

**BOOK 6**

**FROM THE DEATH OF ELI TO  
THE DEATH OF SAUL**

**Flavius Josephus**

## Chapter 1

### **The Destruction That Came Upon the Philistines**

1. When the Philistines had taken the ark of the Hebrews captive, as I said a little before, they carried it to the city of Ashdod, and put it by their own god, who was called Dagon, (1) as one of their spoils; but when they went into his temple the next morning to worship their god, they found him paying the same worship to the ark, for he lay along, as having fallen down from the basis whereon he had stood: so they took him up, and set him on his basis again, and were much troubled at what had happened; and as they frequently came to Dagon and found him still lying along, in a posture of adoration to the ark, they were in very great distress and confusion. At length God sent a very destructive disease upon the city and country of Ashdod, for they died of the dysentery or flux, a sore distemper, that brought death upon them very suddenly; for before the soul could, as usual in easy deaths, be well loosed from the body, they brought up their entrails, and vomited up what they had eaten, and what was entirely corrupted by the disease. And as to the fruits of their country, a great multitude of mice arose out of the earth and hurt them, and spared neither the plants nor the fruits. Now while the people of Ashdod were under these misfortunes, and were not able to support themselves under their calamities, they perceived that they suffered thus because of the ark, and that the victory they had gotten, and their having taken the ark captive, had not happened for their good; they therefore sent to the people of Askelon, and desired that they would receive the ark among them. This desire of the people of Ashdod was not disagreeable to those of Askelon, so they granted them that favor. But when they had gotten the ark, they were in the same miserable condition; for the ark carried along with it the disasters that the people of Ashdod had suffered, to those who received it from them. Those of Askelon also sent it away from themselves to others: nor did it stay among those others neither; for since they were pursued by the

same disasters, they still sent it to the neighboring cities; so that the ark went round, after this manner, to the five cities of the Philistines, as though it exacted these disasters as a tribute to be paid it for its coming among them.

2. When those that had experienced these miseries were tired out with them, and when those that heard of them were taught thereby not to admit the ark among them, since they paid so dear a tribute for it, at length they sought for some contrivance and method how they might get free from it: so the governors of the five cities, Gath, and Ekron, and Askelon, as also of Gaza, and Ashclod, met together, and considered what was fit to be done; and at first they thought proper to send the ark back to its own people, as allowing that God had avenged its cause; that the miseries they had undergone came along with it, and that these were sent on their cities upon its account, and together with it. However, there were those that said they should not do so, nor suffer themselves to be deluded, as ascribing the cause of their miseries to it, because it could not have such power and force upon them; for, had God had such a regard to it, it would not have been delivered into the hands of men. So they exhorted them to be quiet, and to take patiently what had befallen them, and to suppose there was no other cause of it but nature, which, at certain revolutions of time, produces such mutations in the bodies of men, in the earth, in plants, and in all things that grow out of the earth. But the counsel that prevailed over those already described, was that of certain men, who were believed to have distinguished themselves in former times for their understanding and prudence, and who, in their present circumstances, seemed above all the rest to speak properly. These men said it was not right either to send the ark away, or to retain it, but to dedicate five golden images, one for every city, as a thank-offering to God, on account of his having taken care of their preservation, and having kept them alive when their lives were likely to be taken away by such distempers as they were not able to bear up against. They also would have them make five golden mice like to those that devoured and destroyed their country (2) to put them in a bag, and lay them upon the ark; to make them a new cart also for it, and to

yoke milch kine to it (3) but to shut up their calves, and keep them from them, lest, by following after them, they should prove a hinderance to their dams, and that the dams might return the faster out of a desire of those calves; then to drive these milch kine that carried the ark, and leave it at a place where three ways met, and So leave it to the kine to go along which of those ways they pleased; that in case they went the way to the Hebrews, and ascended to their country, they should suppose that the ark was the cause of their misfortunes; but if they turned into another road, they said, "We will pursue after it, and conclude that it has no such force in it."

3. So they determined that these men spake well; and they immediately confirmed their opinion by doing accordingly. And when they had done as has been already described, they brought the cart to a place where three ways met, and left it there and went their ways; but the kine went the right way, and as if some persons had driven them, while the rulers of the Philistines followed after them, as desirous to know where they would stand still, and to whom they would go. Now there was a certain village of the tribe of Judah, the name of which was Bethshemesh, and to that village did the kine go; and though there was a great and good plain before them to proceed in, they went no farther, but stopped the cart there. This was a sight to those of that village, and they were very glad; for it being then summer-time, and all the inhabitants being then in the fields gathering in their fruits, they left off the labors of their hands for joy, as soon as they saw the ark, and ran to the cart, and taking the ark down, and the vessel that had the images in it, and the mice, they set them upon a certain rock which was in the plain; and when they had offered a splendid sacrifice to God, and feasted, they offered the cart and the kine as a burnt-offering: and when the lords of the Philistines saw this, they returned back.

4. But now it was that the wrath of God overtook them, and struck seventy persons (4) of the village of Bethshemesh dead, who, not being priests, and so not worthy to touch the ark, had approached to it. Those of

that village wept for these that had thus suffered, and made such a lamentation as was naturally to be expected on so great a misfortune that was sent from God; and every one mourned for his own relation. And since they acknowledged themselves unworthy of the ark's abode with them, they sent to the public senate of the Israelites, and informed them that the ark was restored by the Philistines; which when they knew, they brought it away to Kirjathjearim, a city in the neighborhood of Bethshemesh. In this city lived one Abinadab, by birth a Levite, and who was greatly commended for his righteous and religious course of life; so they brought the ark to his house, as to a place fit for God himself to abide in, since therein did inhabit a righteous man. His sons also ministered to the Divine service at the ark, and were the principal curators of it for twenty years; for so many years it continued in Kirjathjearim, having been but four months with the Philistines.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. Dagon, a famous maritime god or idol, is generally supposed to have been like a man above the navel, and like a fish beneath it.
2. Spanheim informs us here, that upon the coins of Tenedos, and those of other cities, a field-mouse is engraven, together with Apollo Smintheus, or Apollo, the driver away of field-mice, on account of his being supposed to have freed certain tracts of ground from those mice; which coins show how great a judgment such mice have sometimes been, and how the deliverance from them was then esteemed the effect of a divine power; which observations are highly suitable to this history.
3. This device of the Philistines, of having a yoke of kine to draw this cart, into which they put the ark of the Hebrews, is greatly illustrated by Sanchoniatho's account, under his ninth generation, that Agrouerus, or Agrotus, the husbandman, had a much-worshipped statue and temple, carried about by one or more yoke of oxen, or kine, in Phoenicia, in the neighborhood of these Philistines. See Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 27 and 247; and Essay on the Old Testament, Append. p. 172.

4. These seventy men, being not so much as Levites, touched the ark in a rash or profane manner, and were slain by the hand of God for such their rashness and profaneness, according to the Divine threatenings, Numbers 4:15, 20; but how other copies come to add such an incredible number as fifty thousand in this one town, or small city, I know not. See Dr. Wall's Critical Notes on 1 Samuel 6:19.

## Chapter 2

### **The Hebrews' Victory Under the Conduct of Samuel**

1. Now while the city of Kirjathjearim had the ark with them, the whole body of the people betook themselves all that time to offer prayers and sacrifices to God, and appeared greatly concerned and zealous about his worship. So Samuel the prophet, seeing how ready they were to do their duty, thought this a proper time to speak to them, while they were in this good disposition, about the recovery of their liberty, and of the blessings that accompanied the same. Accordingly he used such words to them as he thought were most likely to excite that inclination, and to persuade them to attempt it: "O you Israelites," said he, "to whom the Philistines are still grievous enemies, but to whom God begins to be gracious, it behooves you not only to be desirous of liberty, but to take the proper methods to obtain it. Nor are you to be contented with an inclination to get clear of your lords and masters, while you still do what will procure your continuance under them. Be righteous then, and cast wickedness out of your souls, and by your worship supplicate the Divine Majesty with all your hearts, and persevere in the honor you pay to him; for if you act thus, you will enjoy prosperity; you will be freed from your slavery, and will get the victory over your enemies: which blessings it is not possible you should attain, either by weapons of war, or by the strength of your bodies, or by the multitude of your assistants; for God has not promised to grant these blessings by those means, but by being good and righteous men; and if you will be such, I will be security to you for the performance of God's promises." When Samuel had said thus, the multitude applauded his discourse, and were pleased with his exhortation to them, and gave their consent to resign themselves up to do what was pleasing to God. So Samuel gathered them together to a certain city called Mizpeh, which, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies a watch-tower; there they drew water, and poured it out to God, and fasted all day, and betook themselves to their

prayers.

2. This their assembly did not escape the notice of the Philistines: so when they had learned that so large a company had met together, they fell upon the Hebrews with a great army and mighty forces, as hoping to assault them when they did not expect it, nor were prepared for it. This thing affrighted the Hebrews, and put them into disorder and terror; so they came running to Samuel, and said that their souls were sunk by their fears, and by the former defeat they had received, and "that thence it was that we lay still, lest we should excite the power of our enemies against us. Now while thou hast brought us hither to offer up our prayers and sacrifices, and take oaths [to be obedient], our enemies are making an expedition against us, while we are naked and unarmed; wherefore we have no other hope of deliverance but that by thy means, and by the assistance God shall afford us upon thy prayers to him, we shall obtain deliverance from the Philistines." Hereupon Samuel bade them be of good cheer, and promised them that God would assist them; and taking a sucking lamb, he sacrificed it for the multitude, and besought God to hold his protecting hand over them when they should fight with the Philistines, and not to overlook them, nor suffer them to come under a second misfortune. Accordingly God hearkened to his prayers, and accepting their sacrifice with a gracious intention, and such as was disposed to assist them, he granted them victory and power over their enemies. Now while the altar had the sacrifice of God upon it, and had not yet consumed it wholly by its sacred fire, the enemy's army marched out of their camp, and was put in order of battle, and this in hope that they should be conquerors, since the Jews (1) were caught in distressed circumstances, as neither having their weapons with them, nor being assembled there in order to fight. But things so fell out, that they would hardly have been credited though they had been foretold by anybody: for, in the first place, God disturbed their enemies with an earthquake, and moved the ground under them to such a degree, that he caused it to tremble, and made them to shake, insomuch that by its trembling, he made some unable to keep their feet, and made them fall down, and by



opening its chasms, he caused that others should be hurried down into them; after which he caused such a noise of thunder to come among them, and made fiery lightning shine so terribly round about them, that it was ready to burn their faces; and he so suddenly shook their weapons out of their hands, that he made them fly and return home naked. So Samuel with the multitude pursued them to Bethcar, a place so called; and there he set up a stone as a boundary of their victory and their enemies' flight, and called it the Stone of Power, as a signal of that power God had given them against their enemies.

3. So the Philistines, after this stroke, made no more expeditions against the Israelites, but lay still out of fear, and out of remembrance of what had befallen them; and what courage the Philistines had formerly against the Hebrews, that, after this victory, was transferred to the Hebrews. Samuel also made an expedition against the Philistines, and slew many of them, and entirely humbled their proud hearts, and took from them that country, which, when they were formerly conquerors in battle, they had cut off from the Jews, which was the country that extended from the borders of Gath to the city of Ekron: but the remains of the Canaanites were at this time in friendship with the Israelites.

#### **Footnote:**

1. This is the first place, so far as I remember, in these Antiquities, where Josephus begins to call his nation Jews, he having hitherto usually, if not constantly, called them either Hebrews or Israelites. The second place soon follows; see also ch. 3. sect. 5.

## Chapter 3

### **The Multitude Required to Have a King**

1. But Samuel the prophet, when he had ordered the affairs of the people after a convenient manner, and had appointed a city for every district of them, he commanded them to come to such cities, to have the controversies that they had one with another determined in them, he himself going over those cities twice in a year, and doing them justice; and by that means he kept them in very good order for a long time.

2. But afterwards he found himself oppressed with old age, and not able to do what he used to do, so he committed the government and the care of the multitude to his sons, - the elder of whom was called Joel, and the name of the younger was Abiah. He also enjoined them to reside and judge the people, the one at the city of Bethel, and the other at Beersheba, and divided the people into districts that should be under the jurisdiction of each of them. Now these men afford us an evident example and demonstration how some children are not of the like dispositions with their parents; but sometimes perhaps good and moderate, though born of wicked parents; and sometimes showing themselves to be wicked, though born of good parents: for these men turning aside from their father's good courses, and taking a course that was contrary to them, perverted justice for the 'filthy lucre of gifts and bribes, and made their determinations not according to truth, but according to bribery, and turned aside to luxury, and a costly way of living; so that as, in the first place, they practiced what was contrary to the will of God, so did they, in the second place, what was contrary to the will of the prophet their father, who had taken a great deal of care, and made a very careful provision that the multitude should be righteous.

3. But the people, upon these injuries offered to their former constitution

and government by the prophet's sons, were very uneasy at their actions, and came running to the prophet, who then lived at the city Ramah, and informed him of the transgressions of his sons; and said, That as he was himself old already, and too infirm by that age of his to oversee their affairs in the manner he used to do, so they begged of him, and entreated him, to appoint some person to be king over them, who might rule over the nation, and avenge them of the Philistines, who ought to be punished for their former oppressions. These words greatly afflicted Samuel, on account of his innate love of justice, and his hatred to kingly government, for he was very fond of an aristocracy, as what made the men that used it of a divine and happy disposition; nor could he either think of eating or sleeping, out of his concern and torment of mind at what they had said, but all the night long did he continue awake and revolved these notions in his mind.

4. While he was thus disposed, God appeared to him, and comforted him, saying, That he ought not to be uneasy at what the multitude desired, because it was not he, but Himself whom they so insolently despised, and would not have to be alone their king; that they had been contriving these things from the very day that they came out of Egypt; that however. in no long time they would sorely repent of what they did, which repentance yet could not undo what was thus done for futurity; that they would be sufficiently rebuked for their contempt, and the ungrateful conduct they have used towards me, and towards thy prophetic office. "So I command thee to ordain them such a one as I shall name beforehand to be their king, when thou hast first described what mischiefs kingly government will bring upon them, and openly testified before them into what a great change of affairs they are hasting."

5. When Samuel had heard this, he called the Jews early in the morning, and confessed to them that he was to ordain them a king; but he said that he was first to describe to them what would follow, what treatment they would receive from their kings, and with how many mischiefs they must struggle.

"For know ye," said he, "that, in the first place, they will take your sons away from you, and they will command some of them to be drivers of their chariots, and some to be their horsemen, and the guards of their body, and others of them to be runners before them, and captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; they will also make them their artificers, makers of armor, and of chariots, and of instruments; they will make them their husbandmen also, and the curators of their own fields, and the diggers of their own vineyards; nor will there be any thing which they will not do at their commands, as if they were slaves bought with money. They will also appoint your daughters to be confectioners, and cooks, and bakers; and these will be obliged to do all sorts of work which women slaves, that are in fear of stripes and torments, submit to. They will, besides this, take away your possessions, and bestow them upon their eunuchs, and the guards of their bodies, and will give the herds of your cattle to their own servants: and to say briefly all at once, you, and all that is yours, will be servants to your king, and will become no way superior to his slaves; and when you suffer thus, you will thereby be put in mind of what I now say. And when you repent of what you have done, you will beseech God to have mercy upon you, and to grant you a quick deliverance from your kings; but he will not accept your prayers, but will neglect you, and permit you to suffer the punishment your evil conduct has deserved."

6. But the multitude was still so foolish as to be deaf to these predictions of what would befall them; and too peevish to suffer a determination which they had injudiciously once made, to be taken out of their mind; for they could not be turned from their purpose, nor did they regard the words of Samuel, but peremptorily insisted on their resolution, and desired him to ordain them a king immediately, and not trouble himself with fears of what would happen hereafter, for that it was necessary they should have with them one to fight their battles, and to avenge them of their enemies, and that it was no way absurd, when their neighbors were under kingly government, that they should have the same form of government also. So when Samuel saw

that what he had said had not diverted them from their purpose, but that they continued resolute, he said, "Go you every one home for the present; when it is fit I will send for you, as soon as I shall have learned from God who it is that he will give you for your king."

## Chapter 4

### **The Appointment of Saul as King**

1. There was one of the tribe of Benjamin, a man of a good family, and of a virtuous disposition; his name was Kish. He had a son, a young man of a comely countenance, and of a tall body, but his understanding and his mind were preferable to what was visible in him: they called him Saul. Now this Kish had some fine she-asses that were wandered out of the pasture wherein they fed, for he was more delighted with these than with any other cattle he had; so he sent out his son, and one servant with him, to search for the beasts; but when he had gone over his own tribe in search after the asses, he went to other tribes, and when he found them not there neither, he determined to go his way home, lest he should occasion any concern to his father about himself. But when his servant that followed him told him as they were near the city of Ramah, that there was a true prophet in that city, and advised him to go to him, for that by him they should know the upshot of the affair of their asses, he replied, That if they should go to him, they had nothing to give him as a reward for his prophecy, for their subsistence money was spent. The servant answered, that he had still the fourth part of a shekel, and he would present him with that; for they were mistaken out of ignorance, as not knowing that the prophet received no such reward (1) So they went to him; and when they were before the gates, they lit upon certain maidens that were going to fetch water, and they asked them which was the prophet's house. They showed them which it was; and bid them make haste before he sat down to supper, for he had invited many guests to a feast, and that he used to sit down before those that were invited. Now Samuel had then gathered many together to feast with him on this very account; for while he every day prayed to God to tell him beforehand whom he would make king, he had informed him of this man the day before, for that he would send him a certain young man out of the tribe of Benjamin about this hour of the day;

and he sat on the top of the house in expectation of that time's being come. And when the time was completed, he came down and went to supper; so he met with Saul, and God discovered to him that this was he who should rule over them. Then Saul went up to Samuel and saluted him, and desired him to inform him which was the prophet's house; for he said he was a stranger and did not know it. When Samuel had told him that he himself was the person, he led him in to supper, and assured him that the asses were found which he had been to seek, and that the greatest of good things were assured to him: he replied, "I am too inconsiderable to hope for any such thing, and of a tribe too small to have kings made out of it, and of a family smaller than several other families; but thou tellest me this in jest, and makest me an object of laughter, when thou discourest with me of greater matters than what I stand in need of." However, the prophet led him in to the feast, and made him sit down, him and his servant that followed him, above the other guests that were invited, which were seventy in number (2) and he gave orders to the servants to set the royal portion before Saul. And when the time of going to bed was come, the rest rose up, and every one of them went home; but Saul staid with the prophet, he and his servant, and slept with him.

2. Now as soon as it was day, Samuel raised up Saul out of his bed, and conducted him homeward; and when he was out of the city, he desired him to cause his servant to go before, but to stay behind himself, for that he had somewhat to say to him when nobody else was present. Accordingly, Saul sent away his servant that followed him; then did the prophet take a vessel of oil, and poured it upon the head of the young man, and kissed him, and said, "Be thou a king, by the ordination of God, against the Philistines, and for avenging the Hebrews for what they have suffered by them; of this thou shalt have a sign, which I would have thee take notice of: - As soon as thou art departed hence, thou wilt find three men upon the road, going to worship God at Bethel; the first of whom thou wilt see carrying three loaves of bread, the second carrying a kid of the goats, and the third will follow them carrying a bottle of wine. These three men will salute thee, and speak kindly

to thee, and will give thee two of their loaves, which thou shalt accept of. And thence thou shalt come to a place called Rachel's Monument, where thou shalt meet with those that will tell thee thy asses are found; after this, when thou comest to Gabatha, thou shalt overtake a company of prophets, and thou shalt be seized with the Divine Spirit, (3) and prophesy along with them, till every one that sees thee shall be astonished, and wonder, and say, Whence is it that the son of Kish has arrived at this degree of happiness? And when these signs have happened to thee, know that God is with thee; then do thou salute thy father and thy kindred. Thou shalt also come when I send for thee to Gilgal, that we may offer thank-offerings to God for these blessings." When Samuel had said this, and foretold these things, he sent the young man away. Now all things fell out to Saul according to the prophecy of Samuel.

3. But as soon as Saul came into the house of his kinsman Abner, whom indeed he loved better than the rest of his relations, he was asked by him concerning his journey, and what accidents happened to him therein; and he concealed none of the other things from him, no, not his coming to Samuel the prophet, nor how he told him the asses were found; but he said nothing to him about the kingdom, and what belonged thereto, which he thought would procure him envy, and when such things are heard, they are not easily believed; nor did he think it prudent to tell those things to him, although he appeared very friendly to him, and one whom he loved above the rest of his relations, considering, I suppose, what human nature really is, that no one is a firm friend, neither among our intimates, nor of our kindred; nor do they preserve that kind disposition when God advances men to great prosperity, but they are still ill-natured and envious at those that are in eminent stations.

4. Then Samuel called the people together to the city Mizpeh, and spake to them in the words following, which he said he was to speak by the command of God: - That when he had granted them a state of liberty, and brought their enemies into subjection, they were become unmindful of his



benefits, and rejected God that he should not be their King, as not considering that it would be most for their advantage to be presided over by the best of beings, for God is the best of beings, and they chose to have a man for their king; while kings will use their subjects as beasts, according to the violence of their own wills and inclinations, and other passions, as wholly carried away with the lust of power, but will not endeavor so to preserve the race of mankind as his own workmanship and creation, which, for that very reason, God would take care of. "But since you have come to a fixed resolution, and this injurious treatment of God has quite prevailed over you, dispose yourselves by your tribes and scepters, and cast lots."

5. When the Hebrews had so done, the lot fell upon the tribe of Benjamin; and when the lot was cast for the families of this tribe, that which was called Matri was taken; and when the lot was cast for the single persons of that family, Saul, the son of Kish, was taken for their king. When the young man knew this, he prevented [their sending for him], and immediately went away and hid himself. I suppose that it was because he would not have it thought that he willingly took the government upon him; nay, he showed such a degree of command over himself, and of modesty, that while the greatest part are not able to contain their joy, even in the gaining of small advantages, but presently show themselves publicly to all men, this man did not only show nothing of that nature, when he was appointed to be the lord of so many and so great tribes, but crept away and concealed himself out of the sight of those he was to reign over, and made them seek him, and that with a good deal of trouble. So when the people were at a loss, and solicitous, because Saul disappeared, the prophet besought God to show where the young man was, and to produce him before them. So when they had learned of God the place where Saul was hidden, they sent men to bring him; and when he was come, they set him in the midst of the multitude. Now he was taller than any of them, and his stature was very majestic.

6. Then said the prophet, God gives you this man to be your king: see

how he is higher than any of the people, and worthy of this dominion." So as soon as the people had made acclamation, God save the king, the prophet wrote down what would come to pass in a book, and read it in the hearing of the king, and laid up the book in the tabernacle of God, to be a witness to future generations of what he had foretold. So when Samuel had finished this matter, he dismissed the multitude, and came himself to the city Rainah, for it was his own country. Saul also went away to Gibeah, where he was born; and many good men there were who paid him the respect that was due to him; but the greater part were ill men, who despised him and derided the others, who neither did bring him presents, nor did they in affection, or even in words, regard to please him.

### **Footnotes:**

1. Of this great mistake of Saul and his servant, as if true prophet of God would accept of a gift or present, for foretelling what was desired of him, see the note on B. IV. ch. 6. sect. 3.
2. It seems to me not improbable that these seventy guests of Samuel, as here, with himself at the head of them, were a Jewish sanhedrim, and that hereby Samuel intimated to Saul that these seventy-one were to be his constant counselors, and that he was to act not like a sole monarch, but with the advice and direction of these seventy-one members of that Jewish sanhedrim upon all occasions, which yet we never read that he consulted afterward.
3. An instance of this Divine fury we have after this in Saul, ch. 5. sect. 2, 3; 1 Samuel 11:6. See the like, Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; and 14:6.

## Chapter 5

### **Saul's Victory Over the Ammonites**

1. After one month, the war which Saul had with Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, obtained him respect from all the people; for this Nahash had done a great deal of mischief to the Jews that lived beyond Jordan by the expedition he had made against them with a great and warlike army. He also reduced their cities into slavery, and that not only by subduing them for the present, which he did by force and violence, but by weakening them by subtlety and cunning, that they might not be able afterward to get clear of the slavery they were under to him; for he put out the right eyes (1) of those that either delivered themselves to him upon terms, or were taken by him in war; and this he did, that when their left eyes were covered by their shields, they might be wholly useless in war. Now when the king of the Ammonites had served those beyond Jordan in this manner, he led his army against those that were called Gileadites, and having pitched his camp at the metropolis of his enemies, which was the city of Jabesh, he sent ambassadors to them, commanding them either to deliver themselves up, on condition to have their right eyes plucked out, or to undergo a siege, and to have their cities overthrown. He gave them their choice, whether they would cut off a small member of their body, or universally perish. However, the Gileadites were so affrighted at these offers, that they had not courage to say any thing to either of them, neither that they would deliver themselves up, nor that they would fight him. But they desired that he would give them seven days' respite, that they might send ambassadors to their countrymen, and entreat their assistance; and if they came to assist them, they would fight; but if that assistance were impossible to be obtained from them, they said they would deliver themselves up to suffer whatever he pleased to inflict upon them.

2. So Nabash, contemning the multitude of the Gileadites and the answer

they gave, allowed them a respite, and gave them leave to send to whomsoever they pleased for assistance. So they immediately sent to the Israelites, city by city, and informed them what Nabash had threatened to do to them, and what great distress they were in. Now the people fell into tears and grief at the hearing of what the ambassadors from Jabesh said; and the terror they were in permitted them to do nothing more. But when the messengers were come to the city of king Saul, and declared the dangers in which the inhabitants of Jabesh were, the people were in the same affliction as those in the other cities, for they lamented the calamity of those related to them. And when Saul was returned from his husbandry into the city, he found his fellow citizens weeping; and when, upon inquiry, he had learned the cause of the confusion and sadness they were in, he was seized with a divine fury, and sent away the ambassadors from the inhabitants of Jabesh, and promised them to come to their assistance on the third day, and to beat their enemies before sun-rising, that the sun upon its rising might see that they had already conquered, and were freed from the fears they were under: but he bid some of them stay to conduct them the right way to Jabesh.

3. So being desirous to turn the people to this war against the Ammonites by fear of the losses they should otherwise undergo, and that they might the more suddenly be gathered together, he cut the sinews of his oxen, and threatened to do the same to all such as did not come with their armor to Jordan the next day, and follow him and Samuel the prophet whithersoever they should lead them. So they came together, out of fear of the losses they were threatened with, at the appointed time. And the multitude were numbered at the city Bezek. And he found the number of those that were gathered together, besides that of the tribe of Judah, to be seven hundred thousand, while those of that tribe were seventy thousand. So he passed over Jordan, and proceeded in marching all that night, thirty furlongs, and came to Jabesh before sun-rising. So he divided the army into three companies; and fell upon their enemies on every side on the sudden, and when they expected no such thing; and joining battle with them, they

slew a great many of the Ammonites, as also their king Nabash. This glorious action was done by Saul, and was related with great commendation of him to all the Hebrews; and he thence gained a wonderful reputation for his valor: for although there were some of them that contemned him before, they now changed their minds, and honored him, and esteemed him as the best of men: for he did not content himself with having saved the inhabitants of Jabesh only, but he made an expedition into the country of the Ammonites, and laid it all waste, and took a large prey, and so returned to his own country most gloriously. So the people were greatly pleased at these excellent performances of Saul, and rejoiced that they had constituted him their king. They also made a clamor against those that pretended he would be of no advantage to their affairs; and they said, Where now are these men? - let them be brought to punishment, with all the like things that multitudes usually say when they are elevated with prosperity, against those that lately had despised the authors of it. But Saul, although he took the good-will and the affection of these men very kindly, yet did he swear that he would not see any of his countrymen slain that day, since it was absurd to mix this victory, which God had given them, with the blood and slaughter of those that were of the same lineage with themselves; and that it was more agreeable to be men of a friendly disposition, and so to betake themselves to feasting.

4. And when Samuel had told them that he ought to confirm the kingdom to Saul by a second ordination of him, they all came together to the city of Gilgal, for thither did he command them to come. So the prophet anointed Saul with the holy oil in the sight of the multitude, and declared him to be king the second time. And so the government of the Hebrews was changed into a regal government; for in the days of Moses, and his disciple Joshua, who was their general, they continued under an aristocracy; but after the death of Joshua, for eighteen years in all, the multitude had no settled form of government, but were in an anarchy; after which they returned to their former government, they then permitting themselves to be judged by him who appeared to be the best warrior and most courageous, whence it was

that they called this interval of their government the Judges.

5. Then did Samuel the prophet call another assembly also, and said to them," I solemnly adjure you by God Almighty, who brought those excellent brethren, I mean Moses and Aaron, into the world, and delivered our fathers from the Egyptians, and from the slavery. they endured under them, that you will not speak what you say to gratify me, nor suppress any thing out of fear of me, nor be overborne by any other passion, but say, What have I ever done that was cruel or unjust? or what have I done out of lucre or covetousness, or to gratify others? Bear witness against me, if I have taken an ox or a sheep, or any such thing, which yet when they are taken to support men, it is esteemed blameless; or have I taken an ass for mine own use of any one to his grief? - lay some one such crime to my charge, now we are in your king's presence." But they cried out, that no such thing had been done by him, but that he had presided over the nation after a holy and righteous manner.

6. Hereupon Samuel, when such a testimony had been given him by them all, said, "Since you grant that you are not able to lay any ill thing to my charge hitherto, come on now, and do you hearken while I speak with great freedom to you. You have been guilty of great impiety against God, in asking you a king. It behoves you to remember that our grandfather Jacob came down into Egypt, by reason of a famine, with seventy souls only of our family, and that their posterity multiplied there to many ten thousands, whom the Egyptians brought into slavery and hard oppression; that God himself, upon the prayers of our fathers, sent Moses and Aaron, who were brethren, and gave them power to deliver the multitude out of their distress, and this without a king. These brought us into this very land which you now possess: and when you enjoyed these advantages from God, you betrayed his worship and religion; nay, moreover, when you were brought under the hands of your enemies, he delivered you, first by rendering you superior to the Assyrians and their forces, he then made you to overcome the Ammonites and the

Moabites, and last of all the Philistines; and these things have been achieved under the conduct of Jephtha and Gideon. What madness therefore possessed you to fly from God, and to desire to be under a king? - yet have I ordained him for king whom he chose for you. However, that I may make it plain to you that God is angry and displeased at your choice of kingly government, I will so dispose him that he shall declare this very plainly to you by strange signals; for what none of you ever saw here before, I mean a winter storm in the midst of harvest, (2) I will entreat of God, and will make it visible to you." Now, as soon as he had said this, God gave such great signals by thunder and lightning, and the descent of hail, as attested the truth of all that the prophet had said, insomuch that they were amazed and terrified, and confessed they had sinned, and had fallen into that sin through ignorance; and besought the prophet, as one that was a tender and gentle father to them, to render God so merciful as to forgive this their sin, which they had added to those other offenses whereby they had affronted him and transgressed against him. So he promised them that he would beseech God, and persuade him to forgive them these their sins. However, he advised them to be righteous, and to be good, and ever to remember the miseries that had befallen them on account of their departure from virtue: as also to remember the strange signs God had shown them, and the body of laws that Moses had given them, if they had any desire of being preserved and made happy with their king. But he said, that if they should grow careless of these things, great judgments would come from God upon them, and upon their king. And when Samuel had thus prophesied to the Hebrews, he dismissed them to their own homes, having confirmed the kingdom to Saul the second time.

### **Footnotes:**

1. Take here Theodoret's note, cited by Dr. Hudson: - "He that exposes his shield to the enemy with his left hand, thereby hides his left eye, and looks at the enemy with his right eye: he therefore that plucks out that eye, makes men useless in war."

2. Mr. Reland observes here, and proves elsewhere in his note on Antiq. B. III. ch. 1. sect. 6, that although thunder and lightning with us usually happen in summer, yet in Palestine and Syria they are chiefly confined to winter. Josephus takes notice of the same thing again, War, B. IV. ch. 4. sect. 5.



## Chapter 6

### **How the Philistines Were Beaten Again**

1. Now Saul chose out of the multitude about three thousand men, and he took two thousand of them to be the guards of his own body, and abode in the city Bethel, but he gave the rest of them to Jonathan his son, to be the guards of his body; and sent him to Gibeah, where he besieged and took a certain garrison of the Philistines, not far from Gilgal; for the Philistines of Gibeah had beaten the Jews, and taken their weapons away, and had put garrisons into the strongest places of the country, and had forbidden them to carry any instrument of iron, or at all to make use of any iron in any case whatsoever. And on account of this prohibition it was that the husbandmen, if they had occasion to sharpen any of their tools, whether it were the coulter or the spade, or any instrument of husbandry, they came to the Philistines to do it. Now as soon as the Philistines heard of this slaughter of their garrison, they were in a rage about it, and, looking on this contempt as a terrible affront offered them, they made war against the Jews, with three hundred thousand footmen, and thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horses; and they pitched their camp at the city Michmash. When Saul, the king of the Hebrews, was informed of this, he went down to the city Gilgal, and made proclamation over all the country, that they should try to regain their liberty; and called them to the war against the Philistines, diminishing their forces, and despising them as not very considerable, and as not so great but they might hazard a battle with them. But when the people about Saul observed how numerous the Philistines were, they were under a great consternation; and some of them hid themselves in caves and in dens under ground, but the greater part fled into the land beyond Jordan, which belonged to Gad and Reuben.

2. But Saul sent to the prophet, and called him to consult with him about

the war and the public affairs; so he commanded him to stay there for him, and to prepare sacrifices, for he would come to him within seven days, that they might offer sacrifices on the seventh day, and might then join battle with their enemies. So he waited (1) as the prophet sent to him to do; yet did not he, however, observe the command that was given him, but when he saw that the prophet tarried longer than he expected, and that he was deserted by the soldiers, he took the sacrifices and offered them; and when he heard that Samuel was come, he went out to meet him. But the prophet said he had not done well in disobeying the injunctions he had sent to him, and had not staid till his coming, which being appointed according to the will of God, he had prevented him in offering up those prayers and those sacrifices that he should have made for the multitude, and that he therefore had performed Divine offices in an ill manner, and had been rash in performing them. Hereupon Saul made an apology for himself, and said that he had waited as many days as Samuel had appointed him; that he had been so quick in offering his sacrifices, upon account of the necessity he was in, and because his soldiers were departing from him, out of their fear of the enemy's camp at Michmash, the report being gone abroad that they were coming down upon him of Gilgal. To which Samuel replied, "Nay, certainly, if thou hadst been a righteous man, (2) and hadst not disobeyed me, nor slighted the commands which God suggested to me concerning the present state of affairs, and hadst not acted more hastily than the present circumstances required, thou wouldst have been permitted to reign a long time, and thy posterity after thee." So Samuel, being grieved at what happened, returned home; but Saul came to the city Gibeah, with his son Jonathan, having only six hundred men with him; and of these the greater part had no weapons, because of the scarcity of iron in that country, as well as of those that could make such weapons; for, as we showed a little before, the Philistines had not suffered them to have such iron or such workmen. Now the Philistines divided their army into three companies, and took as many roads, and laid waste the country of the Hebrews, while king Saul and his son Jonathan saw what was done, but were not able to defend the land, having no more than six hundred men with them.

But as he, and his son, and Abiah the high priest, who was of the posterity of Eli the high priest, were sitting upon a pretty high hill, and seeing the land laid waste, they were mightily disturbed at it. Now Saul's son agreed with his armor-bearer, that they would go privately to the enemy's camp, and make a tumult and a disturbance among them. And when the armor-bearer had readily promised to follow him whithersoever he should lead him, though he should be obliged to die in the attempt, Jonathan made use of the young man's assistance, and descended from the hill, and went to their enemies. Now the enemy's camp was upon a precipice which had three tops, that ended in a small but sharp and long extremity, while there was a rock that surrounded them, like lines made to prevent the attacks of an enemy. There it so happened, that the out-guards of the camp were neglected, because of the security that here arose from the situation of the place, and because they thought it altogether impossible, not only to ascend up to the camp on that quarter, but so much as to come near it. As soon, therefore, as they came to the camp, Jonathan encouraged his armor-bearer, and said to him, "Let us attack our enemies; and if, when they see us, they bid us come up to them, take that for a signal of victory; but if they say nothing, as not intending to invite us to come up, let us return back again." So when they were approaching to the enemy's camp, just after break of day, and the Philistines saw them, they said one to another, "The Hebrews come out of their dens and caves:" and they said to Jonathan and to his armor-bearer, "Come on, ascend up to us, that we may inflict a just punishment upon you, for your rash attempt upon us." So Saul's son accepted of that invitation, as what signified to him victory, and he immediately came out of the place whence they were seen by their enemies: so he changed his place, and came to the rock, which had none to guard it, because of its own strength; from thence they crept up with great labor and difficulty, and so far overcame by force the nature of the place, till they were able to fight with their enemies. So they fell upon them as they were asleep, and slew about twenty of them, and thereby filled them with disorder and surprise, insomuch that some of them threw away their entire armor and fled; but the greatest part, not knowing

one another, because they were of different nations, suspected one another to be enemies, (for they did not imagine there were only two of the Hebrews that came up,) and so they fought one against another; and some of them died in the battle, and some, as they were flying away, were thrown down from the rock headlong.

3. Now Saul's watchmen told the king that the camp of the Philistines was in confusion; then he inquired whether any body was gone away from the army; and when he heard that his son, and with him his armor-bearer, were absent, he bade the high priest take the garments of his high priesthood, and prophesy to him what success they should have; who said that they should get the victory, and prevail against their enemies. So he went out after the Philistines, and set upon them as they were slaying one another. Those also who had fled to dens and caves, upon hearing that Saul was gaining a victory, came running to him. When, therefore, the number of the Hebrews that came to Saul amounted to about ten thousand, he pursued the enemy, who were scattered all over the country; but then he fell into an action, which was a very unhappy one, and liable to be very much blamed; for, whether out of ignorance or whether out of joy for a victory gained so strangely, (for it frequently happens that persons so fortunate are not then able to use their reason consistently,) as he was desirous to avenge himself, and to exact a due punishment of the Philistines, he denounced a curse (3) upon the Hebrews: That if any one put a stop to his slaughter of the enemy, and fell on eating, and left off the slaughter or the pursuit before the night came on, and obliged them so to do, he should be accursed. Now after Saul had denounced this curse, since they were now in a wood belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, which was thick and full of bees, Saul's son, who did not hear his father denounce that curse, nor hear of the approbation the multitude gave to it, broke off a piece of a honey-comb, and ate part of it. But, in the mean time, he was informed with what a curse his father had forbidden them to taste any thing before sun-setting: so he left off eating, and said his father had not done well in this prohibition, because, had they taken some food, they had

pursued the enemy with greater rigor and alacrity, and had both taken and slain many more of their enemies.

4. When, therefore, they had slain many ten thousands of the Philistines, they fell upon spoiling the camp of the Philistines, but not till late in the evening. They also took a great deal of prey and cattle, and killed them, and ate them with their blood. This was told to the king by the scribes, that the multitude were sinning against God as they sacrificed, and were eating before the blood was well washed away, and the flesh was made clean. Then did Saul give order that a great stone should be rolled into the midst of them, and he made proclamation that they should kill their sacrifices upon it, and not feed upon the flesh with the blood, for that was not acceptable to God. And when all the people did as the king commanded them, Saul erected an altar there, and offered burnt-offerings upon it to God (4) This was the first altar that Saul built.

5. So when Saul was desirous of leading his men to the enemy's camp before it was day, in order to plunder it, and when the soldiers were not unwilling to follow him, but indeed showed great readiness to do as he commanded them, the king called Ahitub the high priest, and enjoined him to know of God whether he would grant them the favor and permission to go against the enemy's camp, in order to destroy those that were in it. And when the priest said that God did not give any answer, Saul replied, "And not without some cause does God refuse to answer what we inquire of him, while yet a little while ago he declared to us all that we desired beforehand, and even prevented us in his answer. To be sure there is some sin against him that is concealed from us, which is the occasion of his silence. Now I swear by him himself, that though he that hath committed this sin should prove to be my own son Jonathan, I will slay him, and by that means will appease the anger of God against us, and that in the very same manner as if I were to punish a stranger, and one not at all related to me, for the same offense." So when the multitude cried out to him so to do, he presently set all the rest on

one side, and he and his son stood on the other side, and he sought to discover the offender by lot. Now the lot appeared to fall upon Jonathan himself. So when he was asked by his father what sin he had been guilty of, and what he was conscious of in the course of his life that might be esteemed instances of guilt or profaneness, his answer was this, "O father, I have done nothing more than that yesterday, without knowing of the curse and oath thou hadst denounced, while I was in pursuit of the enemy, I tasted of a honey-comb." But Saul swore that he would slay him, and prefer the observation of his oath before all the ties of birth and of nature. And Jonathan was not dismayed at this threatening of death, but, offering himself to it generously and undauntedly, he said, "Nor do I desire you, father, to spare me: death will be to me very acceptable, when it proceeds from thy piety, and after a glorious victory; for it is the greatest consolation to me that I leave the Hebrews victorious over the Philistines." Hereupon all the people were very sorry, and greatly afflicted for Jonathan; and they swore that they would not overlook Jonathan, and see him die, who was the author of their victory. By which means they snatched him out of the danger he was in from his father's curse, while they made their prayers to God also for the young man, that he would remit his sin.

6. So Saul, having slain about sixty thousand of the enemy, returned home to his own city, and reigned happily: and he also fought against the neighboring nations, and subdued the Ammonites, and Moabites, and Philistines, and Edomites, and Amalekites, as also the king of Zobah. He had three male children, Jonathan, and Isui, and Melchishua; with Merab and Michal his daughters. He had also Abner, his uncle's son, for the captain of his host: that uncle's name was Ner. Now Ner, and Kish the father of Saul, were brothers. Saul had also a great many chariots and horsemen, and against whomsoever he made war he returned conqueror, and advanced the affairs of the Hebrews to a great degree of success and prosperity, and made them superior to other nations; and he made such of the young men as were remarkable for tallness and comeliness the guards of his body.

## Footnotes:

1. Saul seems to have staid till near the time of the evening sacrifice, on the seventh day, which Samuel the prophet of God had appointed him, but not till the end of that day, as he ought to have done; and Samuel appears, by delaying to come to the full time of the evening sacrifice on that seventh day, to have tried him (who seems to have been already for some time declining from his strict and bounden subordination to God and his prophet; to have taken life-guards for himself and his son, which was entirely a new thing in Israel, and savored of a distrust of God's providence; and to have affected more than he ought that independent authority which the pagan kings took to themselves); Samuel, I say, seems to have here tried Saul whether he would stay till the priest came, who alone could lawfully offer the sacrifices, nor would boldly and profanely usurp the priest's office, which he venturing upon, was justly rejected for his profaneness. See Apost. Constit. B. II. ch. 27. And, indeed, since Saul had accepted kingly power, which naturally becomes ungovernable and tyrannical, as God foretold, and the experience of all ages has shown, the Divine settlement by Moses had soon been laid aside under the kings, had not God, by keeping strictly to his laws, and severely executing the threatenings therein contained, restrained Saul and other kings in some degree of obedience to himself; nor was even this severity sufficient to restrain most of the future kings of Israel and Judah from the grossest idolatry and impiety. Of the advantage of which strictness, in the observing Divine laws, and inflicting their threatened penalties, see Antiq. B. VI. ch. 12. sect. 7; and Against Apion, B. II. sect. 30, where Josephus speaks of that matter; though it must be noted that it seems, at least in three instances, that good men did not always immediately approve of such Divine severity. There seems to be one instance, 1 Samuel 6:19, 20; another, 1 Samuel 15:11; and a third, 2 Samuel 6:8, 9; Antiq. B. VI. ch. 7. sect. 2; though they all at last

acquiesced in the Divine conduct, as knowing that God is wiser than men.

2. By this answer of Samuel, and that from a Divine commission, which is fuller in 1 Samuel 13:14, and by that parallel note in the Apostolical Constitutions just now quoted, concerning the great wickedness of Saul in venturing, even under a seeming necessity of affairs, to usurp the priest's office, and offer sacrifice without the priest, we are in some degree able to answer that question, which I have ever thought a very hard one, viz. Whether, if there were a city or country of lay Christians without any clergymen, it were lawful for the laity alone to baptize, or celebrate the eucharist, etc., or indeed whether they alone could ordain themselves either bishops, priests, or deacons, for the due performance of such sacerdotal ministrations; or whether they ought not rather, till they procure clergymen to come among them, to confine themselves within those bounds of piety and Christianity which belong alone to the laity; such particularly as are recommended in the first book of the Apostolical Constitutions, which peculiarly concern the laity, and are intimated in Clement's undoubted epistle, sect. 40. To which latter opinion I incline.
3. This rash vow or curse of Saul, which Josephus says was confirmed by the people, and yet not executed, I suppose principally because Jonathan did not know of it, is very remarkable; it being of the essence of the obligation of all laws, that they be sufficiently known and promulgated, otherwise the conduct of Providence, as to the sacredness of solemn oaths and vows, in God's refusing to answer by Urim till this breach of Saul's vow or curse was understood and set right, and God propitiated by public prayer, is here very remarkable, as indeed it is every where else in the Old Testament.
4. Here we have still more indications of Saul's affectation of despotic power, and of his entrenching upon the priesthood, and making and endeavoring to execute a rash vow or curse, without consulting Samuel or the sanhedrim. In this view it is also that I look upon this erection of a



new altar by Saul, and his offering of burnt-offerings himself upon it, and not as any proper instance of devotion or religion, with other commentators.

## Chapter 7

### **Saul's Conquest of the Amalekites**

1. Now Samuel came unto Saul, and said to him, that he was sent by God to put him in mind that God had preferred him before all others, and ordained him king; that he therefore ought to be obedient to him, and to submit to his authority, as considering, that though he had the dominion over the other tribes, yet that God had the dominion over him, and over all things. That accordingly God said to him, that "because the Amalekites did the Hebrews a great deal of mischief while they were in the wilderness, and when, upon their coming out of Egypt, they were making their way to that country which is now their own, I enjoin thee to punish the Amalekites, by making war upon them; and when thou hast subdued them, to leave none of them alive, but to pursue them through every age, and to slay them, beginning with the women and the infants, and to require this as a punishment to be inflicted upon them for the mischief they did to our forefathers; to spare nothing, neither asses nor other beasts, nor to reserve any of them for your own advantage and possession, but to devote them universally to God, and, in obedience to the commands of Moses, to blot out the name of Amalek entirely." (1)

2. So Saul promised to do what he was commanded; and supposing that his obedience to God would be shown, not only in making war against the Amalekites, but more fully in the readiness and quickness of his proceedings, he made no delay, but immediately gathered together all his forces; and when he had numbered them in Gilgal, he found them to be about four hundred thousand of the Israelites, besides the tribe of Judah, for that tribe contained by itself thirty thousand. Accordingly, Saul made an irruption into the country of the Amalekites, and set many men in several parties in ambush at the river, that so he might not only do them a mischief by open

fighting, but might fall upon them unexpectedly in the ways, and might thereby compass them round about, and kill them. And when he had joined battle with the enemy, he beat them; and pursuing them as they fled, he destroyed them all. And when that undertaking had succeeded, according as God had foretold, he set upon the cities of the Amalekites; he besieged them, and took them by force, partly by warlike machines, partly by mines dug under ground, and partly by building walls on the outsides. Some they starved out with famine, and some they gained by other methods; and after all, he betook himself to slay the women and the children, and thought he did not act therein either barbarously or inhumanly; first, because they were enemies whom he thus treated, and, in the next place, because it was done by the command of God, whom it was dangerous not to obey. He also took Agag, the enemies' king, captive, - the beauty and tallness of whose body he admired so much, that he thought him worthy of preservation. Yet was not this done however according to the will of God, but by giving way to human passions, and suffering himself to be moved with an unseasonable commiseration, in a point where it was not safe for him to indulge it; for God hated the nation of the Amalekites to such a degree, that he commanded Saul to have no pity on even those infants which we by nature chiefly compassionate; but Saul preserved their king and governor from the miseries which the Hebrews brought on the people, as if he preferred the fine appearance of the enemy to the memory of what God had sent him about. The multitude were also guilty, together with Saul; for they spared the herds and the flocks, and took them for a prey, when God had commanded they should not spare them. They also carried off with them the rest of their wealth and riches; but if there were any thing that was not worthy of regard, that they destroyed.

3. But when Saul had conquered all these Amalekites that reached from Pelusium of Egypt to the Red Sea, he laid waste all the rest of the enemy's country: but for the nation of the Shechemites, he did not touch them, although they dwelt in the very middle of the country of Midian; for before

the battle, Saul had sent to them, and charged them to depart thence, lest they should be partakers of the miseries of the Amalekites; for he had a just occasion for saving them, since they were of the kindred of Raguel, Moses's father-in-law.

4. Hereupon Saul returned home with joy, for the glorious things he had done, and for the conquest of his enemies, as though he had not neglected any thing which the prophet had enjoined him to do when he was going to make war with the Amalekites, and as though he had exactly observed all that he ought to have done. But God was grieved that the king of the Amalekites was preserved alive, and that the multitude had seized on the cattle for a prey, because these things were done without his permission; for he thought it an intolerable thing that they should conquer and overcome their enemies by that power which he gave them, and then that he himself should be so grossly despised and disobeyed by them, that a mere man that was a king would not bear it. He therefore told Samuel the prophet, that he repented that he had made Saul king, while he did nothing that he had commanded him, but indulged his own inclinations. When Samuel heard that, he was in confusion, and began to beseech God all that night to be reconciled to Saul, and not to be angry with him; but he did not grant that forgiveness to Saul which the prophet asked for, as not deeming it a fit thing to grant forgiveness of [such] sins at his entreaties, since injuries do not otherwise grow so great as by the easy tempers of those that are injured; or while they hunt after the glory of being thought gentle and good-natured, before they are aware they produce other sins. As soon therefore as God had rejected the intercession of the prophet, and it plainly appeared he would not change his mind, at break of day Samuel came to Saul at Gilgal. When the king saw him, he ran to him, and embraced him, and said, "I return thanks to God, who hath given me the victory, for I have performed every thing that he hath commanded me." To which Samuel replied, "How is it then that I hear the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the greater cattle in the camp?" Saul made answer, That the people had reserved them for sacrifices; but that,

as to the nation of the Amalekites, it was entirely destroyed, as he had received it in command to see done, and that no one man was left; but that he had saved alive the king alone, and brought him to him, concerning whom, he said, they would advise together what should be done with him." But the prophet said, "God is not delighted with sacrifices, but with good and with righteous men, who are such as follow his will and his laws, and never think that any thing is well done by them but when they do it as God had commanded them; that he then looks upon himself as affronted, not when any one does not sacrifice, but when any one appears to be disobedient to him. But that from those who do not obey him, nor pay him that duty which is the alone true and acceptable worship, he will not kindly accept their oblations, be those they offer ever so many and so fat, and be the presents they make him ever so ornamental, nay, though they were made of gold and silver themselves, but he will reject them, and esteem them instances of wickedness, and not of piety. And that he is delighted with those that still bear in mind this one thing, and this only, how to do that, whatsoever it be, which God pronounces or commands for them to do, and to choose rather to die than to transgress any of those commands; nor does he require so much as a sacrifice from them. And when these do sacrifice, though it be a mean oblation, he better accepts of it as the honor of poverty, than such oblations as come from the richest men that offer them to him. Wherefore take notice, that thou art under the wrath of God, for thou hast despised and neglected what he commanded thee. How dost thou then suppose that he will respect a sacrifice out of such things as he hath doomed to destruction? unless perhaps thou dost imagine that it is almost all one to offer it in sacrifice to God as to destroy it. Do thou therefore expect that thy kingdom will be taken from thee, and that authority which thou hast abused by such insolent behavior, as to neglect that God who bestowed it upon thee." Then did Saul confess that he had acted unjustly, and did not deny that he had sinned, because he had transgressed the injunctions of the prophet; but he said that it was out of a dread and fear of the soldiers, that he did not prohibit and restrain them when they seized on the prey. "But forgive me," said he, "and be merciful to me,

for I will be cautious how I offend for the time to come." He also entreated the prophet to go back with him, that he might offer his thank-offerings to God; but Samuel went home, because he saw that God would not be reconciled to him.

5. But then Saul was so desirous to retain Samuel, that he took hold of his cloak, and because the vehemence of Samuel's departure made the motion to be violent, the cloak was rent. Upon which the prophet said, that after the same manner should the kingdom be rent from him, and that a good and a just man should take it; that God persevered in what he had decreed about him; that to be mutable and changeable in what is determined, is agreeable to human passions only, but is not agreeable to the Divine Power. Hereupon Saul said that he had been wicked, but that what was done could not be undone: he therefore desired him to honor him so far, that the multitude might see that he would accompany him in worshipping God. So Samuel granted him that favor, and went with him and worshipped God. Agag also, the king of the Amalekites, was brought to him; and when the king asked, How bitter death was? Samuel said, "As thou hast made many of the Hebrew mothers to lament and bewail the loss of their children, so shalt thou, by thy death, cause thy mother to lament thee also." Accordingly, he gave order to slay him immediately at Gilgal, and then went away to the city Ramah.

#### **Footnote:**

1. The reason of this severity is distinctly given, 1 Samuel 15:18, "Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites:" nor indeed do we ever meet with these Amalekites but as very cruel and bloody people, and particularly seeking to injure and utterly to destroy the nation of Israel. See Exodus 17:8-16; Numbers 14:45; Deuteronomy 25:17-19; Judges 6:3, 6; 1 Samuel 15:33; Psalms 83:7; and, above all, the most barbarous of all cruelties, that of Haman the Agagite, or one of the posterity of

Agag, the old king of the Amalekites, Esther 3:1-15.

## Chapter 8

### **Samuel Ordained David to Be King**

1. Now Saul being sensible of the miserable condition he had brought himself into, and that he had made God to be his enemy, he went up to his royal palace at Gibeah, which name denotes a hill, and after that day he came no more into the presence of the prophet. And when Samuel mourned for him, God bid him leave off his concern for him, and to take the holy oil, and go to Bethlehem, to Jesse the son of Obed, and to anoint such of his sons as he should show him for their future king. But Samuel said, he was afraid lest Saul, when he came to know of it, should kill him, either by some private method or even openly. But upon God's suggesting to him a safe way of going thither, he came to the forementioned city; and when they all saluted him, and asked what was the occasion of his coming, he told them he came to sacrifice to God. When, therefore, he had gotten the sacrifice ready, he called Jesse and his sons to partake of those sacrifices; and when he saw his eldest son to be a tall and handsome man, he guessed by his comeliness that he was the person who was to be their future king. But he was mistaken in judging about God's providence; for when Samuel inquired of God whether he should anoint this youth, whom he so admired, and esteemed worthy of the kingdom, God said, "Men do not see as God seeth. Thou indeed hast respect to the fine appearance of this youth, and thence esteemest him worthy of the kingdom, while I propose the kingdom as a reward, not of the beauty of bodies, but of the virtue of souls, and I inquire after one that is perfectly comely in that respect; I mean one who is beautiful in piety, and righteousness, and fortitude, and obedience, for in them consists the comeliness of the soul." When God had said this, Samuel bade Jesse to show him all his sons. So he made five others of his sons to come to him; of all of whom Eliab was the eldest, Aminadab the second, Shammall the third, Nathaniel the fourth, Rael the fifth, and Asam the sixth. And when the



prophet saw that these were no way inferior to the eldest in their countenances, he inquired of God which of them it was whom he chose for their king. And when God said it was none of them, he asked Jesse whether he had not some other sons besides these; and when he said that he had one more, named David, but that he was a shepherd, and took care of the flocks, Samuel bade them call him immediately, for that till he was come they could not possibly sit down to the feast. Now, as soon as his father had sent for David, and he was come, he appeared to be of a yellow complexion, of a sharp sight, and a comely person in other respects also. This is he, said Samuel privately to himself, whom it pleases God to make our king. So he sat down to the feast, and placed the youth under him, and Jesse also, with his other sons; after which he took oil in the presence of David, and anointed him, and whispered him in the ear, and acquainted him that God chose him to be their king; and exhorted him to be righteous, and obedient to his commands, for that by this means his kingdom would continue for a long time, and that his house should be of great splendor, and celebrated in the world; that he should overthrow the Philistines; and that against what nations soever he should make war, he should be the conqueror, and survive the fight; and that while he lived he should enjoy a glorious name, and leave such a name to his posterity also.

2. So Samuel, when he had given him these admonitions, went away. But the Divine Power departed from Saul, and removed to David; who, upon this removal of the Divine Spirit to him, began to prophesy. But as for Saul, some strange and demoniacal disorders came upon him, and brought upon him such suffocations as were ready to choke him; for which the physicians could find no other remedy but this, That if any person could charm those passions by singing, and playing upon the harp, they advised them to inquire for such a one, and to observe when these demons came upon him and disturbed him, and to take care that such a person might stand over him, and play upon the harp, and recite hymns to him. (1) Accordingly Saul did not delay, but commanded them to seek out such a man. And when a certain

stander-by said that he had seen in the city of Bethlehem a son of Jesse, who was yet no more than a child in age, but comely and beautiful, and in other respects one that was deserving of great regard, who was skillful in playing on the harp, and in singing of hymns, [and an excellent soldier in war,] he sent to Jesse, and desired him to take David away from the flocks, and send him to him, for he had a mind to see him, as having heard an advantageous character of his comeliness and his valor. So Jesse sent his son, and gave him presents to carry to Saul. And when he was come, Saul was pleased with him, and made him his armor-bearer, and had him in very great esteem; for he charmed his passion, and was the only physician against the trouble he had from the demons, whensoever it was that it came upon him, and this by reciting of hymns, and playing upon the harp, and bringing Saul to his right mind again. However, he sent to Jesse, the father of the child, and desired him to permit David to stay with him, for that he was delighted with his sight and company; which stay, that he might not contradict Saul, he granted.

**Footnote:**

1. Spanheim takes notice here that the Greeks had such singers of hymns; and that usually children or youths were picked out for that service; as also, that those called singers to the harp, did the same that David did here, i.e. join their own vocal and instrumental music together.

## Chapter 9

### David's Slaying Goliath

1. Now the Philistines gathered themselves together again no very long time afterward; and having gotten together a great army, they made war against the Israelites; and having seized a place between Shochoh and Azekah, they there pitched their camp. Saul also drew out his army to oppose them; and by pitching his own camp on a certain hill, he forced the Philistines to leave their former camp, and to encamp themselves upon such another hill, over-against that on which Saul's army lay, so that a valley, which was between the two hills on which they lay, divided their camps asunder. Now there came down a man out of the camp of the Philistines, whose name was Goliath, of the city of Gath, a man of vast bulk, for he was of four cubits and a span in tallness, and had about him weapons suitable to the largeness of his body, for he had a breastplate on that weighed five thousand shekels: he had also a helmet and greaves of brass, as large as you would naturally suppose might cover the limbs of so vast a body. His spear was also such as was not carried like a light thing in his right hand, but he carried it as lying on his shoulders. He had also a lance of six hundred shekels; and many followed him to carry his armor. Wherefore this Goliath stood between the two armies, as they were in battle array, and sent out aloud voice, and said to Saul and the Hebrews, "I will free you from fighting and from dangers; for what necessity is there that your army should fall and be afflicted? Give me a man of you that will fight with me, and he that conquers shall have the reward of the conqueror and determine the war; for these shall serve those others to whom the conqueror shall belong; and certainly it is much better, and more prudent, to gain what you desire by the hazard of one man than of all." When he had said this, he retired to his own camp; but the next day he came again, and used the same words, and did not leave off for forty days together, to challenge the enemy in the same words, till Saul and

his army were therewith terrified, while they put themselves in array as if they would fight, but did not come to a close battle.

2. Now while this war between the Hebrews and the Philistines was going on, Saul sent away David to his father Jesse, and contented himself with those three sons of his whom he had sent to his assistance, and to be partners in the dangers of the war: and at first David returned to feed his sheep and his flocks; but after no long time he came to the camp of the Hebrews, as sent by his father, to carry provisions to his brethren, and to know what they were doing. While Goliath came again, and challenged them, and reproached them, that they had no man of valor among them that durst come down to fight him; and as David was talking with his brethren about the business for which his father had sent him, he heard the Philistine reproaching and abusing the army, and had indignation at it, and said to his brethren, "I am ready to fight a single combat with this adversary." Whereupon Eliab, his eldest brother, reprov'd him, and said that he spoke too rashly and improperly for one of his age, and bid him go to his flocks, and to his father. So he was abashed at his brother's words, and went away, but still he spake to some of the soldiers that he was willing to fight with him that challenged them. And when they had informed Saul what was the resolution of the young man, the king sent for him to come to him: and when the king asked what he had to say, he replied, "O king, be not cast down, nor afraid, for I will depress the insolence of this adversary, and will go down and fight with him, and will bring him under me, as tall and as great as he is, till he shall be sufficiently laughed at, and thy army shall get great glory, when he shall be slain by one that is not yet of man's estate, neither fit for fighting, nor capable of being intrusted with the marshalling an army, or ordering a battle, but by one that looks like a child, and is really no elder in age than a child."

3. Now Saul wondered at the boldness and alacrity of David, but durst not presume on his ability, by reason of his age; but said he must on that

account be too weak to fight with one that was skilled in the art of war. "I undertake this enterprise," said David, "in dependence on God's being with me, for I have had experience already of his assistance; for I once pursued after and caught a lion that assaulted my flocks, and took away a lamb from them; and I snatched the lamb out of the wild beast's mouth, and when he leaped upon me with violence, I took him by the tail, and dashed him against the ground. In the same manner did I avenge myself on a bear also; and let this adversary of ours be esteemed like one of these wild beasts, since he has a long while reproached our army, and blasphemed our God, who yet will reduce him under my power."

4. However, Saul prayed that the end might be, by God's assistance, not disagreeable to the alacrity and boldness of the child; and said, "Go thy way to the fight." So he put about him his breastplate, and girded on his sword, and fitted the helmet to his head, and sent him away. But David was burdened with his armor, for he had not been exercised to it, nor had he learned to walk with it; so he said, "Let this armor be thine, O king, who art able to bear it; but give me leave to fight as thy servant, and as I myself desire." Accordingly he laid by the armor, and taking his staff with him, and putting five stones out of the brook into a shepherd's bag, and having a sling in his right hand, he went towards Goliath. But the adversary seeing him come in such a manner, disdained him, and jested upon him, as if he had not such weapons with him as are usual when one man fights against another, but such as are used in driving away and avoiding of dogs; and said, "Dost thou take me not for a man, but a dog?" To which he replied, "No, not for a dog, but for a creature worse than a dog." This provoked Goliath to anger, who thereupon cursed him by the name of God, and threatened to give his flesh to the beasts of the earth, and to the fowls of the air, to be torn in pieces by them. To whom David answered, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a breastplate; but I have God for my armor in coming against thee, who will destroy thee and all thy army by my hands for I will this day cut off thy head, and cast the other parts of thy body to the dogs, and

all men shall learn that God is the protector of the Hebrews, and that our armor and our strength is in his providence; and that without God's assistance, all other warlike preparations and power are useless." So the Philistine being retarded by the weight of his armor, when he attempted to meet David in haste, came on but slowly, as despising him, and depending upon it that he should slay him, who was both unarmed and a child also, without any trouble at all.

5. But the youth met his antagonist, being accompanied with an invisible assistant, who was no other than God himself. And taking one of the stones that he had out of the brook, and had put into his shepherd's bag, and fitting it to his sling, he slang it against the Philistine. This stone fell upon his forehead, and sank into his brain, insomuch that Goliath was stunned, and fell upon his face. So David ran, and stood upon his adversary as he lay down, and cut off his head with his own sword; for he had no sword himself. And upon the fall of Goliath the Philistines were beaten, and fled; for when they saw their champion prostrate on the ground, they were afraid of the entire issue of their affairs, and resolved not to stay any longer, but committed themselves to an ignominious and indecent flight, and thereby endeavored to save themselves from the dangers they were in. But Saul and the entire army of the Hebrews made a shout, and rushed upon them, and slew a great number of them, and pursued the rest to the borders of Garb, and to the gates of Ekron; so that there were slain of the Philistines thirty thousand, and twice as many wounded. But Saul returned to their camp, and pulled their fortification to pieces, and burnt it; but David carried the head of Goliath into his own tent, but dedicated his sword to God [at the tabernacle].

## Chapter 10

### **Saul Promised to David of Giving Him His Daughter In Marriage**

1. Now the women were an occasion of Saul's envy and hatred to David; for they came to meet their victorious army with cymbals, and drums, and all demonstrations of joy, and sang thus: The wives said, that "Saul had slain his many thousands of the Philistines." The virgins replied, that "David had slain his ten thousands." Now, when the king heard them singing thus, and that he had himself the smallest share in their commendations, and the greater number, the ten thousands, were ascribed to the young man; and when he considered with himself that there was nothing more wanting to David, after such a mighty applause, but the kingdom; he began to be afraid and suspicious of David. Accordingly he removed him from the station he was in before, for he was his armor-bearer, which, out of fear, seemed to him much too near a station for him; and so he made him captain over a thousand, and bestowed on him a post better indeed in itself, but, as he thought, more for his own security; for he had a mind to send him against the enemy, and into battles, as hoping he would be slain in such dangerous conflicts.

2. But David had God going along with him whithersoever he went, and accordingly he greatly prospered in his undertakings, and it was visible that he had mighty success, insomuch that Saul's daughter, who was still a virgin, fell in love with him; and her affection so far prevailed over her, that it could not be concealed, and her father became acquainted with it. Now Saul heard this gladly, as intending to make use of it for a snare against David, and he hoped that it would prove the cause of destruction and of hazard to him; so he told those that informed him of his daughter's affection, that he would willingly give David the virgin in marriage, and said, "I engage myself to marry my daughter to him if he will bring me six hundred heads of my

enemies (1) supposing that when a reward so ample was proposed to him, and when he should aim to get him great glory, by undertaking a thing so dangerous and incredible, he would immediately set about it, and so perish by the Philistines; and my designs about him will succeed finely to my mind, for I shall be freed from him, and get him slain, not by myself, but by another man." So he gave order to his servants to try how David would relish this proposal of marrying the damsel. Accordingly, they began to speak thus to him: That king Saul loved him, as well as did all the people, and that he was desirous of his affinity by the marriage of this damsel. To which he gave this answer: - "Seemeth it to you a light thing to be made the king's son-in-law? It does not seem so to me, especially when I am one of a family that is low, and without any glory or honor." Now when Saul was informed by his servants what answer David had made, he said, - "Tell him that I do not want any money nor dowry from him, which would be rather to set my daughter to sale than to give her in marriage; but I desire only such a son-in-law as hath in him fortitude, and all other kinds of virtue," of which he saw David was possessed, and that his desire was to receive of him, on account of his marrying his daughter, neither gold nor silver, nor that he should bring such wealth out of his father's house, but only some revenge on the Philistines, and indeed six hundred of their heads, than which a more desirable or a more glorious present could not be brought him, and that he had much rather obtain this, than any of the accustomed dowries for his daughter, viz. that she should be married to a man of that character, and to one who had a testimony as having conquered his enemies.

3. When these words of Saul were brought to David, he was pleased with them, and supposed that Saul was really desirous of this affinity with him; so that without bearing to deliberate any longer, or casting about in his mind whether what was proposed was possible, or was difficult or not, he and his companions immediately set upon the enemy, and went about doing what was proposed as the condition of the marriage. Accordingly, because it was God who made all things easy and possible to David, he slew many [of



the Philistines], and cut off the heads of six hundred of them, and came to the king, and by showing him these heads of the Philistines, required that he might have his daughter in marriage. Accordingly, Saul having no way of getting off his engagements, as thinking it a base thing either to seem a liar when he promised him this marriage, or to appear to have acted treacherously by him, in putting him upon what was in a manner impossible, in order to have him slain, he gave him his daughter in marriage: her name was Michal.

**Footnote:**

1. Josephus says thrice in this chapter, and twice afterwards, ch. 11. sect. 2, and B. VII. ch. 1. sect. 4, i.e. five times in all, that Saul required not a bare hundred of the foreskins of the Philistines, but six hundred of their heads. The Septuagint have 100 foreskins, but the Syriac and Arabic 200. Now that these were not foreskins, with our other copies, but heads, with Josephus's copy, seems somewhat probable, from 1 Samuel 29:4, where all copies say that it was with the heads of such Philistines that David might reconcile himself to his master, Saul.

## Chapter 11

### **The Affection and Care of Jonathan unto David**

1. However, Saul was not disposed to persevere long in the state wherein he was, for when he saw that David was in great esteem, both with God and with the multitude, he was afraid; and being not able to conceal his fear as concerning great things, his kingdom and his life, to be deprived of either of which was a very great calamity, he resolved to have David slain, and commanded his son Jonathan and his most faithful servants to kill him: but Jonathan wondered at his father's change with relation to David, that it should be made to so great a degree, from showing him no small good-will, to contrive how to have him killed. Now, because he loved the young man, and revered him for his virtue, he informed him of the secret charge his father had given, and what his intentions were concerning him. However, he advised him to take care and be absent the next day, for that he would salute his father, and, if he met with a favorable opportunity, he would discourse with him about him, and learn the cause of his disgust, and show how little ground there was for it, and that for it he ought not to kill a man that had done so many good things to the multitude, and had been a benefactor to himself, on account of which he ought in reason to obtain pardon, had he been guilty of the greatest crimes; and "I will then inform thee of my father's resolution." Accordingly David complied with such an advantageous advice, and kept himself then out of the king's sight.

2. On the next day Jonathan came to Saul, as soon as he saw him in a cheerful and joyful disposition, and began to introduce a discourse about David: "What unjust action, O father, either little or great, hast thou found so exceptionable in David, as to induce thee to order us to slay a man who hath been of great advantage to thy own preservation, and of still greater to the punishment of the Philistines? A man who hath delivered the people of the

Hebrews from reproach and derision, which they underwent for forty days together, when he alone had courage enough to sustain the challenge of the adversary, and after that brought as many heads of our enemies as he was appointed to bring, and had, as a reward for the same, my sister in marriage; insomuch that his death would be very sorrowful to us, not only on account of his virtue, but on account of the nearness of our relation; for thy daughter must be injured at the same time that he is slain, and must be obliged to experience widowhood, before she can come to enjoy any advantage from their mutual conversation. Consider these things, and change your mind to a more merciful temper, and do no mischief to a man, who, in the first place, hath done us the greatest kindness of preserving thee; for when an evil spirit and demons had seized upon thee, he cast them out, and procured rest to thy soul from their incursions: and, in the second place, hath avenged us of our enemies; for it is a base thing to forget such benefits." So Saul was pacified with these words, and swore to his son that he would do David no harm, for a righteous discourse proved too hard for the king's anger and fear. So Jonathan sent for David, and brought him good news from his father, that he was to be preserved. He also brought him to his father; and David continued with the king as formerly.

3. About this time it was that, upon the Philistines making a new expedition against the Hebrews, Saul sent David with an army to fight with them; and joining battle with them he slew many of them, and after his victory he returned to the king. But his reception by Saul was not as he expected upon such success, for he was grieved at his prosperity, because he thought he would be more dangerous to him by having acted so gloriously: but when the demoniacal spirit came upon him, and put him into disorder, and disturbed him, he called for David into his bed-chamber wherein he lay, and having a spear in his hand, he ordered him to charm him with playing on his harp, and with singing hymns; which when David did at his command, he with great force threw the spear at him; but David was aware of it before it came, and avoided it, and fled to his own house, and abode there all that day.

4. But at night the king sent officers, and commanded that he should be watched till the morning, lest he should get quite away, that he might come into the judgment-hall, and so might be delivered up, and condemned and slain. But when Michal, David's wife, the king's daughter, understood what her father designed, she came to her husband, as having small hopes of his deliverance, and as greatly concerned about her own life also, for she could not bear to live in case she were deprived of him; and she said, "Let not the sun find thee here when it rises, for if it do, that will be the last time it will see thee: fly away then while the night may afford thee opportunity, and may God lengthen it for thy sake; for know this, that if my father find thee, thou art a dead man." So she let him down by a cord out of the window, and saved him: and after she had done so, she fitted up a bed for him as if he were sick, and put under the bed-clothes a goat's liver (1) and when her father, as soon as it was day, sent to seize David, she said to those that were there, That he had not been well that night, and showed them the bed covered, and made them believe, by the leaping of the liver, which caused the bed-clothes to move also, that David breathed like one that was asthmatic. So when those that were sent told Saul that David had not been well in the night he ordered him to be brought in that condition, for he intended to kill him. Now when they came and uncovered the bed, and found out the woman's contrivance, they told it to the king; and when her father complained of her that she had saved his enemy, and had put a trick upon himself, she invented this plausible defense for herself, and said, That when he had threatened to kill her, she lent him her assistance for his preservation, out of fear; for which her assistance she ought to be forgiven, because it was not done of her own free choice, but out of necessity: "For," said she, "I do not suppose that thou wast so zealous to kill thy enemy, as thou wast that I should be saved." Accordingly Saul forgave the damsel; but David, when he had escaped this danger, came to the prophet Samuel to Ramah, and told him what snares the king had laid for him, and how he was very near to death by Saul's throwing a spear at him, although he had been no way guilty with relation to him, nor

had he been cowardly in his battles with his enemies, but had succeeded well in them all, by God's assistance; which thing was indeed the cause of Saul's hatred to David.

5. When the prophet was made acquainted with the unjust proceedings of the king, he left the city Ramah, and took David with him, to a certain place called Naioth, and there he abode with him. But when it was told Saul that David was with the prophet, he sent soldiers to him, and ordered them to take him, and bring him to him: and when they came to Samuel, and found there a congregation of prophets, they became partakers of the Divine Spirit, and began to prophesy; which when Saul heard of, he sent others to David, who prophesying in like manner as did the first, he again sent others; which third sort prophesying also, at last he was angry, and went thither in great haste himself; and when he was just by the place, Samuel, before he saw him, made him prophesy also. And when Saul came to him, he was disordered in mind (2) and under the vehement agitation of a spirit; and, putting off his garments, (3) he fell down, and lay on the ground all that day and night, in the presence of Samuel and David.

6. And David went thence, and came to Jonathan, the son of Saul, and lamented to him what snares were laid for him by his father; and said, that though he had been guilty of no evil, nor had offended against him, yet he was very zealous to get him killed. Hereupon Jonathan exhorted him not to give credit to such his own suspicions, nor to the calumnies of those that raised those reports, if there were any that did so, but to depend on him, and take courage; for that his father had no such intention, since he would have acquainted him with that matter, and have taken his advice, had it been so, as he used to consult with him in common when he acted in other affairs. But David swore to him that so it was; and he desired him rather to believe him, and to provide for his safety, than to despise what he, with great sincerity, told him: that he would believe what he said, when he should either see him killed himself, or learn it upon inquiry from others: and that the reason why

his father did not tell him of these things, was this, that he knew of the friendship and affection that he bore towards him.

7. Hereupon, when Jonathan found that this intention of Saul was so well attested, he asked him what he would have him do for him. To which David replied, "I am sensible that thou art willing to gratify me in every thing, and procure me what I desire. Now tomorrow is the new moon, and I was accustomed to sit down then with the king at supper: now, if it seem good to thee, I will go out of the city, and conceal myself privately there; and if Saul inquire why I am absent, tell him that I am gone to my own city Bethlehem, to keep a festival with my own tribe; and add this also, that thou gavest me leave so to do. And if he say, as is usually said in the case of friends that are gone abroad, It is well that he went, then assure thyself that no latent mischief or enmity may be feared at his hand; but if he answer otherwise, that will be a sure sign that he hath some designs against me, Accordingly thou shalt inform me of thy father's inclinations; and that out of pity to my case and out of thy friendship for me, as instances of which friendship thou hast vouchsafed to accept of the assurances of my love to thee, and to give the like assurances to me, that is, those of a master to his servant; but if thou discoverest any wickedness in me, do thou prevent thy father, and kill me thyself."

8. But Jonathan heard these last words with indignation, and promised to do what he desired of him, and to inform him if his father's answers implied any thing of a melancholy nature, and any enmity against him. And that he might the more firmly depend upon him, he took him out into the open field, into the pure air, and sware that he would neglect nothing that might tend to the preservation of David; and he said, "I appeal to that God, who, as thou seest, is diffused every where, and knoweth this intention of mine, before I explain it in words, as the witness of this my covenant with thee, that I will not leave off to make frequent trims of the purpose of my father till I learn whether there be any lurking distemper in the most secret parts of his soul;

and when I have learnt it, I will not conceal it from thee, but will discover it to thee, whether he be gently or peevishly disposed; for this God himself knows, that I pray he may always be with thee, for he is with thee now, and will not forsake thee, and will make thee superior to thine enemies, whether my father be one of them, or whether I myself be such. Do thou only remember what we now do; and if it fall out that I die, preserve my children alive, and requite what kindness thou hast now received to them." When he had thus sworn, he dismissed David, bidding him go to a certain place of that plain wherein he used to perform his exercises; for that, as soon as he knew the mind of his father, he would come thither to him, with one servant only; "and if," says he, "I shoot three darts at the mark, and then bid my servant to carry these three darts away, for they are before him, know thou that there is no mischief to be feared from my father; but if thou hearest me say the contrary, expect the contrary from the king. However, thou shalt gain security by my means, and shalt by no means suffer any harm; but see thou dost not forget what I have desired of thee in the time of thy prosperity, and be serviceable to my children." Now David, when he had received these assurances from Jonathan, went his way to the place appointed.

9. But on the next day, which was the new moon, the king, when he had purified himself, as the custom was, came to supper; and when there sat by him his son Jonathan on his right hand, and Abner, the captain of his host, on the other hand, he saw David's seat was empty, but said nothing, supposing that he had not purified himself since he had accompanied with his wife, and so could not be present; but when he saw that he was not there the second day of the month neither, he inquired of his son Jonathan why the son of Jesse did not come to the supper and the feast, neither the day before nor that day. So Jonathan said, That he was gone, according to the agreement between them, to his own city, where his tribe kept a festival, and that by his permission: that he also invited him to come to their sacrifice; "and," says Jonathan, "if thou wilt give me leave, I Will go thither, for thou knowest the good-will that I bear him." And then it was that Jonathan understood his

father's hatred to David, and plainly saw his entire disposition; for Saul could not restrain his anger, but reproached Jonathan, and called him the son of a runagate, and an enemy; and said he was a partner with David, and his assistant, and that by his behavior he showed he had no regard to himself, or to his mother, and would not be persuaded of this, - that while David is alive, their kingdom was not secure to them; yet did he bid him send for him, that he might be punished. And when Jonathan said, in answer, "What hath he done that thou wilt punish him?" Saul no longer contented himself to express his anger in bare words, but snatched up his spear, and leaped upon him, and was desirous to kill him. He did not indeed do what he intended, because he was hindered by his friends; but it appeared plainly to his son that he hated David, and greatly desired to despatch him, insomuch that he had almost slain his son with his own hands on his account.

10. And then it was that the king's son rose hastily from supper; and being unable to admit any thing into his mouth for grief, he wept all night, both because he had himself been near destruction, and because the death of David was determined: but as soon as it was day, he went out into the plain that was before the city, as going to perform his exercises, but in reality to inform his friend what disposition his father was in towards him, as he had agreed with him to do; and when Jonathan had done what had been thus agreed, he dismissed his servant that followed him, to return to the city; but he himself went into the desert, and came into his presence, and communed with him. So David appeared and fell at Jonathan's feet, and bowed down to him, and called him the preserver of his soul; but he lifted him up from the earth, and they mutually embraced one another, and made a long greeting, and that not without tears. They also lamented their age, and that familiarity which envy would deprive them of, and that separation which must now be expected, which seemed to them no better than death itself. So recollecting themselves at length from their lamentation, and exhorting one another to be mindful of the oaths they had sworn to each other, they parted asunder.



## Footnotes:

1. Since the modern Jews have lost the signification of the Hebrew word here used, *cebr*; and since the LXX., as well as Josephus, render it the liver of the goat, and since this rendering, and Josephus's account, are here so much more clear and probable than those of others, it is almost unaccountable that our commentators should so much as hesitate about its true interpretation.
2. These violent and wild agitations of Saul seem to me to have been no other than demoniacal; and that the same demon which used to seize him, since he was forsaken of God, and which the divine hymns and psalms which were sung to the harp by David used to expel, was now in a judicial way brought upon him, not only in order to disappoint his intentions against innocent David, but to expose him to the laughter and contempt of all that saw him, or heard of those agitations; such violent and wild agitations being never observed in true prophets, when they were under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Our other copies, which say the Spirit of God came him, seem not so here copy, which mentions nothing of God at all. Nor does Josephus seem to ascribe this impulse and ecstasy of Saul to any other than to his old demoniacal spirit, which on all accounts appears the most probable. Nor does the former description of Saul's real inspiration by the Divine Spirit, 1 Samuel 10:9-12; Antiq. B. VI. ch. 4. sect. 2, which was before he was become wicked, well agree with the descriptions before us.
3. What is meant by Saul's lying down naked all that day, and all that night, 1 Samuel 19:4, and whether any more than laying aside his royal apparel, or upper garments, as Josephus seems to understand it, is by no means certain. See the note on Antiq. B. VIII. ch. 14. sect. 2.

## Chapter 12

### David Fled to Ahimelech

1. But David fled from the king, and that death he was in danger of by him, and came to the city Nob, to Ahimelech the priest, who, when he saw him coming all alone, and neither a friend nor a servant with him, he wondered at it, and desired to learn of him the cause why there was nobody with him. To which David answered, That the king had commanded him to do a certain thing that was to be kept secret, to which, if he had a mind to know so much, he had no occasion for any one to accompany him; "however, I have ordered my servants to meet me at such and such a place." So he desired him to let him have somewhat to eat; and that in case he would supply him, he would act the part of a friend, and be assisting to the business he was now about: and when he had obtained what he desired, he also asked him whether he had any weapons with him, either sword or spear. Now there was at Nob a servant of Saul, by birth a Syrian, whose name was Doeg, one that kept the king's mules. The high priest said that he had no such weapons; but, he added, "Here is the sword of Goliath, which, when thou hadst slain the Philistine, thou didst dedicate to God."

2. When David had received the sword, he fled out of the country of the Hebrews into that of the Philistines, over which Achish reigned; and when the king's servants knew him, and he was made known to the king himself, the servants informing him that he was that David who had killed many ten thousands of the Philistines, David was afraid lest the king should put him to death, and that he should experience that danger from him which he had escaped from Saul; so he pretended to be distracted and mad, so that his spittle ran out of his mouth; and he did other the like actions before the king of Gath, which might make him believe that they proceeded from such a distemper. Accordingly the king was very angry at his servants that they had

brought him a madman, and he gave orders that they should eject David immediately [out of the city].

3. So when David had escaped in this manner out of Gath, he came to the tribe of Judah, and abode in a cave by the city of Adullam. Then it was that he sent to his brethren, and informed them where he was, who then came to him with all their kindred, and as many others as were either in want or in fear of king Saul, came and made a body together, and told him they were ready to obey his orders; they were in all about four hundred. Whereupon he took courage, now such a force and assistance was come to him; so he removed thence and came to the king of the Moabites, and desired him to entertain his parents in his country, while the issue of his affairs were in such an uncertain condition. The king granted him this favor, and paid great respect to David's parents all the time they were with him.

4. As for himself, upon the prophet's commanding him to leave the desert, and to go into the portion of the tribe of Judah, and abide there, he complied therewith; and coming to the city Hareth, which was in that tribe, he remained there. Now when Saul heard that David had been seen with a multitude about him, he fell into no small disturbance and trouble; but as he knew that David was a bold and courageous man, he suspected that somewhat extraordinary would appear from him, and that openly also, which would make him weep and put him into distress; so he called together to him his friends, and his commanders, and the tribe from which he was himself derived, to the hill where his palace was; and sitting upon a place called Aroua, his courtiers that were in dignities, and the guards of his body, being with him, he spake thus to them: - "You that are men of my own tribe, I conclude that you remember the benefits that I have bestowed upon you, and that I have made some of you owners of land, and made you commanders, and bestowed posts of honor upon you, and set some of you over the common people, and others over the soldiers; I ask you, therefore, whether you expect greater and more donations from the son of Jesse? for I know that

you are all inclinable to him; (even my own son Jonathan himself is of that opinion, and persuades you to be of the same); for I am not unacquainted with the oaths and the covenants that are between him and David, and that Jonathan is a counselor and an assistant to those that conspire against me, and none of you are concerned about these things, but you keep silence and watch, to see what will be the upshot of these things." When the king had made this speech, not one of the rest of those that were present made any answer; but Doeg the Syrian, who fed his mules, said, that he saw David when he came to the city Nob to Ahimelech the high priest, and that he learned future events by his prophesying; that he received food from him, and the sword of Goliath, and was conducted by him with security to such as he desired to go to.

5. Saul therefore sent for the high priest, and for all his kindred; and said to them, "What terrible or ungrateful tiring hast thou suffered from me, that thou hast received the son of Jesse, and hast bestowed on him both food and weapons, when he was contriving to get the kingdom? And further, why didst thou deliver oracles to him concerning futurities? For thou couldst not be unacquainted that he was fled away from me, and that he hated my family." But the high priest did not betake himself to deny what he had done, but confessed boldly that he had supplied him with these things, not to gratify David, but Saul himself: and he said, "I did not know that he was thy adversary, but a servant of thine, who was very faithful to thee, and a captain over a thousand of thy soldiers, and, what is more than these, thy son-in-law, and kinsman. Men do not choose to confer such favors on their adversaries, but on those who are esteemed to bear the highest good-will and respect to them. Nor is this the first time that I prophesied for him, but I have done it often, and at other times as well as now. And when he told me that he was sent by thee in great haste to do somewhat, if I had furnished him with nothing that he desired I should have thought that it was rather in contradiction to thee than to him; wherefore do not thou entertain any ill opinion of me, nor do thou have a suspicion of what I then thought an act of

humanity, from what is now told thee of David's attempts against thee, for I did then to him as to thy friend and son-in-law, and captain of a thousand, and not as to thine adversary."

6. When the high priest had spoken thus, he did not persuade Saul, his fear was so prevalent, that he could not give credit to an apology that was very just. So he commanded his armed men that stood about him to kill him, and all his kindred; but as they durst not touch the high priest, but were more afraid of disobeying God than the king, he ordered Doeg the Syrian to kill them. Accordingly, he took to his assistance such wicked men as were like himself, and slew Ahimelech and all his family, who were in all three hundred and eighty-five. Saul also sent to Nob, (1) the city of the priests, and slew all that were there, without sparing either women or children, or any other age, and burnt it; only there was one son of Ahimelech, whose name was Abiathar, who escaped. However, these things came to pass as God had foretold to Eli the high priest, when he said that his posterity should be destroyed, on account of the transgression of his two sons.

7. (2) Now this king Saul, by perpetrating so barbarous a crime, and murdering the whole family of the high-priestly dignity, by having no pity of the infants, nor reverence for the aged, and by overthrowing the city which God had chosen for the property, and for the support of the priests and prophets which were there, and had ordained as the only city allotted for the education of such men, gives all to understand and consider the disposition of men, that while they are private persons, and in a low condition, because it is not in their power to indulge nature, nor to venture upon what they wish for, they are equitable and moderate, and pursue nothing but what is just, and bend their whole minds and labors that way; then it is that they have this belief about God, that he is present to all the actions of their lives, and that he does not only see the actions that are done, but clearly knows those their thoughts also, whence those actions do arise. But when once they are advanced into power and authority, then they put off all such notions, and, as

if they were no other than actors upon a theater, they lay aside their disguised parts and manners, and take up boldness, insolence, and a contempt of both human and Divine laws, and this at a time when they especially stand in need of piety and righteousness, because they are then most of all exposed to envy, and all they think, and all they say, are in the view of all men; then it is that they become so insolent in their actions, as though God saw them no longer, or were afraid of them because of their power: and whatsoever it is that they either are afraid of by the rumors they hear, or they hate by inclination, or they love without reason, these seem to them to be authentic, and firm, and true, and pleasing both to men and to God; but as to what will come hereafter, they have not the least regard to it. They raise those to honor indeed who have been at a great deal of pains for them, and after that honor they envy them; and when they have brought them into high dignity, they do not only deprive them of what they had obtained, but also, on that very account, of their lives also, and that on wicked accusations, and such as on account of their extravagant nature, are incredible. They also punish men for their actions, not such as deserve condemnation, but from calumnies and accusations without examination; and this extends not only to such as deserve to be punished, but to as many as they are able to kill. This reflection is openly confirmed to us from the example of Saul, the son of Kish, who was the first king who reigned after our aristocracy and government under the judges were over; and that by his slaughter of three hundred priests and prophets, on occasion of his suspicion about Ahimelech, and by the additional wickedness of the overthrow of their city, and this is as he were endeavoring in some sort to render the temple [tabernacle] destitute both of priests and prophets, which endeavor he showed by slaying so many of them, and not suffering the very city belonging to .them to remain, that so others might succeed them.

8. But Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, who alone could be saved out of the family of priests slain by Saul, fled to David, and informed him of the calamity that had befallen their family, and of the slaughter of his father;

who hereupon said, He was not unapprised of what would follow with relation to them when he saw Doeg there; for he had then a suspicion that the high priest would be falsely accused by him to the king, and he blamed himself as having been the cause of this misfortune. But he desired him to stay there, and abide with him, as in a place where he might be better concealed than any where else.

### **Footnotes:**

1. This city Nob was not a city allotted to the priests, nor had the prophets, that we know of, any particular cities allotted them. It seems the tabernacle was now at Nob, and probably a school of the prophets was here also. It was full two days' journey on foot from Jerusalem, 1 Samuel 21:5. The number of priests here slain in Josephus is three hundred and eighty-five, and but eighty-five in our Hebrew copies; yet are they three hundred and five in the Septuagint. I prefer Josephus's number, the Hebrew having, I suppose, only dropped the hundreds, the other the tens. This city Nob seems to have been the chief, or perhaps the only seat of the family of Ithamar, which here perished, according to God's former terrible threatenings to Eli, 1 Samuel 2:27-36; 3:11-18. See ch. 14. sect. D, hereafter.
2. This section contains an admirable reflection of Josephus concerning the general wickedness of men in great authority, and the danger they are in of rejecting that regard to justice and humanity, to Divine Providence and the fear of God, which they either really had, or pretended to have, while they were in a lower condition. It can never be too often perused by kings and great men, nor by those who expect to obtain such elevated dignities among mankind. See the like reflections of our Josephus, Antiq. B. VII. ch. 1. sect. 5, at the end; and B. VIII. ch. 10. sect. 2, at the beginning. They are to the like purport with one branch of Agur's prayer: "One thing have I required of thee, deny it me not before I die: Give me not riches, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ?"

Proverbs 30:7-9.



## Chapter 13

### David Did Not Kill Saul

1. About this time it was that David heard how the Philistines had made an inroad into the country of Keilah, and robbed it; so he offered himself to fight against them, if God, when he should be consulted by the prophet, would grant him the victory. And when the prophet said that God gave a signal of victory, he made a sudden onset upon the Philistines with his companions, and he shed a great deal of their blood, and carried off their prey, and staid with the inhabitants of Keilah till they had securely gathered in their corn and their fruits. However, it was told Saul the king that David was with the men of Keilah; for what had been done and the great success that had attended him, were not confined among the people where the things were done, but the fame of it went all abroad, and came to the hearing of others, and both the fact as it stood, and the author of the fact, were carried to the king's ears. Then was Saul glad when he heard David was in Keilah; and he said, "God hath now put him into my hands, since he hath obliged him to come into a city that hath walls, and gates, and bars." So he commanded all the people suddenly, and when they had besieged and taken it to kill David. But when David perceived this, and learned of God that if he staid there the men of Keilah would deliver him up to Saul, he took his four hundred men and retired into a desert that was over against a city called Engedi. So that when the king heard he was fled away from the men of Keilah, he left off his expedition against him.

2. Then David removed thence, and came to a certain place called the New Place, belonging to Ziph; where Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to him, and saluted him, and exhorted him to be of good courage, and to hope well as to his condition hereafter, and not to despond at his present circumstances, for that he should be king, and have all the forces of the Hebrews under him:

he told him that such happiness uses to come with great labor and pains: they also took oaths, that they would, all their lives long, continue in good-will and fidelity one to another; and he called God to witness, as to what execrations he had made upon himself if he should transgress his covenant, and should change to a contrary behavior. So Jonathan left him there, having rendered his cares and fears somewhat lighter, and returned home. Now the men of Ziph, to gratify Saul, informed him that David abode with them, and [assured him] that if he would come to them, they would deliver him up, for that if the king would seize on the Straits of Ziph, David would not escape to any other people. So the king commended them, and confessed that he had reason to thank them, because they had given him information of his enemy; and he promised them, that it should not be long ere he would requite their kindness. He also sent men to seek for David, and to search the wilderness wherein he was; and he promised that he himself would follow them. Accordingly they went before the king, to hunt for and to catch David, and used endeavors, not only to show their good-will to Saul, by informing him where his enemy was, but to evidence the same more plainly by delivering him up into his power. But these men failed of those their unjust and wicked desires, who, while they underwent no hazard by not discovering such an ambition of revealing this to Saul, yet did they falsely accuse and promise to deliver up a man beloved of God, and one that was unjustly sought after to be put to death, and one that might otherwise have lain concealed, and this out of flattery, and expectation of gain from the king; for when David was apprized of the malignant intentions of the men of Ziph, and the approach of Saul, he left the Straits of that country, and fled to the great rock that was in the wilderness of Maon.

3. Hereupon Saul made haste to pursue him thither; for, as he was marching, he learned that David was gone away from the Straits of Ziph, and Saul removed to the other side of the rock. But the report that the Philistines had again made an incursion into the country of the Hebrews, called Saul another way from the pursuit of David, when he was ready to be caught; for

he returned back again to oppose those Philistines, who were naturally their enemies, as judging it more necessary to avenge himself of them, than to take a great deal of pains to catch an enemy of his own, and to overlook the ravage that was made in the land.

4. And by this means David unexpectedly escaped out of the danger he was in, and came to the Straits of Engedi; and when Saul had driven the Philistines out of the land, there came some messengers, who told him that David abode within the bounds of Engedi: so he took three thousand chosen men that were armed, and made haste to him; and when he was not far from those places, he saw a deep and hollow cave by the way-side; it was open to a great length and breadth, and there it was that David with his four hundred men were concealed. When therefore he had occasion to ease nature, he entered into it by himself alone; and being seen by one of David's companions, and he that saw him saying to him, that he had now, by God's providence, an opportunity of avenging himself of his adversary; and advising him to cut off his head, and so deliver himself out of that tedious, wandering condition, and the distress he was in; he rose up, and only cut off the skirt of that garment which Saul had on: but he soon repented of what he had done; and said it was not right to kill him that was his master, and one whom God had thought worthy of the kingdom; "for that although he were wickedly disposed towards us, yet does it not behove me to be so disposed towards him." But when Saul had left the cave, David came near and cried out aloud, and desired Saul to hear him; whereupon the king turned his face back, and David, according to custom, fell down on his face before the king, and bowed to him; and said, "O king, thou oughtest not to hearken to wicked men, nor to such as forge calumnies, nor to gratify them so far as to believe what they say, nor to entertain suspicions of such as are your best friends, but to judge of the dispositions of all men by their actions; for calumny deludes men, but men's own actions are a clear demonstration of their kindness. Words indeed, in their own nature, may be either true or false, but men's actions expose their intentions nakedly to our view. By these, therefore it

will be well for thee to believe me, as to my regard to thee and to thy house, and not to believe those that frame such accusations against me as never came into my mind, nor are possible to be executed, and do this further by pursuing after my life, and have no concern either day or night, but how to compass my life and to murder me, which thing I think thou dost unjustly prosecute; for how comes it about, that thou hast embraced this false opinion about me, as if I had a desire to kill thee? Or how canst thou escape the crime of impiety towards God, when thou wishest thou couldst kill, and deemest thine adversary, a man who had it in his power this day to avenge himself, and to punish thee, but would not do it? nor make use of such an opportunity, which, if it had fallen out to thee against me, thou hadst not let it slip, for when I cut off the skirt of thy garment, I could have done the same to thy head." So he showed him the piece of his garment, and thereby made him agree to what he said to be true; and added, "I, for certain, have abstained from taking a just revenge upon thee, yet art thou not ashamed to prosecute me with unjust hatred. (1) May God do justice, and determine about each of our dispositions." - But Saul was amazed at the strange delivery he had received; and being greatly affected with the moderation and the disposition of the young man, he groaned; and when David had done the same, the king answered that he had the justest occasion to groan, "for thou hast been the author of good to me, as I have been the author of calamity to thee; and thou hast demonstrated this day, that thou possessest the righteousness of the ancients, who determined that men ought to save their enemies, though they caught them in a desert place. I am now persuaded that God reserves the kingdom for thee, and that thou wilt obtain the dominion over all the Hebrews. Give me then assurances upon oath, That thou wilt not root out my family, nor, out of remembrance of what evil I have done thee, destroy my posterity, but save and preserve my house." So David sware as he desired, and sent back Saul to his own kingdom; but he, and those that were with him, went up the Straits of Mastheroth.

5. About this time Samuel the prophet died. He was a man whom the

Hebrews honored in an extraordinary degree: for that lamentation which the people made for him, and this during a long time, manifested his virtue, and the affection which the people bore for him; as also did the solemnity and concern that appeared about his funeral, and about the complete observation of all his funeral rites. They buried him in his own city of Ramah; and wept for him a very great number of days, not looking on it as a sorrow for the death of another man, but as that in which they were every one themselves concerned. He was a righteous man, and gentle in his nature; and on that account he was very dear to God. Now he governed and presided over the people alone, after the death of Eli the high priest, twelve years, and eighteen years together with Saul the king. And thus we have finished the history of Samuel.

6. There was a man that was a Ziphite, of the city of Maon, who was rich, and had a vast number of cattle; for he fed a flock of three thousand sheep, and another flock of a thousand goats. Now David had charged his associates to keep these flocks without hurt and without damage, and to do them no mischief, neither out of covetousness, nor because they were in want, nor because they were in the wilderness, and so could not easily be discovered, but to esteem freedom from injustice above all other motives, and to look upon the touching of what belonged to another man as a horrible crime, and contrary to the will of God. These were the instructions he gave, thinking that the favors he granted this man were granted to a good man, and one that deserved to have such care taken of his affairs. This man was Nabal, for that was his name, - a harsh man, and of a very wicked life, being like a cynic in the course of his behavior, but still had obtained for his wife a woman of a good character, wise and handsome. To this Nabal, therefore, David sent ten men of his attendants at the time when he sheared his sheep, and by them saluted him; and also wished he might do what he now did for many years to come, but desired him to make him a present of what he was able to give him, since he had, to be sure, learned from his shepherds that we had done them no injury, but had been their guardians a long time together,

while we continued in the wilderness; and he assured him he should never repent of giving any thing to David. When the messengers had carried this message to Nabal, he accosted them after an inhuman and rough manner; for he asked them who David was? and when he heard that he was the son of Jesse, he said, "Now is the time that fugitives grow insolent, and make a figure, and leave their masters." When they told David this, he was wroth, and commanded four hundred armed men to follow him, and left two hundred to take care of the stuff, (for he had already six hundred, (2)) and went against Nabal: he also swore that he would that night utterly destroy the whole house and possessions of Nabal; for that he was grieved, not only that he had proved ungrateful to them, without making any return for the humanity they had shown him, but that he had also reproached them, and used ill language to them, when he had received no cause of disgust from them.

7. Hereupon one of those that kept the flocks of Nabal, said to his mistress, Nabal's wife, that when David sent to her husband he had received no civil answer at all from him; but that her husband had moreover added very reproachful language, while yet David had taken extraordinary care to keep his flocks from harm, and that what had passed would prove very pernicious to his master. When the servant had said this, Abigail, for that was his wife's name, saddled her asses, and loaded them with all sorts of presents; and, without telling her husband any thing of what she was about, (for he was not sensible on account of his drunkenness,) she went to David. She was then met by David as she was descending a hill, who was coming against Nabal with four hundred men. When the woman saw David, she leaped down from her ass, and fell on her face, and bowed down to the ground; and entreated him not to bear in mind the words of Nabal, since he knew that he resembled his name. Now Nabal, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies folly. So she made her apology, that she did not see the messengers whom he sent. "Forgive me, therefore," said she, "and thank God, who hath hindered thee from shedding human blood; for so long as thou keepest thyself innocent, he

will avenge thee of wicked men, (3) for what miseries await Nabal, they will fall upon the heads of thine enemies. Be thou gracious to me, and think me so far worthy as to accept of these presents from me; and, out of regard to me, remit that wrath and that anger which thou hast against my husband and his house, for mildness and humanity become thee, especially as thou art to be our king." Accordingly, David accepted her presents, and said, "Nay, but, O woman, it was no other than God's mercy which brought thee to us today, for, otherwise, thou hadst never seen another day, I having sworn to destroy Nabal's house this very night, and to leave alive not one of you who belonged to a man that was wicked and ungrateful to me and my companions; but now hast thou prevented me, and seasonably mollified my anger, as being thyself under the care of God's providence: but as for Nabal, although for thy sake he now escape punishment, he will not always avoid justice; for his evil conduct, on some other occasion, will be his ruin." (4)

8. When David had said this, he dismissed the woman. But when she came home and found her husband feasting with a great company, and oppressed with wine, she said nothing to him then about what had happened; but on the next day, when he was sober, she told him all the particulars, and made his whole body to appear like that of a dead man by her words, and by that grief which arose from them; so Nabal survived ten days, and no more, and then died. And when David heard of his death, he said that God had justly avenged him of this man, for that Nabal had died by his own wickedness, and had suffered punishment on his account, while he had kept his own hands clean. At which time he understood that the wicked are prosecuted by God; that he does not overlook any man, but bestows on the good what is suitable to them, and inflicts a deserved punishment on the wicked. So he sent to Nabal's wife, and invited her to come to him, to live with him, and to be his wife. Whereupon she replied to those that came, that she was not worthy to touch his feet; however, she came, with all her servants, and became his wife, having received that honor on account of her wise and righteous course of life. She also obtained the same honor partly on

account of her beauty. Now David had a wife before, whom he married from the city Abesar; for as to Michal, the daughter of king Saul, who had been David's wife, her father had given her in marriage to Phalti, the son of Laish, who was of the city of Gallim.

9. After this came certain of the Ziphites, and told Saul that David was come again into their country, and if he would afford them his assistance, they could catch him. So he came to them with three thousand armed men; and upon the approach of night, he pitched his camp at a certain place called Hachilah. But when David heard that Saul was coming against him, he sent spies, and bid them let him know to what place of the country Saul was already come; and when they told him that he was at Hachilah, he concealed his going away from his companions, and came to Saul's camp, having taken with him Abishai, his sister Zeruiah's son, and Ahimelech the Hittite. Now Saul was asleep, and the armed men, with Abner their commander, lay round about him in a circle. Hereupon David entered into the king's tent; but he did neither kill Saul, though he knew where he lay, by the spear that was stuck down by him, nor did he give leave to Abishai, who would have killed him, and was earnestly bent upon it so to do; for he said it was a horrid crime to kill one that was ordained king by God, although he was a wicked man; for that he who gave him the dominion would in time inflict punishment upon him. So he restrained his eagerness; but that it might appear to have been in his power to have killed him when he refrained from it, he took his spear, and the cruse of water which stood by Saul as he lay asleep, without being perceived by any in the camp, who were all asleep, and went securely away, having performed every thing among the king's attendants that the opportunity afforded, and his boldness encouraged him to do. So when he had passed over a brook, and was gotten up to the top of a hill, whence he might be sufficiently heard, he cried aloud to Saul's soldiers, and to Abner their commander, and awaked them out of their sleep, and called both to him and to the people. Hereupon the commander heard him, and asked who it was that called him. To whom David replied, "It is I, the son of Jesse, whom



you make a vagabond. But what is the matter? Dost thou, that art a man of so great dignity, and of the first rank in the king's court, take so little care of thy master's body? and is sleep of more consequence to thee than his preservation, and thy care of him? This negligence of yours deserves death, and punishment to be inflicted on you, who never perceived when, a little while ago, some of us entered into your camp, nay, as far as to the king himself, and to all the rest of you. If thou look for the king's spear and his cruse of water, thou wilt learn what a mighty misfortune was ready to overtake you in your very camp without your knowing it." Now when Saul knew David's voice, and understood that when he had him in his power while he was asleep, and his guards took no care of him, yet did not he kill him, but spared him, when he might justly have cut him off, he said that he owed him thanks for his preservation; and exhorted him to be of good courage, and not be afraid of suffering any mischief from him any more, and to return to his own home, for he was now persuaded that he did not love himself so well as he was loved by him: that he had driven away him that could guard him, and had given many demonstrations of his good-will to him: that he had forced him to live so long in a state of banishment, and in great fears of his life, destitute of his friends and his kindred, while still he was often saved by him, and frequently received his life again when it was evidently in danger of perishing. So David bade them send for the spear and the cruse of water, and take them back; adding this withal, That God would be the judge of both their dispositions, and of the actions that flowed from the same, "who knows that then it was this day in my power to have killed thee I abstained from it."

10. Thus Saul having escaped the hands of David twice, he went his way to his royal palace, and his own city: but David was afraid, that if he staid there he should be caught by Saul; so he thought it better to go up into the land of the Philistines, and abide there. Accordingly, he came with the six hundred men that were with him to Achish, the king of Gath, which was one of their five cities. Now the king received both him and his men, and gave them a place to inhabit in. He had with him also his two wives, Ahinoam and

Abigail, and he dwelt in Gath. But when Saul heard this, he took no further care about sending to him, or going after him, because he had been twice, in a manner, caught by him, while he was himself endeavoring to catch him. However, David had no mind to continue in the city of Gath, but desired the king, that since he had received him with such humanity, that he would grant him another favor, and bestow upon him some place of that country for his habitation, for he was ashamed, by living in the city, to be grievous and burdensome to him. So Achish gave him a certain village called Ziklag; which place David and his sons were fond of when he was king, and reckoned it to be their peculiar inheritance. But about those matters we shall give the reader further information elsewhere. Now the time that David dwelt in Ziklag, in the land of the Philistines, was four months and twenty days. And now he privately attacked those Geshurites and Amalekites that were neighbors to the Philistines, and laid waste their country, and took much prey of their beasts and camels, and then returned home; but David abstained from the men, as fearing they should discover him to king Achish; yet did he send part of the prey to him as a free gift. And when the king inquired whom they had attacked when they brought away the prey, he said, those that lay to the south of the Jews, and inhabited in the plain; whereby he persuaded Achish to approve of what he had done, for he hoped that David had fought against his own nation, and that now he should have him for his servant all his life long, and that he would stay in his country.

### **Footnotes:**

1. The phrase in David's speech to Saul, as set down in Josephus, that he had abstained from just revenge, puts me in mind of the like words in the Apostolical Constitutions, B. VII. ch. 2., "That revenge is not evil, but that patience is more honorable."
2. The number of men that came first to David, are distinctly in Josephus, and in our common copies, but four hundred. When he was at Keilah still but four hundred, both in Josephus and in the LXXX.; but six

hundred in our Hebrew copies, 1 Samuel 23:3; see 30:9, 10. Now the six hundred there mentioned are here estimated by Josephus to have been so many, only by an augmentation of two hundred afterward, which I suppose is the true solution of this seeming disagreement.

3. In this and the two next sections, we may perceive how Josephus, nay, how Abigail herself, would understand, the "not avenging ourselves, but heaping coals of fire on the head of the injurious," Proverbs 25:22; Romans 12:20, not as we do now, of them into but of leaving them to the judgment of God, "to whom vengeance belongeth," Deuteronomy 32:35; Psalms 94:1; Hebrews 10:30, and who will take vengeance on the wicked. And since all God's judgments are just, and all fit to be executed, and all at length for the good of the persons punished, I incline to think that to be the meaning of this phrase of "heaping coals of fire on their heads."
4. We may note here, that how sacred soever an oath was esteemed among the people of God in old times, they did not think it obligatory where the action was plainly unlawful. For so we see it was in this case of David, who, although he had sworn to destroy Nabal and his family, yet does he here, and 1 Samuel 25:32-41, bless God for preventing his keeping his oath, and shedding of blood, which he had swore to do.

## Chapter 14

### **Saul Died With His Sons**

1. About the same time the Philistines resolved to make war against the Israelites, and sent to all their confederates that they would go along with them to the war to Reggan, [near the city Shunem,] whence they might gather themselves together, and suddenly attack the Hebrews. Then did Achish, the king of Gath, desire David to assist them with his armed men against the Hebrews. This he readily promised; and said that the time was now come wherein he might requite him for his kindness and hospitality. So the king promised to make him the keeper of his body, after the victory, supposing that the battle with the enemy succeeded to their mind; which promise of honor and confidence he made on purpose to increase his zeal for his service.

2. Now Saul, the king of the Hebrews, had cast out of the country the fortune-tellers, and the necromancers, and all such as exercised the like arts, excepting the prophets. But when he heard that the Philistines were already come, and had pitched their camp near the city Shunem, situate in the plain, he made haste to oppose them with his forces; and when he was come to a certain mountain called Gilboa, he pitched his camp over-against the enemy; but when he saw the enemy's army he was greatly troubled, because it appeared to him to be numerous, and superior to his own; and he inquired of God by the prophets concerning the battle, that he might know beforehand what would be the event of it. And when God did not answer him, Saul was under a still greater dread, and his courage fell, foreseeing, as was but reasonable to suppose, that mischief would befall him, now God was not there to assist him; yet did he bid his servants to inquire out for him some woman that was a necromancer and called up the souls of the dead, that So he might know whether his affairs would succeed to his mind; for this sort of

necromantic women that bring up the souls of the dead, do by them foretell future events to such as desire them. And one of his servants told him that there was such a woman in the city Endor, but was known to nobody in the camp; hereupon Saul put off his royal apparel, and took two of those his servants with him, whom he knew to be most faithful to him, and came to Endor to the woman, and entreated her to act the part of a fortune-teller, and to bring up such a soul to him as he should name to her. But when the woman opposed his motion, and said she did not despise the king, who had banished this sort of fortune-tellers, and that he did not do well himself, when she had done him no harm, to endeavor to lay a snare for her, and to discover that she exercised a forbidden art, in order to procure her to be punished, he swore that nobody should know what she did; and that he would not tell any one else what she foretold, but that she should incur no danger. As soon as he had induced her by this oath to fear no harm, he bid her bring up to him the soul of Samuel. She, not knowing who Samuel was, called him out of Hades. When he appeared, and the woman saw one that was venerable, and of a divine form, she was in disorder; and being astonished at the sight, she said, "Art not thou king Saul?" for Samuel had informed her who he was. When he had owned that to be true, and had asked her whence her disorder arose, she said that she saw a certain person ascend, who in his form was like to a god. And when he bid her tell him what he resembled, in what habit he appeared, and of what age he was, she told him he was an old man already, and of a glorious personage, and had on a sacerdotal mantle. So the king discovered by these signs that he was Samuel; and he fell down upon the ground, and saluted and worshipped him. And when the soul of Samuel asked him why he had disturbed him, and caused him to be brought up, he lamented the necessity he was under; for he said, that his enemies pressed heavily upon him; that he was in distress what to do in his present circumstances; that he was forsaken of God, and could obtain no prediction of what was coming, neither by prophets nor by dreams; and that "these were the reasons why I have recourse to thee, who always took great care of me." But (1) Samuel, seeing that the end of Saul's life was come, said, "It is in

vain for thee to desire to learn of me any thing future, when God hath forsaken thee: however, hear what I say, that David is to be king, and to finish this war with good success; and thou art to lose thy dominion and thy life, because thou didst not obey God in the war with the Amalekites, and hast not kept his commandments, as I foretold thee while I was alive. Know, therefore, that the people shall be made subject to their enemies, and that thou, with thy sons, shall fall in the battle tomorrow, and thou shalt then be with me [in Hades]."

3. When Saul heard this, he could not speak for grief, and fell down on the floor, whether it were from the sorrow that arose upon what Samuel had said, or from his emptiness, for he had taken no food the foregoing day nor night, he easily fell quite down: and when with difficulty he had recovered himself, the woman would force him to eat, begging this of him as a favor on account of her concern in that dangerous instance of fortune-telling, which it was not lawful for her to have done, because of the fear she was under of the king, while she knew not who he was, yet did she undertake it, and go through with it; on which account she entreated him to admit that a table and food might be set before him, that he might recover his strength, and so get safe to his own camp. And when he opposed her motion, and entirely rejected it, by reason of his anxiety, she forced him, and at last persuaded him to it. Now she had one calf that she was very fond of, and one that she took a great deal of care of, and fed it herself; for she was a woman that got her living by the labor of her own hands, and had no other possession but that one calf; this she killed, and made ready its flesh, and set it before his servants and himself. So Saul came to the camp while it was yet night.

4. Now it is but just to recommend the generosity of this woman, (2) because when the king had forbidden her to use that art whence her circumstances were bettered and improved, and when she had never seen the king before, she still did not remember to his disadvantage that he had condemned her sort of learning, and did not refuse him as a stranger, and one

that she had had no acquaintance with; but she had compassion upon him, and comforted him, and exhorted him to do what he was greatly averse to, and offered him the only creature she had, as a poor woman, and that earnestly, and with great humanity, while she had no requital made her for her kindness, nor hunted after any future favor from him, for she knew he was to die; whereas men are naturally either ambitious to please those that bestow benefits upon them, or are very ready to serve those from whom they may receive some advantage. It would be well therefore to imitate the example and to do kindnesses to all such as are in want and to think that nothing is better, nor more becoming mankind, than such a general beneficence, nor what will sooner render God favorable, and ready to bestow good things upon us. And so far may suffice to have spoken concerning this woman. But I shall speak further upon another subject, which will afford me all opportunity of discoursing on what is for the advantage of cities, and people, and nations, and suited to the taste of good men, and will encourage them all in the prosecution of virtue; and is capable of showing them the of acquiring glory, and an everlasting fame; and of imprinting in the kings of nations, and the rulers of cities, great inclination and diligence of doing well; as also of encouraging them to undergo dangers, and to die for their countries, and of instructing them how to despise all the most terrible adversities: and I have a fair occasion offered me to enter on such a discourse by Saul the king of the Hebrews; for although he knew what was coming upon him, and that he was to die immediately, by the prediction of the prophet, he did not resolve to fly from death, nor so far to indulge the love of life as to betray his own people to the enemy, or to bring a disgrace on his royal dignity; but exposing himself, as well as all his family and children, to dangers, he thought it a brave thing to fall together with them, as he was fighting for his subjects, and that it was better his sons should die thus, showing their courage, than to leave them to their uncertain conduct afterward, while, instead of succession and posterity, they gained commendation and a lasting name. Such a one alone seems to me to be a just, a courageous, and a prudent man; and when any one has arrived at these

dispositions, or shall hereafter arrive at them, he is the man that ought to be by all honored with the testimony of a virtuous or courageous man: for as to those that go out to war with hopes of success, and that they shall return safe, supposing they should have performed some glorious action, I think those do not do well who call these valiant men, as so many historians and other writers who treat of them are wont to do, although I confess those do justly deserve some commendation also; but those only may be styled courageous and bold in great undertakings, and despisers of adversities, who imitate Saul: for as for those that do not know what the event of war will be as to themselves, and though they do not faint in it, but deliver themselves up to uncertain futurity, and are tossed this way and that way, this is not so very eminent an instance of a generous mind, although they happen to perform many great exploits; but when men's minds expect no good event, but they know beforehand they must die, and that they must undergo that death in the battle also, after this neither to be afrighted, nor to be astonished at the terrible fate that is coming, but to go directly upon it, when they know it beforehand, this it is that I esteem the character of a man truly courageous. Accordingly this Saul did, and thereby demonstrated that all men who desire fame after they are dead are so to act as they may obtain the same: this especially concerns kings, who ought not to think it enough in their high stations that they are not wicked in the government of their subjects, but to be no more than moderately good to them. I could say more than this about Saul and his courage, the subject affording matter sufficient; but that I may not appear to run out improperly in his commendation, I return again to that history from which I made this digression.

5. Now when the Philistines, as I said before, had pitched their camp, and had taken an account of their forces, according to their nations, and kingdoms, and governments, king Achish came last of all with his own army; after whom came David with his six hundred armed men. And when the commanders of the Philistines saw him, they asked the king whence these Hebrews came, and at whose invitation. He answered that it was David, who



was fled away from his master Saul, and that he had entertained him when he came to him, and that now he was willing to make him this requital for his favors, and to avenge himself upon Saul, and so was become his confederate. The commanders complained of this, that he had taken him for a confederate who was an enemy; and gave him counsel to send him away, lest he should unawares do his friends a great deal of mischief by entertaining him, for that he afforded him an opportunity of being reconciled to his master by doing a mischief to our army. They thereupon desired him, out of a prudent foresight of this, to send him away, with his six hundred armed men, to the place he had given him for his habitation; for that this was that David whom the virgins celebrated in their hymns, as having destroyed many ten thousands of the Philistines. When the king of Gath heard this, he thought they spake well; so he called David, and said to him, "As for myself, I can bear witness that thou hast shown great diligence and kindness about me, and on that account it was that I took thee for my confederate; however, what I have done does not please the commanders of the Philistines; go therefore within a day's time to the place I have given thee, without suspecting any harm, and there keep my country, lest any of our enemies should make an incursion upon it, which will be one part of that assistance which I expect from thee." So David came to Ziklag, as the king of Gath bade him; but it happened, that while he was gone to the assistance of the Philistines, the Amalekites had made an incursion, and taken Ziklag before, and had burnt it; and when they had taken a great deal of other prey out of that place, and out of the other parts of the Philistines' country, they departed.

6. Now when David found that Ziklag was laid waste, and that it was all spoiled, and that as well his own wives, who were two, as the wives of his companions, with their children, were made captives, he presently rent his clothes, weeping and lamenting, together with his friends; and indeed he was so cast down with these misfortunes, that at length tears themselves failed him. He was also in danger of being stoned to death by his companions, who were greatly afflicted at the captivity of their wives and children, for they

laid the blame upon him of what had happened. But when he had recovered himself out of his grief, and had raised up his mind to God, he desired the high priest Abiathar to put on his sacerdotal garments, and to inquire of God, and to prophesy to him, whether God would grant; that if he pursued after the Amalekites, he should overtake them, and save their wives and their children, and avenge himself on the enemies. And when the high priest bade him to pursue after them, he marched apace, with his four hundred men, after the enemy; and when he was come to a certain brook called Besor, and had lighted upon one that was wandering about, an Egyptian by birth, who was almost dead with want and famine, (for he had continued wandering about without food in the wilderness three days,) he first of all gave him sustenance, both meat and drink, and thereby refreshed him. He then asked him to whom he belonged, and whence he came. Whereupon the man told him he was an Egyptian by birth, and was left behind by his master, because he was so sick and weak that he could not follow him. He also informed him that he was one of those who had burnt and plundered, not only other parts of Judea, but Ziklag itself also. So David made use of him as a guide to find out the Amalekites; and when he had overtaken them, as they lay scattered about on the ground, some at dinner, some disordered, and entirely drunk with wine, and in the fruition of their spoils and their prey, he fell upon them on the sudden, and made a great slaughter among them; for they were naked, and expected no such thing, but had betaken themselves to drinking and feasting; and so they were all easily destroyed. Now some of them that were overtaken as they lay at the table were slain in that posture, and their blood brought up with it their meat and their drink. They slew others of them as they were drinking to one another in their cups, and some of them when their full bellies had made them fall asleep; and for so many as had time to put on their armor, they slew them with the sword, with no less case than they did those that were naked; and for the partisans of David, they continued also the slaughter from the first hour of the day to the evening, so that there were, not above four hundred of the Amalekites left; and they only escaped by getting upon their dromedaries and camels. Accordingly David recovered not only

all the other spoils which the enemy had carried away, but his wives also, and the wives of his companions. But when they were come to the place where they had left the two hundred men, which were not able to follow them, but were left to take care of the stuff, the four hundred men did not think fit to divide among them any other parts of what they had gotten, or of the prey, since they did not accompany them, but pretended to be feeble, and did not follow them in pursuit of the enemy, but said they should be contented to have safely recovered their wives; yet did David pronounce that this opinion of theirs was evil and unjust, and that when God had granted them such a favor, that they had avenged themselves on their enemies, and had recovered all that belonged to themselves, they should make an equal distribution of what they had gotten to all, because the rest had tarried behind to guard their stuff; and from that time this law obtained among them, that those who guarded the stuff, should receive an equal share with those that fought in the battle. Now when David was come to Ziklag, he sent portions of the spoils to all that had been familiar with him, and to his friends in the tribe of Judah. And thus ended the affairs of the plundering of Ziklag, and of the slaughter of the Amalekites.

7. Now upon the Philistines joining battle, there followed a sharp engagement, and the Philistine, became the conquerors, and slew a great number of their enemies; but Saul the king of Israel, and his sons, fought courageously, and with the utmost alacrity, as knowing that their entire glory lay in nothing else but dying honorably, and exposing themselves to the utmost danger from the enemy (for they had nothing else to hope for); so they brought upon themselves the whole power of the enemy, till they were encompassed round and slain, but not before they had killed many of the Philistines. Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchisua; and when these were slain the multitude of the Hebrews were put to flight, and all was disorder, and confusion, and slaughter, upon the Philistines pressing in upon them. But Saul himself fled, having a strong body of soldiers about him; and upon the Philistines sending after them those

that threw javelins and shot arrows, he lost all his company except a few. As for himself, he fought with great bravery; and when he had received so many wounds, that he was not able to bear up nor to oppose any longer, and yet was not able to kill himself, he bade his armor-bearer draw his sword, and run him through, before the enemy should take him alive. But his armor-bearer not daring to kill his master, he drew his own sword, and placing himself over against its point, he threw himself upon it; and when he could neither run it through him, nor, by leaning against it, make the sword pass through him, he turned him round, and asked a certain young man that stood by who he was; and when he understood that he was an Amalekite, he desired him to force the sword through him, because he was not able to do it with his own hands, and thereby to procure him such a death as he desired. This the young man did accordingly; and he took the golden bracelet that was on Saul's arm, and his royal crown that was on his head, and ran away. And when Saul's armor-bearer saw that he was slain, he killed himself; nor did any of the king's guards escape, but they all fell upon the mountain called Gilboa. But when those Hebrews that dwelt in the valley beyond Jordan, and those who had their cities in the plain, heard that Saul and his sons were fallen, and that the multitude about them were destroyed, they left their own cities, and fled to such as were the best fortified and fenced; and the Philistines, finding those cities deserted, came and dwelt in them.

8. On the next day, when the Philistines came to strip their enemies that were slain, they got the bodies of Saul and of his sons, and stripped them, and cut off their heads; and they sent messengers all about their country, to acquaint them that their enemies were fallen; and they dedicated their armor in the temple of Astarte, but hung their bodies on crosses at the walls of the city Bethshun, which is now called Scythepolls. But when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard that they had dismembered the dead bodies of Saul and of his sons, they deemed it so horrid a thing to overlook this barbarity, and to suffer them to be without funeral rites, that the most courageous and hardy among them (and indeed that city had in it men that were very stout both in

body and mind) journeyed all night, and came to Bethshun, and approached to the enemy's wall, and taking down the bodies of Saul and of his sons, they carried them to Jabesh, while the enemy were not able enough nor bold enough to hinder them, because of their great courage. So the people of Jabesh wept all in general, and buried their bodies in the best place of their country, which was named Areurn; and they observed a public mourning for them seven days, with their wives and children, beating their breasts, and lamenting the king and his sons, without either tasting meat or drink (3) [till the evening.]

9. To this his end did Saul come, according to the prophecy of Samuel, because he disobeyed the commands of God about the Amalekites, and on the account of his destroying the family of Ahimelech the high priest, with Ahimelech himself, and the city of the high priests. Now Saul, when he had reigned eighteen years while Samuel was alive, and after his death two [and twenty], ended his life in this manner.

### **Footnotes:**

1. This history of Saul's consultation, not with a witch, as we render the Hebrew word here, but with a necromancer, as the whole history shows, is easily understood, especially if we consult the Recognitions of Clement, B. I. ch. 5. at large, and more briefly, and nearer the days of Samuel Eccclus. 46:20, "Samuel prophesied after his death, and showed the king his end, and lift up his voice from the earth in prophecy," to blot out "the wickedness of the people." Nor does the exactness of the accomplishment of this prediction, the very next day, permit us to suppose any imposition upon Saul in the present history; for as to all modern hypotheses against the natural sense of such ancient and authentic histories, I take them to be of very small value or consideration.
2. These great commendations of this necromantic woman of Endor, and of

Saul's martial courage, when yet he knew he should die in the battle, are somewhat unusual digressions in Josephus. They seem to me extracted from some speeches or declamations of his composed formerly, in the way of oratory, that lay by him, and which he thought fit to insert upon this occasion. See before on Antiq. B. I. ch. 6 sect. 8.

3. This way of speaking in Josephus, of fasting "seven days without meat or drink," is almost like that of St. Paul, Acts 27:33, "This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued fasting, having taken nothing:" and as the nature of the thing, and the impossibility of strictly fasting so long, require us here to understand both Josephus and the sacred author of this history, 1 Samuel 30:13, from whom he took it, of only fasting till the evening; so must we understand St. Paul, either that this was really the fourteenth day that they had taken nothing till the evening, or else that this was the fourteenth day of their tempestuous weather in the Adriatic Sea, as ver. 27, and that on this fourteenth day alone they had continued fasting, and had taken nothing before that evening. The mention of their long abstinence, ver. 21, inclines me to believe the former explication to be the truth, and that the case was then for a fortnight what it was here for a week, that they kept all those days entirely as lasts till the evening, but not longer. See Judges 20:26; 21:2; 1 Samuel 14:24; 2 Samuel 1:12; Antiq. B. VII. ch. 7. sect. 4.