

DAVID, his rise to power.

David, the Great King of Israel.

David was a very important person in the characters of the Old Testament and because Jesus had the title "the Son of David" his position also had an important effect in the New Testament. He was the great grandson of Ruth and Boaz, the youngest son of Jesse. He spent his early life as a shepherd on the hills close to Bethlehem, this exposed him to a time of physical and mental preparation for his future life, for God to prepare him as King David, *"the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart,"* [1 Samuel 13:14](#). He was chosen by God to lead His people as their king, [1 Kings 8:16](#).

What do we know about the life of David?

His life was a strange mixture of good and bad, there are many records of his good actions and deeds, yet he was involved in situations which were great sins. One example was to arranged for the death of Uriah the Hittite in a battle when he desired the wife of Uriah,

[2 Samuel 11:1-17](#).

Yet David was able to write many Psalms of worship, like [Psalm 23](#). The life of David shows the human nature in all of us.

Generally David's life was religious and in [1 Samuel 13:14](#) he was referred to as "a man after God's own heart," this would only apply as long as he lived his life as required by God and kept His commandments. His life was far from perfect, the Bible does not ignore his failures but there is no Biblical record that David ever worship idols, it seems that he was loyal to the Lord in worship and witness.

David made a great contribution to the worship of God by Israel, including the planning and construction of the Temple, though he was not allowed to build the temple due to his sins and that he was a "Man of blood."

Early life

The life of David can be divided into three periods:-

- 1) The rise to power, 1 Samuel chapters 16-31;
- 2) The triumphs of David, 2 Samuel chapters 1 to 10;
- 3) The problems of David, 2 Samuel chapters 11 to 20.

David was the youngest of eight sons of an Israel farmer called Jesse.

[1 Samuel 16:10,11](#).

His early life was as a shepherd which exposed him to the danger of the weather and animals.

[1 Samuel 17:34-36](#).

David was chosen by God to be the king of Israel following the failures of king Saul.

David was quietly anointed to the position by the prophet Samuel initially.

[1 Samuel 16:12,13](#).

The life of David under King Saul.

David is selected and secretly anointed.

[1 Samuel 1:1-13](#).

The priest Samuel, is instructed by God to anoint a new king, following the failure of Saul to obey the instructions of God and Samuel.

Samuel is instructed to go to the family of Jesse where God will show his choice. Samuel is afraid of Saul and the leadership of Bethlehem, because the people of Bethlehem are concerned about the sudden appearance of Samuel in the town. To cover his presence Samuel said that he was here to "*sacrifice to the LORD*," verse 5, as instructed by God.

Samuel now looks and examines the family of Jesse, he is only concerned with the physical appearance but God looks on their hearts, God rejects each man until finally David is brought before Samuel. *"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward."*

The Spirit Departs from Saul.

[1 Samuel 16:14-15.](#)

Saul had not obeyed the instructions of the Word of God and therefore was disobedient to God himself, this was basically due to his personal pride, his self-will, disobedience and his stubbornness. Because of this, the Spirit of God had left him and some sort of "evil spirit" had now possessed him. From now, the life of Saul reflects that he is not controlled by the Spirit of God. Saul appears to have been a Believer, therefore he would not have become demon-possessed, but God may have used some spiritual agent to make Saul turn away from Him. Note that Saul was not immediately removed from the position of king by God. The periods of rage and insanity are used by God to show Saul that he has been rejected as king by the Lord.

David comes into the court of Saul as an Harpist.

[1 Samuel 16:14-23.](#)

The court of Saul realized that music calmed Saul during his rages, so they looked for a harpist and found that David, who appears to have been made an armour bearer later,

[1 Samuel 16:21;](#)

David was able to play the lyre very skillfully, a lyre is similar to a small harp, David therefore became the personal harpist for king Saul, standing before him and playing to refresh Saul's mind, his beautiful music playing was able to sooth and helped calm Saul,

[1 Samuel 16:23.](#)

David remained in the court of king Saul for a period, then he returned to his fathers home and farm.

[1 Samuel 17:15.](#)

It is recorded that *"Saul loved David greatly,"*

David and Goliath

[1 Samuel 17:1-58.](#)

The Philistines were a very powerful people from the southern coastal plain of Canaan, Israel was regularly at war with the Philistine nation. On this occasion the two armies were camped on either side of a long narrow hill rising from the valley of Elah, the two armies were about one mile apart. As part of this fight, a giant soldier called Goliath from Gath came from the Philistine army and he challenged the Jews to settle the battle by having a single fight with him. We are told that he was "six cubits and a span" about nine feet, nine inches tall, possibly a descendent of the sons of Anak,

[Joshua 11:22;](#)

[Deuteronomy 3:11;](#)

[Numbers 13:33.](#)

No Jewish soldiers were willing to fight the giant Goliath.

David visit his brothers.

[1 Samuel 17:12-30.](#)

David, the young shepherd from Bethlehem, was sent by his father Jesse, with supplies for his three brothers, who were part of Saul's army. David arrived at the camp in time to see Goliath come into the valley and issue his morning challenge to the armies of Saul. David was angry with the Israelites for not accepting the challenge, he believed that their behavior showed that they had no faith in promises of the nations covenant with God, and God's guarantee to fight for them if they trusted Him, David also felt that this Philistine was insulting God.

David knew that if anyone had been willing to go into battle in the name of God, then God would have given him the victory. David was looking at the situation and all he could see was God. King Saul and his army only saw the giant soldier, Goliath. David saw the God of the armies of Israel, while the Israelites saw only the man Goliath and were afraid.

David knew that the God who had protected him from danger when he was looking after the sheep would not now turn His back on him if he chose to fight for the people of God, he trusted God in complete faith.

[1 Samuel 17:25-53.](#)

David meets Goliath.

The giant, armed for the battle with sword and spear, laughed at the youth who has accepted the challenge and does not even wear any sort of armour as protection, David is carrying just his shepherd's rod. Goliath

expressed contempt for David and said *"I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"*, cursing David in the name of his god.

David, speaking as the servant of the Lord, replied, *"Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's"*

All it took was a sling and a small stone, David picks up the stone and puts it into his sling. *"the stone hit the Philistine in his forehead with such great force that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth."*

As a result of this successful fight with Goliath David becomes a champion of the people. This admiration by the people makes king Saul become jealous.

[1 Samuel 18:1-9.](#)

Jonathan, the son of King Saul.

[1 Samuel 18:1-4.](#)

It was following the fight by David with Goliath that the friendship with Jonathan develops,

[1 Samuel 18:1-5.](#)

Jonathan admires David for his bravery and as a result a true friendship develops. It appears, by his actions, that Jonathan may have already realized who was to replace his father as the king of Israel.

Saul's Jealousy.

[1 Samuel 18:6-9.](#)

David's success as a soldier soon caused problems, he became very popular with the people, even songs were being made up about his successes, this resulted in Saul developing fear and suspicion in his heart,

[1 Samuel 18:9, 12, 15, 29.](#)

Saul was becoming very jealous, it was eating away at him like a cancer. In

[1 Samuel 18:8.](#)

Saul has now realized that it was only his position as king that David had not taken over.

This jealousy now develops into a physical act by Saul,

[1 Samuel 18:10-12.](#)

In an attempt to get David killed in battle Saul promotes David to *"fight the LORD'S battles."* This promotion also including a promise of his daughter Merab in marriage,

[1 Samuel 17:25;](#)

[1 Samuel 18:17, 18.](#)

But Saul broke the promise and dishonestly gave Merab to another man,

[1 Samuel 18:19.](#)

Saul probably thought that David would not be alive much longer due to his new position, Saul had not reckoned with God and the protection of His choice.

David's Marriage.

[1 Samuel 18:17-30.](#)

Following king Saul's dishonest promise and behaviour over Merab, Saul's oldest daughter, became the wife of David, Michal, the youngest daughter of Saul, told of her love for David and desire to marry him. So in hatred for David, Saul demanded that David pay a dowry for the marriage, he is to bring *"an hundred foreskins of the Philistines soldiers,"* Saul was sure this demand would result in the death of David.

However, God was with David and gave him the power and protection to actually killed two hundred Philistines, so Michal became the wife of David, as promised by Saul. From now on Saul was even more determined to kill David.

David Escapes from Saul.

[1 Samuel 19:1-10.](#)

The growing hatred of David by king Saul now forces David, for his own safety, to keep out of king Saul's presence. Saul now increases the threat by telling Jonathan and all his servants that David must be killed.

Jonathan refused to get involved and some how managed to persuade King Saul, his father, to accept David as a "friend," for a further short period.

[1 Samuel 19:4-7.](#)

Unfortunately more fighting with the Philistines caused the hatred of Saul for David to return, therefore, David had to run away and go into hiding for his own safety.

David becomes an Outlaw.

[1 Samuel 19:11-24.](#)

David has returned to his wife Michal at his home. King Saul is now hunting for David, Michal told David of the danger and helps him escape. It is interesting to note that both Jonathan and Michal were out to protect David from their father Saul by the use of deception,

consider [Exodus 20:16.](#)

Michal placed an image in their bed to make it look as if David was there, this initially fooled the messengers from Saul. It is interesting as to what this image was, why was there an image in the home of David? Was it an household idol.

[Genesis 31:19; 30-35](#)

These idols were normally small, easily carried, so would not make a suitable replacement for David in the bed. It is describe as a pillow or similar but the Bible text does use the word "image."

David did not try to defend himself or create a revolt against Saul but instead he escaped to Ramah to tell Samuel of all that had happened and then they both went on to Naioth meaning "Dwellings." The name which was given to the Prophetical College created by Samuel. It was a number of separate dwellings, hence the name.

[1 Samuel 19:18-24; Psalm 59.](#)

Saul finds out where David is and sends people to capture him but God intervenes, protecting David. The protection on the life of David was so complete that three groups of men who were sent to destroy him were defeated by the Spirit of God. Instead of killing David, the soldiers joined the prophets.

Saul, angry that his orders were not being executed, now goes to Ramah, but he was also disarmed by the Spirit and caught up in the praises of the prophets. Saul's experience of praise did not have any affect on his heart, which was fixed on defying the will of God and destroying David.

Jonathan Protects David

[1 Samuel 20:1-40.](#)

We see the hearts of three men, as this story develops. David does not understand why Saul wants to kill him, he has approached Jonathan for help. David and Jonathan met in secret after David's escape from Ramah. Jonathan makes one more attempt to restore David into Saul's grace.

David is very despondent, while Jonathan is full of faith that the Lord is in total control. Jonathan tells David that he will keep him informed of his father Saul's attitude toward him, the friendship between the two is immediately obvious.

It is possible that Jonathan did not know of the events and instruction of

[1 Samuel 19:8-24.](#)

Even though Jonathan had never talked about the future, it is obvious that he knew of the future of David, as well as the future of his own family, the ultimate judgement by God, *"no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth."*

Two days later, in fierce anger, Saul demanded that David is hunted down and killed. After Saul's rage against his son and an attempt to kill Jonathan by Saul for his defense of David the young men met once more.

Jonathan, though angered and grieved by his fathers attitude, once again risked his life to warn David. When they meet we see the character of friendship, the words of Jonathan to David, *"the LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever."* An addition to the earlier agreement in verses 14,15,

"And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth."

This relationship was much stronger because of their common love and trust in God.

David now escapes southward towards Nob.

David the outlaw

[1 Samuel 21:1-31:13.](#)

David now has to hide from Saul for a very long time because Saul saw the death of David as his main priority in his life. Later others are to join David and they become outlaws.

This period of his life helped to develop his character in two different ways, his concern for the oppressed

and his reliance upon God.

Saul continues to hunt for David and the group of men who have now joined him. God is protecting David and his followers. We read of two occasions when Saul put himself into a situation which would have allowed David to kill him, but on both of these occasions David spared the life of Saul, showing the true character of David,

[1 Samuel 24:1-15;](#)

[1 Samuel 26:1-20.](#)

A significant number of David's Psalms were written during this period.

David in Nob

[1 Samuel 21:1-15.](#)

During his journey to Nob David has collected a small band of men,

[1 Samuel 21:4,5.](#)

When David arrives at Nob, about a mile north of Jerusalem. He goes to the tabernacle and he meets Ahimelech, the great grandson of Eli, who was then acting as priest. Ahimelech is frightened by the presence of David, "*why is he alone?*", he asks himself.

Because there is a possible threat to his life, to explain his appearance, David pretended to be on secret business for king Saul.

It is interesting to note that the Word of God faithfully records David's actions into the deception to protect himself, therefore David did not rely on the protection of God.

The meeting now develops an interesting situation, David and his men are hungry and he asks for food, he can see that Ahimelech has bread in his hand, but this is "*hallowed bread only, if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.*" The bread is Shewbread (or showbread,) This bread is place before the face of the Lord in the 'holy place'.

[Exodus 25:30;](#)

[Exodus 26:35;](#)

[Exodus 35:13;](#)

[Leviticus 24:6;](#)

[Leviticus 15:16.](#)

This bread was replaced each Sabbath by the priest. David is now given the showbread which has been taken from the altar.

See the remarks by Jesus on this event,

[Matthew 12:3,4;](#)

[Mark 2:25,26.](#)

David is unarmed and asks Ahimelech if there are any weapons, he is offered the "*sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah,*" David takes this. Unfortunately, also at the tabernacle was "Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdsmen that belonged to Saul, and he has seen and heard all." In desperation, David now sought shelter with the enemies of Israel, the Philistines, he turns to Achish the king of Gath.

The deception by David to Ahimelech telling him that he was on the king's business later resulted in a terrible act by Saul, they were all murdered, Ahimelech, his family and the priests at Nob, this was done by Doeg, as instructed by Saul.

However, "*The son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David,*" He joined the men with David.

[1 Samuel 22:9-23.](#)

David moves into the Philistine territory.

[1 Samuel 21:10-15.](#)

Because it was not safe for David to remain in the land controlled by Saul he moved South East into the Philistine controlled area, to Gath, the home town of Goliath. He was immediately recognized by the servants of the king Achish of Gath. David is scared and pretends to be mad, which results in the king of Gath sending David away to safety.

Psalms 34 and 56 reflect this event.

David in the Cave of Adullam

[1 Samuel 22:1-5.](#)

David and his small company of followers shelter in a cave, the largest of the limestone caves which border the lowlands near Adullam, about ten miles southeast of Gath, there he is joined by his family and many people, *"And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men."* David's father and mother were kept in safety by the king of Moab, a group of people which had a relationship connection to the family of Jesse through Ruth a Moabitess,

[Ruth 1:4-18;](#)

[Ruth 4:21,22.](#)

David remains in the caves of Adullam waiting for God to reveal his future,

[1 Samuel 22:3b.](#)

He does not become or act in any way as a rebel against Saul, he was still willing to defend Israel against the Philistines.

David returns from Moab, at the advice of God through the prophet Gad, he moved to hid in the forest of Hareth in Judah, a few miles southeast of Adullam, then later he moved on to Keilah.

David and his men were now to spend many years of suffering and affliction, in constant flight and hiding from Saul, yet David at all times knew God's faithful protection and awaited upon Him to carry out His plan for David.

Saul destroys the priests.

[1 Samuel 22:6-23.](#)

We now see the evil heart of Saul in the following event. Saul is about to kill innocent priests and their families, showing the evidence of his departure from the Lord.

We first find him sitting under a tamarisk tree complaining to his servants, about how his son was disloyal, his people did not care and David was full of conspiracy.

At this point Doeg, who had seen David at the Tabernacle, now sets out to make his position with king Saul of benefit to himself, he reports what he saw and how Ahimelech had helped David with food and a weapon. Saul sends a message to Ahimelech and the priests at NOB, that he wanted to see them.

On their arrival, they are accused of conspiracy, plotting against the throne. Ahimelech accidentally defends David as he defends his actions, Ahimelech is asking *"David had free access to Saul so how can he be an enemy?"* Ahimelech continued, *"he knew of no conspiracy so was innocent,"*

[1 Samuel 22:14,15.](#)

Saul then declares that Ahimelech and his family must die. The servants of Saul knew that it was wrong to kill the priests of God and refused, Doeg, however, saw a possibility of a further reward and murders eighty-five priests and their families,

[1 Samuel 22:16-20.](#)

Abiathar manages to escapes to report the event to David. Saul had no right to punish the priests of God, though it does partially fulfill the prophecy of,

[1 Samuel 2:27-36](#)

For the family of Eli.

The extent of Saul's spiritual decline has become all too apparent to David. Saul's deplorable murder of the priests of Nob now shows how far he is from God.

As priest, Abiathar had access to the ephod which allowed David to inquire of the Lord for all his future actions and events.

The city of Keilah is rescued by David.

[1 Samuel 23:1-14.](#)

This event shows how David continued to protect and serve Israel during the time he was in exile. Keilah was about three miles south of Adullam, the Philistines regularly attacked Keilah, they were after their harvest and stealing the grain from the people.

David first enquires of the Lord, *"Shall I go and smite these Philistines?"* to which he received the reply, *"Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah."*

Unfortunately his men were afraid to attack the Philistines, so David asked again of the Lord and received confirmation, *"I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand."* They now knew that God was with them and attacked and slaughtered the Philistines.

Somehow Saul hears of this event and immediately thinks that God has delivered David into his hands, as he is now trapped in a walled city. Saul has assumed that God has provided the answer to his hatred of David, a warning not to assume that, an apparent opportunity is a clear indication of the will of God.

Though David had rescued the people of Keilah, many of the inhabitants were loyal to Saul, so David again asked God, "*is it safe?*" And the LORD said, "*They will deliver thee up.*" So David and his men departed the city of Keilah into the wilderness, this area is found near the Dead Sea, full of caves and water cut ravines, a safe home for David and his men.

It was in this area that the Jewish rebels hid from the Roman soldiers during the problems of 66-73 A.D. and 132-135 A.D.

Saul now tries to find David but God protects him. For fourteen years David is to remain in exile, years of suffering for David and his men, they were constantly running and hiding from Saul, but throughout David is to know God's faithful protection.

Jonathan encourages David.

[1 Samuel 23:15-18.](#)

David has escaped from the cave of Adullam into the forest of Hereth in Judah, Now Jonathan comes to the wilderness of Ziph, planning to meet his friend. This passage records the last time Jonathan and David meet. Jonathan is guided by God to where David is hidden in the wilderness forest. Jonathan was heir to the throne but he was happy to stand aside for the king appointed by God, David is promised that he would be the next king of Israel. They then committed everything to God and separated.

Consider the thoughts of [Philippians 2:3-11.](#)

Saul hunts David in the wilderness of Moan.

[1 Samuel 23:19-29.](#)

From Ziph, to avoid the searching Saul, David was forced to move to the wildernesses of Maon, then En Gedi and later Paran. There were many who supported and were faithful to him but David was betrayed by some, one tribe were the Ziphites.

The events in the wilderness of Moan were most dangerous for David. The Ziphites inform Saul that David was hiding in the woods, they promise Saul to betray David so they are instructed by Saul to locate the exact hiding place and then lead him to the hiding place. Saul manages to surround David and his men and gets very close to the capture David but God is still controlling the situation. Saul receives a message that the Philistines have invaded the land, and is forced to depart to defend the country and so leave David to escape.

The life of Saul is spared.

[1 Samuel 24:1-22.](#)

David and his men have now moved into the wilderness of Engedi, on hearing of this, Saul takes three thousand, specially chosen, men to hunt for David.

Engedi was an oasis east of Hebron, located six hundred feet above the shore of the Dead Sea, the area is known for the very fertile vineyards, these vineyards occurred because of a local fresh water spring in the area. The area is made of limestone and therefore has many caves, it is obviously another good place for David and his men to hide in. Engedi is still an oasis in the desert for the vineyards have now gone.

We again see the hand of God at work, Saul enters into a cave in which David and some of his men are hiding. The expression "*cover his feet:*" is an indication that he was using the cave as a toilet. The men with David felt that God had delivered their enemy into the hand of David, but David felt that "*the LORD forbids that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed,*" he knows that God originally appointed Saul and only God can remove him, instead he secretly cuts off a piece of Saul's clothing, Saul may have taken off his cloak when he entered the cave. By this action David has shown the danger Saul had been in. When Saul leaves the cave David reveals himself to Saul, bowed down in honour to God's anointed, then shows Saul the piece of clothing he had cut off. David now points out that it proves he is not Saul's enemy, he was happy to wait on the action of God and not take the matter into his own hand.

Saul now realized that David was no threat to him or his position as king. "*Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.*"

Saul now admits that David will one day be the king and asks David to preserve his family in the future. Although Saul appears to be sincere in his response, David was not convinced and so remained in hiding.

The death of Samuel

[1 Samuel 25:1.](#)

Samuel, the last of the judges and first of the prophets, was very popular, so all Israel mourned for Samuel at his death, they sent representatives from the various tribes of Israel to attend the funeral. Samuel was then buried at his home near Ramah. David must have felt that any earthly controlling restraint upon Saul had now been removed by the death of Samuel.

David never made any opposition or interfered with the government of Saul during these years. He never tried to create discontent in the people with the rule of Saul, or in any way challenge the God-given right of Saul to the throne. Twice David had an opportunity to kill Saul, but he refused to *"touch God's anointed,"* leaving any action in the hands of God.

David meets Nabal.

[1 Samuel 25:2ff.](#)

David and his men have now moved to the wilderness of Paran, on the Northeast of the Sinai Peninsula. While they are hiding they have also taken on the job of guarding the flocks of a very rich business man called Nabal, a common practice even today. His name means "fool" and he lived up to his name. After protecting the flocks and possessions of Nabal for sometime, David felt that Nabal should make some attempt to pay for the service and sends ten men to collect their rightful wages on the day that Nabal has just sold the wool from his sheep, so would have money.

Nabal not only refused to pay for the service of David and his men he also pretended not to even know of David and the service he has given, he referred to them as *"servants"* or *"slaves"* who have run away from their master. David's men returned to their camp and reported what has happened. David is very angry and sets out with four hundred armed men to take their wages by force.

Abigail, Nabal's wife, hears of the events and realized how stupid Nabal had been and she knew how much protection David and his men had provided. *"Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses."* She goes out to meet David and his men but does not tell her foolish husband Nabal of her action to save him.

She meets David and prostrates herself before him. She confesses the wrong done, offers the reward due and is able to persuade David not to spill blood, she admits Nabal's sin and asks for forgiveness, reminding David that God is in control, *"seeing the LORD hath with holden thee from coming to shed blood."*

While Abigail is caring for the safety of Nabal and his possessions, he is getting drunk. The next day when he was sober Abigail tells him what she has done to save him *"his heart died within him, and he became as a stone,"* possibly a stroke. The divine judgement by God on his life, ten days later he dies. Consider *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."*

[Romans 12:19.](#)

David later offered the widow Abigail a marriage proposal, which she accepts,

[1 Samuel 25:39-42.](#)

David also took another wife, Ahinoam of Jezreel; The beginning of his harem which was in violation of the instruction of God given in

[Deuteronomy 17:17.](#)

Compare [2 Samuel 3:2-5.](#)

The life of Saul is again spared.

[1 Samuel 26:1-26.](#)

The Ziphites informed Saul a second time of where David was hiding. Saul again leads his soldiers into the wilderness looking for David and his men. As Saul and his men are sleeping, David and his nephew Abishai secretly enter the camp of Saul. As a sign of Saul's authority, as he slept a spear was stuck into the ground by his head, his position was very obvious amongst the sleeping soldiers. Abishai wanted to kill Saul but David still refused to attack the Lord's anointed, he would not assassinate God's choice of king. David knows that God is in control of the situation, and at His time, will remove Saul when He wants David to become the king. David therefore takes the spear and a water jug to show how much danger Saul had been in.

[1 Samuel 26:12](#)

This tells us that God was controlling the situation completely.

David crossed the valley then shouts to wake up the camp and Saul, he taunts Abner, the leader of the king's guards, he holds up the spear and jug as proof of poor guards and again proves David's attitude to Saul, he is not an enemy. David demands the answers to three questions, "*why are you still hunting me?*" was his first question. David offered to make an atoning offering if he had sinned against Saul. The final question was "*Have evil men told lies against David?*" They should be punished. David felt that he was being made "*to serve other gods*" by being forced out of his nation. The true God was not worshipped outside Israel. As before, Saul confesses that he has sinned against David, "*come back*" was the invitation, but David still does not trust Saul. The spear and jug are returned and David asked Saul to value his life as much as David values the life of Saul. This is the last meeting between Saul and David, Saul now knows that David will be king in his place.

David returns to the area of the Philistines.

[1 Samuel 27:1-12.](#)

Because he does not trust Saul, David again seeks refuge outside Israel, he goes to Achish, to the king of Gath. The time he spent in the nation of the Philistines was to his advantage later when he was king. David asked the Philistines for a town for him and his six hundred men to live in, perhaps this request was to protect his men from the pagan worship of the Philistines. He was given Ziklag, about thirteen miles northwest of Beersheba.

David used Ziklag as a base to raid the various enemies of Israel, such as the Amalekites, he made sure that the king of Gath, Achish did not realize what he was up to in these desert raids. He was so successful in his cover up that Achish had full trust in David.

Saul and the Witch of En-dor.

[1 Samuel 28:1-25.](#)

This event shows again how far Saul had moved away from God, this was a very dark time in his reign. The Philistines are preparing to attack, instead of turning to God Saul turns to spiritism, showing that there is a total absence of any sign of humility or interest in repentance before God.

The situation.

The Philistines armies have chariots and these are a great advantage in flat lands like the valley of Jezreel. This site also cuts Saul off from any help from the northern tribes of Israel. Samuel is dead and Saul now has no one to turn to for advice, except God. In addition Saul has removed any mediums and spiritualists from Israel according to the Word of God,

see [Deuteronomy 18:9-13](#);

[Exodus 22:18](#);

[Leviticus 19:31](#).

David was not only in the Philistine army but was also the guard of king Achish, (verses 1,2). Verse 2 records the answer by David to the king concerning the coming battle, it can be taken a number of ways, to start, he did not commit himself against the battle with Israel, if he had done so it would have meant his immediate death, he has to wait on God to provide the answers for the situation.

The Philistines were in their camp at Shunem, (today this is Solem) a city in the Jezreel valley, the Israelite army was five miles to the south at Mount Gilboa. Verse 5 tells us that Saul was very scared, he "*trembled greatly*." He had no Samuel for advice guidance from God, so Saul enquired of the Lord himself but received no response, as a result Saul now turns to a spiritual medium in an attempt to contact the dead Samuel for guidance.

Saul disguised himself and under darkness travelled to En-dor. He assured the medium that she would not be punished,

[Exodus 22:18](#),

His request was for her to bring Samuel back from the dead.

She carried out her normal fake tricks of her trade, pretending to contact the dead, but it was very obvious that she was very surprised when an old man appears, who Saul immediately identified as Samuel, verse 14, The old man bowed before him. Some people believe it was all part of her tricking and have doubted that this was actually Samuel but the witch's behaviour and surprise, obviously not expecting the appearance of this old man shows the truth. She immediately realized who Saul was.

Note that men from the dead also appeared with Christ at His transfiguration,

[Matthew 17:3](#),

This action is no problem to the power of God.

The message given by the figure was obviously from God and the writer identified and recorded that the figure was Samuel. Samuel reminds Saul that the kingdom has already been taken from him because of his disobedience in the Amalekite war, and that the Philistines will win and Saul and his sons will die in the battle. The message did not tell Saul what to do, the basic message was *"It is too late, your fate is sealed."* The future for Saul is now clear, judgement was about to be carried out. He returns to Mount Gilboa.

David is rejected by the Philistines.

[1 Samuel 29:1-11](#).

The events of chapter 29 must have occurred before the events of chapter 28 as the Philistines were in Aphek and then went on to Jezreel.

We now see that God was controlling the situation by delivering David from having to fight against Israel. The various armies of Philistines now march in front of the Philistine leaders, David and his men follow after king Achish and his men. *"The lords of the Philistines,"* were concerned by the presence of David and his men because David and his men could turn on them during the battle just to please Saul, so they demanded that David and his men are not involved in the battle but sent back to Ziklag. King Achish is full of apology as he sends them home, David puts on an act of anger and disappointment as his response to this instruction, but it was what he wanted, God has released David from a serious situation by using the suspicion of the Philistine leaders.

David rescues the people of Ziklag.

[1 Samuel 30:1-31](#).

Saul had failed to obey the instructions of God to destroy the Amalekites,

[1 Samuel 15:2,3 & 10-19](#)

And they had been a problem for the Israelites since. While the Philistine armies and David had been at Aphek, the Amalekites attacked Ziklag, took the wives and the children of David's men, both of David's wives were taken, they are destined for slavery, in addition the Amalekites burnt the city.

The men were angry with David, they blamed him for the situation and even had thoughts about stoning him, but David turned to the Lord for guidance, the response was *"go after them and get them back."* Six hundred men set off after the Amalekites, but when they reach the brook Besor, two hundred were exhausted and had to stop, remember they had just returned from the preparation for the battle at Jezreel, so the remaining four hundred carried on after the Amalekites. As they travelled on they came upon an Egyptian slave who was ill and had been left to die by the Amalekites. David promised to help the slave if he would guide them to the location of the Amalekites, verse 15. David and his men rapidly found the Amalekites camp, they were celebrating their recent victories, not expecting an attack, David's men carried out a major slaughter, only 400 camel riders escaped. As promised by God, David's men were able to recover their families and their stolen possessions.

David had a serious situation when they returned to those who had remained by the brook Besor, some of his men became selfish and refused to share the things they had gained from the Amalekites. David pointed out that the spoil was a gift from God who had promised to care for them if they chased the Amalekites, verse 23. David made sure that the spoil was equally shared with those who had remained at the brook and had guarded the equipment etc. owned by David's men. This again shows that David was a leader who made sure justice was true. David also sent gifts to the leaders of Judah, it was later that the people of Judah named David as king,

[2 Samuel 2:1-4](#).

The death of Saul on Mount Gilboa.

[1 Samuel 31:1-13](#).

Israel and the Philistines met in battle on Mount Gilboa, a 1696 foot hill in the valley of Jezreel. The battle turned against the Israelites and many of the Israelite fighters escaped the battlefield but were still slaughtered by the Philistines.

As given by Samuel's posthumous prophecy, [1 Samuel 28:19](#), The sons of Saul, Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchishua were killed. Meanwhile Saul was badly injured by an arrow, not wanting to suffer at the hands of the Philistines he ordered his armour bearer to kill him, who refused to do it, Saul therefore fell on his

own sword. The armour bearer then took his own life. Saul himself has fulfilled the prophecy and opened the way for God to move his choice into the position of king.

Following the battle many Israelites from the North fled their cities for safety, allowing the Philistines to occupy these cities,

[1 Samuel 31:7.](#)

The bodies of Saul and his sons were taken to Beth-shan to be put on public display, a sign of dishonour, the bodies appeared to have been hung on a wall in the open square of Beth-shan,

[2 Samuel 21:12.](#)

The head of Saul was being used as a trophy in the temple of Dagon,

[1 Chronicles 10:10.](#)

And his weapons placed in a temple of Ashtoreth.

The men of Jabesh-gilead learned of the dishonour of Saul and his sons and recovered the bodies at great personal risk, then cremated the bodies and buried the remains under a tamarisk tree in Jabesh. Cremation was not the normal after death procedure by Hebrews, unless the person was a serious criminal. It was possible that the bodies had been mutilated by the Philistines, hence the cremation. The people had a period of fasting and public mourning for the king.

The life of Saul showed he was a good military leader but his life ended because he refused to seek God and repent of his self-will, disobedience and bad evil heart. Resisting the Holy Spirit is a serious act of sin,

[James 1:15](#)

This tells us that this will bring death.

Saul, who was the choice of the people, had departed, in ruin and shame. The hope of Israel would now be upon a new king, *"a man after God's own heart,"* David the son of Jesse.