

Lesson 19 I Samuel 21 - 31

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. *What is David's character? In human terms, in spiritual terms?*
2. *For background to the story of the medium and the seance see Dt 19:9ff. Why are God's people given this command? What is the outcome of Saul's adventure with the medium? What is the difference between this and "inquiring of the Lord" with Urim and Thummim?*
3. *What was David's relationship with Achish, King of Gath (Philistine) over these years?*
4. *Enemies and friends of Israel turn up again and again. What old enemy is defeated by David? And to what old friend does he send a gift of spoil?*
5. *The men of Jabesh-Gilead raid the Philistines of Beth-shean and recover the bodies of Saul and Jonathan. Why do they have loyalty to Saul? What would David's reaction be to this?*

Psalm 22 and prayer

David was a man of sensitivity, a writer of poetry and of song. This was the other side of the warrior. A fascinating personality, he had many strengths and not a few weaknesses. We love him as a human being, even though his harsh side would unnerve us. In this psalm, David tells of his sorrows of being persecuted and misunderstood, of being an outcaste. Jesus, David's greater son, will use this psalm adding a dimension that fits Jesus' life like a profound prophecy. It can be remembered because of its position next to the 23rd psalm which is well known; we should learn to know it as well.

The promises are being fulfilled. When we come to David in Salvation History, approximately 1000 years have passed since God first called Abraham. How many of the promises made to Abraham have been accomplished? God has made a nation from one man and his barren wife. The four hundred years of settled life in Egypt have brought a nation into being. They went into Egypt as a nomadic family of seventy persons, and came out 3,000,000 (if not this number, at least, a very large group). Such a group could not have coalesced into a nation

in their nomadic wanderings. The sparsity of grazeable land would have forced continual split-ups even as that reality forced Abraham and Lot to separate in order to survive. So Egypt and its bitter experiences built a nation, but a nation without a land. The second promise given to Abraham was that his descendants would secure the land that God had promised. For two hundred and fifty years the Israelites, first under Joshua, then under the judges, and finally under Saul and David have been wresting the land from others who owned it or wanted to own it. With David this promise of God will be seen through to its conclusion. A third promise remains to be fulfilled. Abraham was promised that by the nation springing from his loins all peoples on earth would be blessed. It will be this promise that will link into the further promises that are made to David about the future of his house. It will not be fulfilled in his day, but stimulates the nation into the future with hope of seeing eventual fulfillment by God. So the People of God live looking forward with hope in the promise and plan of God.

Saul and David are contrasted. The book of I Samuel contrasts the character of two men, Saul and David. What made David a better man than Saul? What was Saul's defect that brought about his downfall? Saul stimulates a certain sympathy. He was just a young farmer and was thrust into a role for which he didn't quite have the goods. Though he trusted and obeyed God, it was only after a fashion - not the whole cloth that must be true of a king of the People of God. Think how it was when he was told by Samuel to wait seven days for him to come to make sacrifice before the battle. He waited, but couldn't help being fearful when the army began to desert in the face of the Philistine war that was pending. He was not really sure that the battle was the Lord's; he thought he needed those men. So instead of waiting to the eleventh hour, trusting God, he made the sacrifice himself before Samuel got there. He had failed two tests - he did not trust and he did not obey. Saul failed. He failed again in his war against the Amalekites. God had put the whole tribe of them under herem - they were to be dispatched, killed, as being dedicated to the Lord. Not a thing of theirs or a person of theirs could be saved, but only dispatched to the Lord. Nevertheless, Saul saved out the best of the animals and did not kill the king of the Amalekites. His reason being that he wanted to make a sacrifice of the animals. Saul, how can you sacrifice something that is already dedicated

to God? You can't sacrifice what is not your own. Saul was spiritually dull, he missed the point, he disobeyed.

The Spirit is taken from him. The Scriptures say that an evil spirit from God came upon him. We would have trouble seeing God responsible for an evil spirit. In the Hebrews view of cause, everything came from God, nothing was beyond His command. They had no steps of causality - neither human will nor Satan were intermediates to blame. We might understand it by saying, Saul had opened himself to mental distress because of his disobedience. He reaped what he had sown. To the Hebrew this was the same as saying God sent an evil spirit; and, it's true, the result of sin is a curse even as Moses had warned. As Saul slipped down and down, David rose up and up. The contrast is clearly seen in all the recorded events.

Saul is deranged and David flees. Working through the text from the 21st chapter, David is in flight. He stops at Nob, the present Mt. of Olives. See how close to Jerusalem Nob is on your map . under one mile, just across the Kidron valley opposite the great walls of Jerusalem. Hungry David gets both the shew bread (the holy bread set out fresh each day) for himself and his men, and the sword of Goliath which had been kept in the sanctuary as a religious relic. Jesus later uses this incident to explain how certain additions to the Mosaic law are subject to higher authority. David set them aside, and Jesus is even more qualified to set them aside. Matthew 12:3-4. The laws of God are there to serve men; men were not created to serve the laws of God. Saul found out through a spy that David had secured what he needed from the priests. He has all the priests of Nob and their families murdered. This action really seals Saul's doom. Jealousy has completely unhinged him. Any redeeming quality Saul might have had is erased in our memories because of this outrageous act.

David lives in Philistine territory. At this point David goes to Gath, a Philistine city, to hide. The story is odd in that David feigns to be mad so that the king there will not kill him. Later David becomes one of this same king's servants. Would he really have accepted David as a

commander if he thought he was mad? This is another case of two traditions being transmitted. David then spends time at Adullam and various hideouts in the southern wilderness. Follow these places on the map: Keilah, just south of Adullam, Engedi, Maon (where Nabal and Abigail live), Carmel - all of them in southern Judah. David's army at the time was hardly more than a band of ruffians. With his commanding skills he was able to control these men, and during these years of flight he looked after the welfare of the people they lived among. He came to the aid of the town of Keilah even though these people would turn around and betray him several times. Meanwhile Saul continues to seek him. Except for interruption of his pursuit of David by a renewed war with the Philistines, he would have caught him quite early. He continues to track him. Twice David is able to sneak up on Saul, demonstrating both times how easily he could have killed his adversary. Here David's character is observed. He will not harm the Lord's anointed. Saul may be unjust, he may even be mad, but that is God's problem; David will not attack him. Saul may even deserve to be killed, but David will not do it. He honors the one whom God has anointed despite his possible depravity. It calls to mind the honor due the popes of history despite the shocking morality of some of them. They are the Lord's anointed. Consider how it is that as someone has wisely said, "God writes straight with crooked lines." How has God accomplished Salvation History to this point? He has worked throughout with man's limited cooperation, even with man's sin. He has made do with that. He has not twisted people into becoming something they are not, but has worked with whatever they offer Him.

David honored the role that God had given to Saul. He scolded Abner, Saul's chief commander, because he was not taking good care of Saul. He also promised Saul that he would not annihilate his descendants. Saul makes promises to David in return, but David wisely never trusts these promises. He continues to maintain hiding. He realizes that Saul is completely unstable. David so mistrusts him that he has his mother and father move into Moab, the home of his great grandmother, Ruth. Obviously there are still family ties there.

David meets Abigail. David's life in the wilderness depends on the goodwill of the people who live there. Most are willing to help feed him

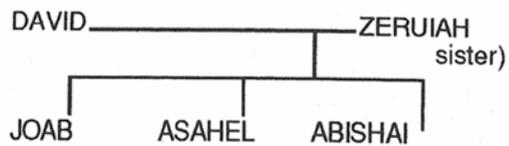
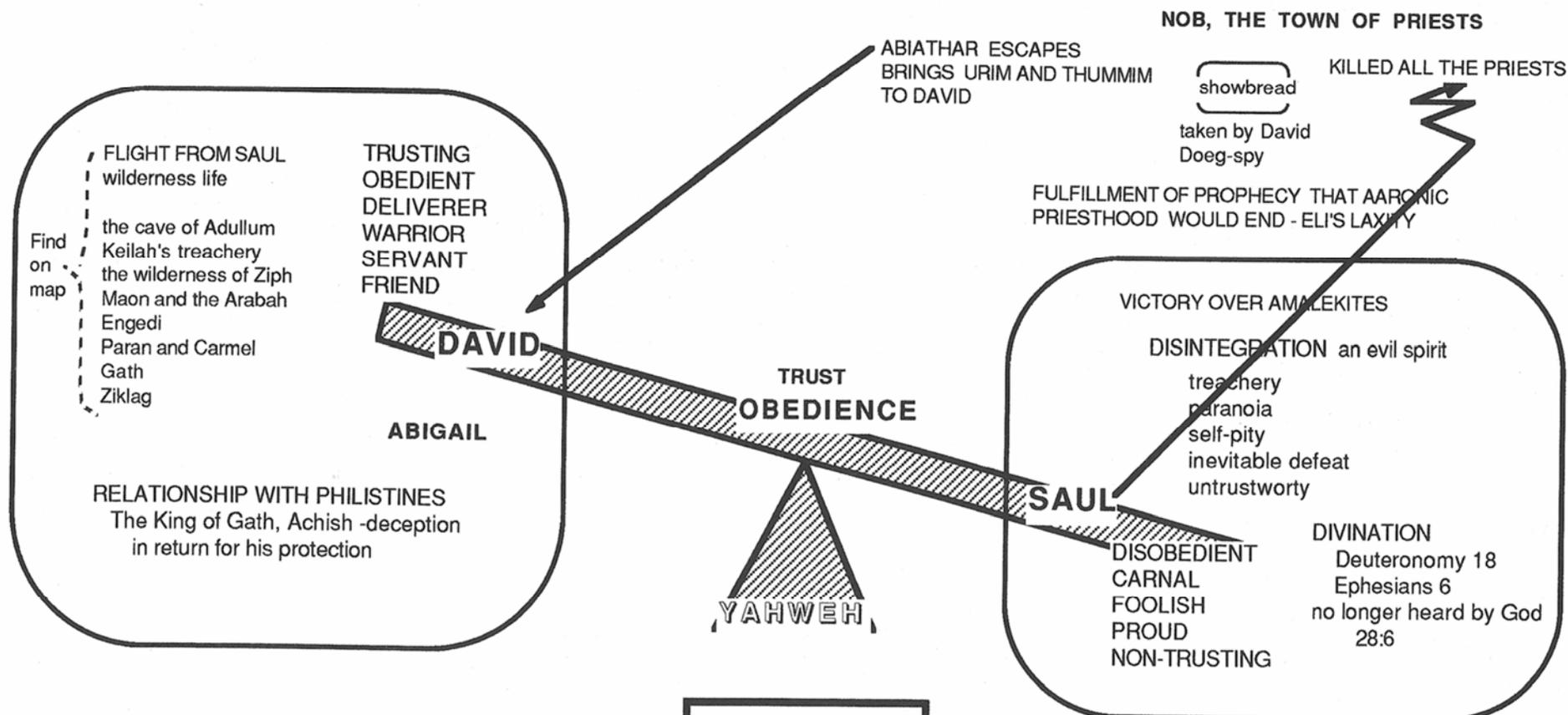
and his men for the protection he offers, but not the rich farmer, Nabal. Consider Nabal and Abigail. Does Abigail show the respect due a husband, even a disagreeable one? She speaks very ill of him, even to calling him “a fool.” She betrays him with her words. It would have been one thing to recognize his grave faults, yet in humility to defend her husband from his own folly. Why did she really take the food to David? To save her husband? It seems more likely she was saving herself if we consider her attitudes toward this man. Would Nabal have been a better man if she had been a more faithful woman? Was lack of her love part of the problem? If we “tell them by their fruits” in the Old Testament, Abigail, though she marries David, moves out of history without a contribution. Bathsheba will be just as strong a woman as Abigail. But she will also demonstrate a loyalty that brings her forward as one of the distant mothers of Our Lord - a fruitful woman. David, however, liked Abigail. He was very weak around beautiful women, and eventually after the death of Nabal, he calls her to become his wife. It is the last we hear of her.

David moves to Gath to be a trusted servant of its king, Achish. He is given the city of Ziklag for himself and his entourage. There he settles his two wives and their children. He becomes a raider against the Philistines and their allies in Southern Judah, lying all the time to Achish whom he tells he is raiding Hebrews. Achish has utter confidence in him. When the battle between Israel and the Philistines comes to a head, he gladly makes David one of his commanders with David’s men part of his army. David must have prayed when it became clear that Achish intended that he fight against his own country and his own people. He went with the Philistine army north to Aphek. There they joined the other chiefs of the Philistines who refused to let this Hebrew fight with them. Whew! He went back to Ziklag, arriving to find that the community had been raided by the hated Amalekites. If Saul had carried out God’s command completely earlier, there would have been no Amalekites. Urim and Thummim are drawn - the direction from God is, “go after them.”

God provides David with a priest. Where did the ephod, the sacred lots, and the priest come from for this ceremony of drawing Urim and

Thummim? Abiathar one of the priests of Nob had escaped Saul’s murderers there. He fled to David bringing with him an ephod with Urim and Thummim. David was thankful. From then on he consulted God by drawing the sacred lots for all his major decisions. Saul had haphazardly consulted if reminded, and sometimes forgot. David does nothing without asking God, sometimes asking God twice. This priest becomes one of his right hand men. The lots tell David to pursue the Amalekites, which he does. He overtakes them, recovering his wives and the children taken from Ziklag.

Saul consults a medium. Saul is now destitute of a way to consult God because God has not answered his questions for sometime. How is this? By simply drawing lots there would always be an answer - Yes or No. Perhaps the drawing of Urim and Thummim meant drawing the same answer three times; nothing is given about the procedure. Because poor Saul was ignored by God, he decided to resort to a medium, called “the witch of Endor.” Moses forbade resorting to any such person. See Deuteronomy 18:9. In the New Testament, St. Paul condemns such practices also. Why are we told to shun Jean Dixon and her horoscopes, despite the fact that she is a Catholic who attends daily mass? The Bible reveals that it is not because these practices are foolish and vain, but because they open a dangerous realm of the spirit world. It is a spirit world which is not to be taken lightly, rather one to be absolutely avoided. There are spiritual powers of wickedness in high places, says St. Paul - good and bad spiritual beings. We cannot discern one from the other, so we don’t open our spirit or psyche to them. God’s word commands that we do not. Saul during his kingship had cleared the land of many soothsayers, clairvoyants, mediums, and witches, but now, in need, he stoops to visiting a witch himself. The woman calls up Samuel from the dead. Samuel tells Saul nothing he doesn’t already know, except that by nightfall, Saul, Jonathan and Saul’s other sons will be with Samuel in Sheol. For the Hebrew, Sheol was the shadowland where they waited for Salvation History to be played out. Saul falls on his face in fear of the dread message that Samuel brings. His fate is sealed. He goes to meet the Philistines on Mt. Gilboa, and injured, falls on his own sword to end his life. The Jabesh-gileadites for whom Saul first began his deliverance of Israel, come and take his body and honor him with a decent burial. The story of Saul has ended.



**death of Saul
and his sons
on Mt. Gilboa**

- DOUBLE TRADITION
1. ACHISH OF GATH 21...27
 2. ZIPHITES 13...26
 3. SAUL SPARED 24...26
 4. SAUL REPENTS
SAUL SPARES DAVID 24...26
 5. SAUL MEETS DAVID 16..17
 6. SAMUEL CHOOSES SAUL
9...10
 7. SAUL PINS DAVID TO
THE WALL 18....19
 8. SAUL AND THE PROPHETS
10....19

**Lesson 19 Samuel 21 - 31
Synopsis**

21. in David's flight from Saul Abimelech the priest at Nob gives the holy bread to David Doeg a spy of Saul reports it David retrieves the great sword he had taken from Goliath fleeing Saul, David goes to Gath feigning madness he deceives Achish the king
22. David hides in the cave of Adullam he captains 400 distressed men he sends his parents to Moab to be out of the reach of Saul who is more and more paranoid Saul retaliates their help to David all the priests of Nob are killed Doeg the Edomite is the only one who will fall upon the priests eighty-five are killed that day Abiathar alone escapes to David he brings an ephod with him David now has the sacred lots by which to make decisions
23. David frees Keilah from Philistines David and Jonathan covenant before the Lord at Horesh the Ziphites betray David to Saul David barely escapes at Maon because Saul is called to battle with the Philistines in the north
24. David has opportunity to kill Saul because he is the Lord's anointed he spares him in the Engedi cave Saul is grateful and repents David will protect Saul's family when he becomes king
- but he does not trust Saul he stays in the stronghold
25. Samuel dies, is buried at Ramah Nabal of Carmel refuses David when he requests food for his men David decides to punish him Abigail, his wife intervenes she takes food to David heads off his revenge, flatters him regales her "fool" of a husband David is won over by her beauty at home her husband is drunk later she tells him of her adventure Nabal dies of a stroke
26. David marries Ahinoam and Abigail the Ziphites again betray David David spares Saul at Ziph while he sleeps surrounded by his army David goes into the camp could have speared Saul he won't harm the Lord's anointed David taunts and scolds Abner for not protecting Saul better Saul again blesses David
27. he says he will die at Saul's hand so David flees to Gath to the protection of King Achish trusted, he is made bodyguard he really raids Israel's enemies who are the friends of Achish but he deceives Achish who believes and trusts David
28. the Philistine forces gather for war David is Achish's bodyguard his men are in the Philistine army Saul had put mediums and wizards out of the land yet, because God no longer hears his questions are not answered
- he is greatly afraid and trembles about the upcoming battle so he disguises himself and goes to the Endor diviner she brings up Samuel from Sheol who predicts his death in battle with his sons that very day the woman then serves Saul and strengthens him with food
29. the Philistines gather at Aphek they are ready to battle Saul David and his men are with them as bodyguard of Achish The Philistine lords question are the Hebrews fighting with them they turn David back with his men because they don't trust them
30. David goes home to Ziklag while he has been gone the Amalekites have raided the women and children are gone David has Abiathar draw the lots Urim and Thummim say "pursue" thru help of an Egyptian slave who is found deserted he retrieves wives and children smites the Amalekites and evenly distributes the spoil to those who have been his allies even to those who did not fight also sends gifts to elders of Judah
31. Philistines strike Saul on Gilboa also kill his sons and Jonathan Saul dies on his own sword the men of Jabesh-gilead come and recover the bodies Saul is buried in Jabesh

Lesson 19 | Samuel 21.31 Outline

I. David's flight from Saul

- A. The encounter with the priest Abimelech at Nob
 - 1. a city of priests near Jerusalem
 - a. Jerusalem was not yet in Israel's control
 - b. the Levitical priests occupied a hill near by
 - 1) prophecy had been given to Samuel
 - 2) the Levitical priesthood would come to an end
 - c. later Nob was called the Mt. of Olives
 - 2. the shew bread was given to David
 - a. Moses was to place bread of Presence in the tabernacle Ex 25:30
 - b. these were twelve baked cakes made of flour
 - c. frankincense was put on them as a memorial
 - d. they were offered to God by fire Lv 24:7
 - e. it was the duty of priests to place bread on the table each Sabbath
 - f. old cakes were eaten by priests; they were most holy Lv 25:5-9
 - 3. David swears he and his men are ritually clean to be able to eat the bread
 - 4. he takes the sword of Goliath that was kept there
 - 5. Doeg, an Edomite (Edom later betrays Israel), observes all of this
 - a. he reports to Saul 22:9
 - b. all of the priests of Nob are questioned
 - c. Saul's guard would not kill the priests at Saul's command
 - d. Doeg would and did kill eighty-five of them 22:19
 - 6. one priest, Abiathar, escapes to David 22:20-23
 - a. he brings an ephod with Urim and Thummim
 - b. now David can consult with God about decisions
- B. The southern Judah region conceals David and his men
 - 1. the cave of Adullam 22:1 is a haven
 - 2. David delivers Keilah from Philistines 23:1ff
 - 3. he hides in the wilderness of Ziph (S. of Hebron in the Judean desert)
 - 4. he is in the wilderness of Maon and the Arabah 23:24 with his men
 - 5. the strongholds of Engedi 23:29 are a refuge
 - 6. the wilderness of Paran around Carmel 25:2 host him and his men
 - 7. he finally flees to Gath of the Philistines 27:2
 - 8. he is given a home by Achish at Ziklag 27:6

II. Saul's disintegration

- A. This treacherous act against the priests of Nob 22:17 seals his doom

- B. His paranoia grows
 - 1. he has distrust of Jonathan 22:8
 - 2. he is filled with self-pity 22:8, 23:21
- C. He seeks David's life constantly
- D. He knows his inevitable defeat 24:20
- E. He knows his attempt to kill David was wrong 26:21
- F. He is completely untrustworthy 26:21 - 27:1
- G. He goes to a diviner - a medium
 - 1. this is prohibited by the laws of Moses Dt 18
 - 2. he is no longer answered by God when he inquires 28:6
 - 3. a medium lives at Endor
 - a. he promises her safety from punishment
 - b. she calls up Samuel from Sheol for Saul
 - 1) Samuel is disturbed
 - 2) he tells Saul the Lord has become his enemy
 - 3) he prophesies: tomorrow you and your sons will be with me 28:19
 - 4. the medium then feeds and strengthens frightened Saul

III. David meets Abigail 25

- A. Nabal, a surly farmer, refuses to help feed David and his men
 - 1. David has been an aid to the neighborhood
 - 2. his men have been trustworthy and have stolen nothing
- B. David would punish him, but Abigail saves the day
 - 1. David's weakness is pretty women - he thinks she's wonderful
 - a. she brings abundant food
 - b. she flatters David with words
 - c. she is beautiful and smart
 - 2. her attitudes toward her husband are condescending
 - a. calls him "a fool"
 - b. acts independently of him
 - c. could his heart "rest in her?"
- C. Nabal dies of a stroke or heart attack
- D. David marries Abigail
 - 1. Michel, in the meantime, has been given to another man 25:44
 - 2. he also marries Ahinoam of Jezreel

IV. David and the Philistines

- A. David flees to Achish the king of Gath, from Saul
- B. Achish gives him the city of Ziklag to live in

- 1. his wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, and their children go with him
- C. He raids the southern enemies of Israel
 - 1. he deceives Achish - raiding his own people
 - 2. he kills everyone who could have reported
- D. The Philistines prepare to make war on Saul
 - 1. Achish trusts David
 - a. he makes him his bodyguard for life
 - b. he wants David to fight with him
 - 2. the Philistines encamp at Aphek
 - a. David and his men go to Aphek with Achish
 - 1) it is a command performance
 - 2) would David really have fought for Philistia?
 - b. Philistine lords refuse to allow him in their army
 - 1) they think he will turn against them in battle
 - 2) in this way he would be reconciled to Saul
 - c. Achish thinks of David as an "angel of God"
- E. David goes back to Ziklag
 - 1. the Amalekites have raided
 - a. they were the first enemy of the nation Ex 17:8,14
 - b. Saul was to have exterminated them and did not I Sam 15:4-9
 - 2. there is consternation in his ranks of soldiers
 - a. everyone's wives and children have been taken captive
 - b. his people are ready to stone him in anguish
 - 3. he strengthens himself in the Lord
 - a. he draws Urim and Thummim
 - b. and is assured of success
 - c. he receives help of an Egyptian slave found along the way
 - d. he recovers all the possessions and families
 - 4. all those unable to fight, and those who fought, receive equally of the spoil
 - 5. David plays politics with the spoil of the Amalekites
 - a. he gives gifts to the "elders of Judah"
 - b. in 2 Sam 2:4 they will later be the first to crown him king
 - c. he gives gifts in all the places his men had roamed
 - d. by gifts he made sure all had a good impression and bore him no ill
 - e. this will serve him in good stead when he assumes the kingship

V. Saul's last battle

- A. Israel is soundly routed by the Philistines
- B. Saul and his sons fight on Mt. Gilboa

- 1. Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua are slain
- 2. Saul is badly wounded
- 3. he asks his armor bearer to kill him
- 4. he finally falls on his own sword, his armor bearer also
- C. The Philistines occupy all the cities in the vicinity
- D. Saul's body beheaded
 - 1. his armor is sent to the temple of Ashtaroth
 - 2. they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shean
- E. The men of Jabesh-gilead come with risk and take his and his sons' bodies
 - 1. they burnt the bodies at Jabesh
 - 2. they buried the bones and fasted seven days
- F. Why Jabesh-gilead?
 - 1. Saul was from Gibeah originally
 - a. Gibeah of Benjamin was punished Ju 19,20,21
 - b. the tribe of Benjamin was reduced in this war to 600 men without wives
 - c. Jabesh-gilead was raided for wives for them
 - 2. Saul's grandmother one of these Jabesh women - probably
 - 3. Saul rescued the Jabesh-gileadites early in his career I Sam 11

VI. Parallel stories in I Samuel (possibly two interwoven traditions)

- A. Achish of Gath
 - 1. chapter 21 - David feigns madness
 - 2. chapter 27 - David becomes an ally
- B. Ziphite treachery, 23 and 26
- C. Saul spared
 - 1. chapter 24 - the cave incident
 - 2. chapter 26 - the sword and water jar incident
- D. Saul blesses David - both of the above, 24 and 26
- E. Death of Samuel chapters 25:1 and 28:3
- F. Saul meets David 17:55 and 16:18
 - 1. as a player of the lyre to sooth him
 - 2. as a brave young killer of Goliath
- G. Samuel chooses Saul as king 10:20, 9:15
 - 1. once by clairvoyance
 - 2. then by drawing lots
- H. Saul pins David to the wall 19:10, 18:10-12
- I. Saul and the prophets 10:9-13, 19:24 "Is Saul also among the prophets?"
- J. Discourse in the field with Jonathan 19, 20