saul would come and that the people might betray him and deliver him to Saul. So David took his men and fled. God allowed David to run away so that he would realize his weakness. God saved him from formidable enemies and gave him victory over them, but when it came to Saul, who was weaker, God let David escape so that he would remain humbled by his exile.

2. David went into the wilderness of Ziph (means "decorated" and "flowery") and hid there. The Ziphites went to Saul and offered to deliver David to him. They had no valid reason to do so, because they could have just asked David to leave so that they would not get in trouble with Saul. David was in hiding, resembling the Church hiding with Christ in God (Col. 3:3), while the people of Ziph grew like weeds. David is glorified after tribulation while the people of the world wilt as fast as weeds.

3. David and Jonathan met perhaps for the last time during that crisis [15-18] where they made a covenant before the Lord and departed each on his way. They might have met once more when Samuel died. Jonathan encouraged David to "strengthen his hand in God" and assured him that Saul would not harm him and that he would become king of Israel, hoping at the same time that he would be next to him when the time came; but God allowed that Jonathan die before David came to the throne. In a way that was because it would have been difficult for David to take the throne from his best friend who would have been the natural successor.

4. Saul considered the treason of the Ziphites a blessing, because they were going to save him from David's unfairness and wrath [21]. He told them to follow David's footprints on the sand as though they were hunters seeking a wild beast. David went to the wilderness of Maon. Saul went to the side of the mountain while David was on the other, and separating them were some insure mountable rocks. Saul could see David fleeing from him, so he sent two teams to surround him but he received an urgent message informing him that the Philistines were attacking his land so he had to pull out and leave David for the time being. That place was called the Rock of Escape because David escaped Saul's attempt to capture him. "Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi" [29].

DAVID'S SYMPATHY FOR SAUL (I SAM. 24)

1. While Saul was failing in his own eyes and in those of the people, David was being glorified. His strength was clear when Saul was in his power when he was pursuing him, and David's men thought that the time had come for Saul to die and for David to rule, but all David did was cut off a corner of Saul's robe and even that troubled David's heart [5]. Saul had entered the cave to relieve himself and David and his men were farther in the cave where Saul could not see them. David and his men waited until he fell asleep and then David came out and cut off the corner of his robe thus saving him from his men.

2. When Saul left the cave David followed him out and spoke to him in humility: "My lord the king" [8] and then he stooped and bowed down before him. This he did before a king who was rejected and who was pursuing him. He also reprimanded him mildly saying: "Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea?" [14]. He spoke candidly, yet strictly and reverently to Saul whose own self esteem diminished even farther in his own eyes; he responded:

a. called David his son: "Is this your voice, my son David?" [16] In the meantime he had given his daughter Michal to another man.

b. ..."And Saul lifted up his voice and wept" [16].

c. Saul confessed: "You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil... for when the Lord delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me" [17- 18].

d. Saul came to the realization that David would be king, and he asked him not to destroy his name [21].

DAVID AND ABIGAIL (I SAM. 25)

1. Samuel, the prophet, died after a full life in the service of the Lord. He started at the age of 12 and died at 90. The Israelites lamented him as much as they did to Moses (Deut. 34:8). It was the tradition that on such sad occasions a complete pardon would be

granted and David thought that maybe that would happen, should he meet Saul and Jonathan at Samuel's funeral.

2. David went down to the Wilderness of Paran. It was a spacious, uninhabited desert, South of Judea. There was a man from Carmel called Nabal (means "fool") who owned 3000 sheep and 1000 goats and they were in an open area with the men who tended them. David and his men were a source of protection to them against the Amalekites, the Philistines and the wild beast. Nabal was a descendant of Caleb who inhabited Hebron and its surroundings (Josh. 15:13) hence from a noble background but which did not show on him.

3. David learnt that Nabal was shearing his sheep. This occasion called for festivities and feasting on good food and created a spirit of giving. So David sent some of his men to ask politely for something in return for their protecting Nabal's men. But Nabal refused 's men with stupidity thinking David an outlaw [10-11]. David became very angry and he armed 400 of his men and went to face Nabal, leaving behind 200 men to watch their supplies. Moments of weakness! David who pardoned Saul, his resistor, was after revenge for himself. God sent Abigail (means "father" or "source of happiness"), Nabal's wife, a wise and beautiful woman, to David. She had heard from one of the men about what her husband had done, so she took a peace offering of "200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded them on donkeys. And she said to her servants, "Go on before me..." But she did not tell her husband Nabal" [18-19]. In wisdom she offered a present to ward off David's anger and as she approached him she got off her donkey and fell to the ground on her face at his feet and she spoke in humility and wisdom.

a. She started off by confessing the wrong committed against David, in humility saying: "On me my lord, on me let this iniquity be!" [24].

b. ...that it was beneath him to resist Nabal because David was above that.

c. She reminded him of how God saved him from Saul and that his life "...shall be bound in the lives of your enemies He shall sling out, as from the pocket of a sling" 24:29 so why would he want to start defending himself ?!

d. that his concern was to fight the battles of the Lord, so why would he worry about such petty revenge.

e. that he was going to be made king, so he should act like a wide-hearted king, and should not set a bad example to his people by avenging himself.

f. that he should not forget her when he became king, because many are looking up to him with hope.

We should appreciate Abigail for her wisdom and David for his humility in happily accepting advice from others. Because of the purity of his heart, God sent him Abigail to keep him from avenging himself.

4. David did not only listen to Abigail but he also commended her, because he felt that she was carrying a Divine message.

The story ends with Nabal's death 10 days later. He had hosted a big royal feast which did not fill him with joy but with depression especially after Abigail told him of what had happened with David. As a result, he had a heart attack and died. When David heard of his death, he sent and asked Abigail to be his wife. She humbly came and "...bowed her face to the earth, and said, Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord" [41]. She accepted him in his misery to share with him in his glory. She resembles the Church of the New Covenant who embraced the Gentiles who were once united with idols (idolcy) then became a bride to Christ. Let Nabal (folly) die in our lives so that we unite with the Son of David, the Groom. We receive Him crucified so that we may partake in His Glory.

DAVID REFUSES TO KILL SAUL (I SAM. 26)

David spared Saul for the second time.

1. Again, the Ziphites came to Saul to betray David, who was hiding in the hill of Hachilah, which was opposite Jeshimon. David took his nephew, Abishai and Ahimelech, the Hittite, and descended to where Saul and his guards were sleeping inside a fenced area. Abishai wanted to kill Saul with his spear because the Lord delivered him in David's hand [8], but, for the second time, David wanted to spare Saul's life, as the Lord's anointed, and instead, he was satisfied with taking the spear and the jug of water which were by Saul's head. "Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top a hill afar off..." [13] and he reprimanded Abner, Saul's guard, for his negligence in protecting his king. Abner could not defend himself and Saul recognized David's voice and as usual, he was touched by David's generosity. David did not trust Saul but still in humility and meekness but sternly, he answered Saul.

a. He addressed Saul as : "...my lord, O king," while he called himself "a flea" despite the fact that he was the victorious one. He compared Saul to a hunter who "hunts a partridge in the mountains" [20].

b. David exonerated himself saying: "...what evil is in my hand" [18].

c. David proposed possibilities :- either God allowed Saul to be enraged at him, and in that case he would confess his fault and offer a sacrifice of sin; or, evil people had incensed Saul against him and these have brought a curse upon themselves.

d. He considered himself ousted from among his own people, barred from congregational worship and his evil enemies were driving him towards the Gentiles as though they were encouraging him to share in their pagan worship. To describe David's inner anguish at not partaking in congregational worship would be beyond words.

e. David believed in Divine justice so if he were to be killed his blood would cry as did Abel's (Gen. 4:10).

2. Saul broke down before David begging him to come back to him as a son, but David could not trust him. He also returned to Saul his spear which he had taken, and Saul accepted them in a spirit of humiliation and defeat.

DAVID SEEKS A HAVEN IN ZIKLAG (I SAM. 27)

1. When David lost all confidence in Saul, he seriously considered going to alien countries, especially that since by then he and his men had their wives and children. So again he went to Gath, to Achish, the son of Maach, descendant of Achish mentioned in I Sam. 21:10. The struggle between David and Saul had become common knowledge and this time he came accompanied by his men and their families, so the king did not fear him but rather considered him a power and reinforcement. David's going there was a sign of weak faith, which would result in anguish later because he resorted to human measures for safety.

2. Achish welcomed David, who asked that he be allowed to settle outside Gath, it being a kingdom and belonged exclusively to the king and his own people, so the king gave David Ziklag to inhabit it with his own men.

3. Living away from Gath, gave David the freedom of action and of organizing his men. He then proceeded to attack the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites, tribes that were known to be thieves and robbers, who raided the Amalekites, and "...he left neither man nor woman alive but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the apparel and returned and came to Achish" [27]. He gave them to the king of Gath in lieu of taxes. This, of course, is the result of his going to an alien country. David pretended that he had raided the South of Judah or the area of Jerahmeelites or the area of the Kenites when Achish asked him, thus convincing Achish that he was then hated by the people of Israel and that would have put him in his power indefinitely [12]. But his situation was worse when war broke out between the Israelites and the Philistines.

SAUL CONSULTS A MEDIUM (I SAM. 28)

1. Achish was confident of David's fidelity to him even when he was fighting against his own people. David did not give him a straight answer to show Achish which side he was on. David felt really bad for his people. He did not know how he would react once war broke out, especially that Achish had promised to make him the chief of his personal guards [2].

2. When the Philistines gathered together, Saul was very upset for the following reasons

- the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him,
- Samuel had died,
- David was a fugitive because of his persecution to him.

Saul started looking for a medium (one who has access to spirits), despite the fact that he had once banned such people. He wanted her to call on Samuel's spirit so that he could seek some advice.

His servants told him about a woman at En Dor. So, devastated as he was, he went to her and his devastation showed in:

- a. "He was afraid and his heart trembled," when he saw the army of the Philistines [5].
- b. He humiliated himself before his servants when he asked them to call the medium because they were well aware of his resisting such people and their beliefs in the past.
- c. He disguised himself and wore different clothes so that the medium would not fear him; a very unbecoming situation for a king to put himself in.
- d. He went to her at En D, he walked for about 10 miles, bearing the hardships of the road and exposing himself to the danger of the enemies at Shunam, between Gilboa, where his army was, and En Dor.
- e. She probably recognized him because of his stature, so she pretended that she did not practice this sort of thing and in stupidity he swore to her saying: "As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing" [10].
- f. When the spirit appeared covered with a mantle, the woman screamed and reprimanded Saul but he was not intimidated and entered into a conversation with the apparition. Saul fell to the ground and bowed down. At the end of the conversation he fell to the ground again and was extremely frightened. It was a series of failings and humiliations at the end of his life.
- g. The medium had compassion on him and she offered him the best of what she had to eat but he could not because his soul was bitter.

3. Most of the Fathers of the Church believe that was an evil spirit which could transform itself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14) and also would set itself up like a god (2 Thes. 2:4). He talked to Saul through the reality of his situation in that he was rejected by God, but it was a mistake to pin-point the day of his death.

DAVID DOES NOT PARTAKE IN THE BATTLE (I SAM. 29)

1. The Philistines gathered their army and moved from Shunem to Aphek in the south close to where Saul had encamped, and David, with his army, came to the rear of the Philistine army with Achish. Inwardly, David was very distressed because of his fighting against the Israelites. He could not flee and leave the battle ground for then Achish would consider him a traitor and if he took part in the battle he would consider himself a traitor to his own people, and if Saul were killed, the Israelites would say that David killed him with the enemies. But God "...with the temptation [He] will also make the way of escape" 1 Cor. 10:13; for the princes of the Philistines knew the dilemma that David might have had and they did not trust him; so they came to Achish and demanded that David and his men should withdraw from the battle. Achish was embarrassed to show David any distrust, but he had to comply with the princes of the Philistines and very delicately

explained the situation to David and at the same time reassured him of his own trust in him as an angel of the Lord. Hence God supplied David with a way out accompanied by a favorable character reference from outsiders.

THE BURNING OF ZIKLAG (I SAM. 30)

"Now it happened when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire" [1].

1. The Amalekites took advantage of David's absence and immediately invaded the South, burnt Ziklag with fire and enslaved the women and children. David was very upset because he lost his own family and those of his men; he was especially worried when the men considered stoning him because he had not left anyone behind to guard the city.

2. David did not give in to weeping and desperation, but he called upon God for strength (I Sam. 30:6; Ps. 18:1-21; Ps. 27:14; Ps. 31:10). He asked Abiathar to bring the ephod and through it he consulted with God, took off with 600 men to the Brook Besor (Valley of the law); there 200 of his men became very weak and he instructed them to stay behind to watch their belongings and he and the 400 others crossed to Brook Besor. They met an Egyptian who had been enslaved by an Amalekite, who had taken him during the raid; but when the Egyptian became sick, his master left him behind without food or drink for 3 days and 3 nights. David and his men took the Egyptian in and they gave him: "...a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins" [12], and when he had eaten, his strength was restored. He became their guide after they promised they would spare his life. [It was the tradition in war that the guide would be killed so that he would not betray the people he led.] They also promised him that they would not deliver him back to his master.

3. David and his men went down to the Amalekites, most probably at night time, where he found them spread around, feasting and dancing, celebrating their spoils of war and they didn't suspect that they could be raided. David and his men waited in hiding until the revellers fell asleep and then they raided them and rescued the women and children and took their spoils of war without losing any of his own men. As for the Amalekites, they lost all but 400 young men who fled to the mountains.

[The Egyptian slave symbolizes the thief on the right hand of the Cross who achieved the victory of the Cross with the Son of David over the Amalekite who enslaved him. David's two wives symbolize the Churches of the Old and the New Covenant because they were set free from Satan's captivity through Christ's sacrificial deed.]

4. With love, David offered the men who stayed behind a share in the spoils. [The men of the Old Covenant shared in glory with the men of the New Covenant.]

5. David distributed the spoils among the elders of many of the cities of Judah as a blessing from God, to reassure them of his fidelity, that the victory came from God and that he fought the battles of the Lord and not his own.

THE DEATH OF SAUL AND HIS SONS (I SAM. 31)

1. While David was successful in defeating the Amalekites, Saul was destroyed by the Philistines and his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua died before him. Saul feared that David would steal the throne from Jonathan, but however Jonathan died before Saul. Thus Saul's banning David to exile, saved him to come into the kingdom.

2. David did not touch Saul, but when the enemies struck, Saul committed suicide with his own sword [10], so that the enemy would not ridicule him as they did Samson (Judg. 16:21-25). "So Saul, his 3 sons, his armor bearer, and all his men died together that same day" [6].

3. Saul was taller than the rest of the people from the shoulder up, and now the enemies beheaded him and nailed him and his children's bodies to the wall of Beth Shan. This is the king whom the people chose to be their saviour!

4. The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead returned the favor which they owed Saul (11:1-2) by sending their "...valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted 7 days" [12-13].

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This book began with the birth of Samuel who was a Divine gift not only to his mother but also for the whole people and it ended with the suicide of Saul, the cutting off of the arrogant head which was a human choice as the tallest among them to protect them against the enemy. His life ended in humility and shame. What a vast difference between Divine strategy and mere human planning.

QUESTIONS

- 1- What is the aim of the Book of I Samuel?
- 2- How did Hannah, Elkanah's wife, face hardship? (Ch.1)
- 3- What is the role of a mother in the Church? (Ch. 2)
- 4- How do we heed God's calling to us? (Ch. 3)
- 5- a- Why did God allow the loss of the ark?
b- How did He use that to build the Church? (Ch. 4-5)
- 6- Compare between the new cart and the Church of the New Covenant. (Ch. 6)
- 7- 7- What is the secret of Samuel's success as a spiritual leader? (Ch. 7)
- 8- Does God demand a particular political regime? (Ch. 7)
- 9- "God commander of history." Explain this phrase as shown through the story of the anointing of Saul as king. (Ch. 9)
- 10- Samuel's talk with Saul after he was anointed king was symbolic. Explain the symbolisms? (Ch. 10)
- 11- Depict the good in Saul's personality. (Ch. 9,11)
- 12- What can we learn from Samuel's farewell speech? (Ch. 12)
- 13- What did king Saul's usurpation of the clerical duties reveal in his character? (Ch. 13)
- 14- Show the good and kind trends in Jonathan's life. (Ch.14)
- 15- Why did God refuse king Saul? (Ch. 15)
- 16- What were the Prophet David's most important characteristics? (Ch. 16-31)
- 17- Samuel, the prophet, offered a sacrifice, publicly, in Bethlehem, he anointed David secretly. How is this also true of the Lord Jesus? (Ch. 16)
- 18- Compare between David's battle with Goliath and Christ's battle with Satan. (Ch. 17)
- 19- How can a person deal with jealousy? Who is harmed the most by jealousy : the person who is jealous or the target of jealousy? (Ch. 18)
- 20- Describe God's care for David when Saul cornered him. (Ch.19-20)
- 21- Explain how Saul's personality appears as an unpredictable person. (Ch. 19)
- 22- Describe the beautiful friendship that grew between David and Jonathan as it came in I & II Samuel.
- 23- Why did God remember David's weaknesses? (Ch. 21)
- 24- Compare between David in the cave of Adullam and the suffering Christ the Lord. (Ch. 22)
- 25- Compare between the people of Zeph and Jonathan. (Ch. 23)
- 26- David obeyed the biblical commandment "Love your enemies" while he was still under the law of Moses. Explain. (Ch. 24,26)

- 27- Write about David's gains which he acquired through his kindness and forgiveness towards his persecutor, Saul. (Ch. 24, 26)
- 28-The story of David with Nabal and Abigail honored David and Abigail, how? (Ch. 25)
- 29-Why did Achish, the king of Gath, welcome David, while the previous Achish almost killed him? (Ch. 21:10)
- 30- What is your opinion of the situation when Samuel's spirit appeared to Saul through the medium? (Ch. 27)
- 31- Describe David's emotions when he was at Ziklag when the pagans were fighting his people. Also, describe his feelings when he was refused by the elders to fight with them. (Ch. 29)
- 32- The burning of Ziklag brought to light good characteristics in David. Explain. (Ch. 30)
- 33- Saul, the king, who was chosen because of his physique, died at the hands of the enemy. What do you gather from that? (Ch. 31)