

# **Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Lecture 20, Saul to David**

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This is Dr. Elaine Phillips in her Old Testament History, Literature and Theology course, lecture number 20.

Our Father, we do pray that your name would be exalted, be exalted in our midst, be exalted in our hearts. Father, we are thankful that you are our God.

And because of what Jesus has done, stooping down to make us great, we do indeed enjoy the tremendous blessing and benefit of salvation through Christ. Lord, as we thank you for this, we thank you for so many other blessings that you have just lavished upon us as well. We're thankful to be here.

We're thankful to have friends, fellowship, and a Christian community. We pray that we would be good members of this community, helping those who are struggling for whatever reason. We pray for your mercy and grace to be showered upon them.

We would ask that we would learn today the lessons that you would have us to learn. And as always, we would pray that you would help us to be prepared to be your servants through the planting of your word deeply in our hearts. We ask these things in Christ's name with thanksgiving. Amen.

Well, we've got to do a little bit of review as we move on to the rise of David and the fall of Saul. But before we do that, just a little bit more artwork to work on.

Obviously, we have a picture here that depicts whom? And David, right? Now, which one's David? Right. David is the hands right here with the harp. Notice how small that depiction is in contrast to Saul.

Notice the prominent thing that he's holding. It's the spear, isn't it? And, of course, we're supposed to be mindful of the stuff that you've read for today. David plays the harp to soothe Saul's spirit when the evil spirit comes upon Saul.

And yet Saul is so vexed by that evil spirit that on more than one occasion, he hurls it and hurls it in order to try and kill David. So, there is a very interesting juxtaposition here between two persons: the spirit of the Lord on David and the spirit of the Lord removed from Saul. We're going to talk about that in a moment.

These are just a couple of things to remind us of what we were doing last time—another nice little artwork to kind of stimulate us a little bit this morning. But we said, as we were talking about the life of Saul, that the two reasons that the scripture

gives for his having the kingship removed from him are, first of all, his presumptuous sacrifice at Gilgal.

He was supposed to wait till Samuel came, seven days. He didn't wait quite long enough. He had waited seven days and then offered the sacrifice.

Of course, he's not a priest or even in the line of Levi, and he was not supposed to be doing this, but he did it. And then, secondly, God had commanded that he deal fully with the Amalekites by exterminating them. And of course, he left all those best sacrifices.

That's what he said they were going to be, but it was basically the animals and so forth, and also left the king alive. For those reasons, Saul has the kingship taken away from him. We're going to pose some questions about that.

All right? First, you've read the story of David, and even if you haven't read it for today, you probably know a lot of what David did. Why are Saul's sins so much worse? How are Saul's sins so much worse than the ones that David engaged in? We won't see those much today. Friday is when we're going to get into them, but David's story is pretty well-known.

This is not a rhetorical question. I'm curious in terms of what you think. How are Saul's sins so much worse? Okay, he, you know, doesn't wait long enough to offer a sacrifice, doesn't kill everything and everybody.

What did David do? Does anybody know from Sunday school? Sarah? Well, in some way, something that has to do with those sacred offerings, yeah. Okay. Good.

Okay, so guilty of adultery and murder, guilty of adultery with Bathsheba, wiping out Uriah, her husband. Kristen? I think... What's the heart issue? I think... I don't know. I mean, like, you obviously can't know these people, but it seems that Saul's intention when he's sinning, in order to end, like, completely, like, David admitted to humanity.

And I remember, like, after, after that whole, him having adultery, like, he was very humble about it and was like, like, I need you to forgive me. And Saul was just like, no, actually, I don't need you, God. Like, it was just kind of... Okay, so you're saying there's a difference in terms of their humility and their stance before God, and they're willing to confess and so forth.

Yeah, I think we're going to end up going in that direction, but let me just push that a little bit. David, and again, we're going to see this on Friday, he doesn't confess until Samuel actually... Sorry, Nathan actually comes and nails him with what he's done wrong. Otherwise, he's in the business of covering it up.

So, it does take the prophets coming and saying, here's a parable. This is you in this parable. Again, we'll see that on Friday.

But I think you're right in indicating it has to be a heart issue. After all, God himself says he's going for a man after God's own heart. And David is indeed a man after God's own heart.

And I think we'll see it has everything to do with his humility and his ability to recognize that he is just utterly, utterly wrong once he comes around to that point. Whereas Saul does cover up a little bit and Saul, as we said last time, is pretty busy trying to make monuments in his own honor and make sure that his honor is supported in the popular approach and so forth. So I think there are some of those things.

Trevor? I feel like, in Saul's case, he's so quickly judged for his actions that he didn't even have the chance, if he were, to repent. And that way, I know it seems really strange for God to punish someone so quickly. Great point.

In other words, to put this in a nutshell, maybe there is some question that really needs to be raised here because Saul seems to get judged very quickly, and yet David does have time that God gives him to repent, and God sends him the prophet Nathan and so forth and so on to bring him about to that point where he'll repent. So you're seeing some things that still make you a little uneasy with this. All right, Chelsea? Okay, you're raising the issue of the presence of the spirit of God.

On the one hand, it seems to be an abiding presence with David, perhaps. On the other, it comes upon Saul. God also very directly takes it away.

We're going to address that issue of spirit of the Lord in a little bit. So that's forthcoming. But your point is well taken.

Anything else? One of the things... Go ahead. I'm sorry, Susanna. So even as you're reading the narratives, you're seeing that there is an ongoing, very personal relationship between God and David or David and God.

Whereas you may not see that quite so clearly, at least in the things that we're allowed to see as we see Saul's heart. The idea that Saul's heart was changed and the people are so shocked when they see Saul prophesying. You know, Saul among the prophets, et cetera, seems to be that David's heart was changed. These manifestations of the spirit for Saul are, dare I say it, temporary and not necessarily evidence of an indwelling abiding spirit.

Now, you know, I'm not here in the business of being God and judging Saul. We're not doing that. Just from reading the text, however, I think we can suggest that that might be the case.

Well, I have more to say about that later on. A couple of other questions. Once the kingdom was removed from Saul, why was God allowing Saul to be king for so long and to suffer such torment? Because he does.

I mean, there's a real paranoia going on here, and it's something that's gnawing at Saul, and you can tell it. I suspect if psychologists got a hold of him, they would really have some interesting diagnoses to suggest. And by the way, there have been some psychologists who have done some interesting work on Saul.

But why? Why years of pursuing David, chasing him all over everywhere, trying to kill him, and still clinging on to the kingdom, even though he knows, because he's going to tell Jonathan, you know, as long as you, Jonathan, are friends with David, you've got to realize that you're never going to be king and my dynasty isn't going to go on. Why do you suppose God leaves him there for that? Go ahead, Rebecca. Okay.

So, this has less to do with Saul and more to do with the preparation of David, who, as we know, is a very young person when he first comes on the scene here. Good. Yeah, Ginger.

So, it's a lesson for the broader populace who are still needing to learn that kings aren't necessarily the answer to every problem that they have, possibly. Possibly. Is it actually mercy to Saul to give him more time? Could it be that as well? These are all fine, but could we throw that in too and suggest that maybe Saul is just like the Amorites.

Remember our Amorites who have been in the land for 400 years, and God doesn't use Israel to destroy them for that whole length of time. They've got extra time. Of course, the tragedy is that they, and in this case, Saul, don't avail themselves of that.

Saul continues to, I would suggest, harden his heart right on up to the end, where he tragically takes his own life on Mount Gilboa. Well, at any rate, again, don't have all the answers to these things. How do we understand the spirit of the Lord and the evil spirit? I'm going to come back to that in a moment.

We've raised some of those already, but let me simply suggest that as we have all of these discussions, one of the things I think we have to finally come back to is that we're not in the place of defining every aspect of what God decides to do. As Walter Brueggemann says, God is untamable. Sometimes in some of these circumstances we realize that.

So why did God choose Saul as king and allow such personal and national disaster? Again, it's just something to think about. I'm not going to spend a lot of time unwinding that right now, but as you think of it from a personal standpoint, these are some really, really difficult things to wrestle with. Of course, the same kinds of questions could be moved into our spheres.

Why does God do some of these things? Why does he allow them? We only have partial answers through a veil right now. Of course, this is where our confidence and faith and trust in God and in his ultimate sovereignty and goodness need to come into play in our own hearts and minds. Well, let's carry on.

We've got a lot of things to do today. Just some stuff, of course, that you're going to want to know. David is, as we know, the tribe of Judah.

The tribe of Judah, Genesis 49 verse 10, has been the one that has been in God's sights to have the king coming from it. So that will be important. It's also important just to remind ourselves that Ruth is in this line as well.

Ruth, the Moabite woman. This will be important because there's coming a time in the stuff that you've actually read for today where David is under such stress as he's running from Saul that he actually takes his father and mother and moves them over into Moab for safekeeping for a while. And he's taking them to the home territory.

That's one of the reasons why that's the case. He's anointed by Samuel, and this is a very interesting context. If you've got your Bible, I'm actually moving back to Samuel 16 just to have a quick look at the interesting stuff that's going on here.

The Lord sends Samuel down to Bethlehem. Is Samuel entirely forthcoming at the Lord's command in terms of what he's to do? The answer is no. Because Samuel says, you know, my goodness, if Saul finds out this is going to be really awful, he's going to kill me.

And so, the Lord says, you just go and say that you're going to be making a sacrifice, making a sacrifice. Of course, that's not the whole truth. But it's the truth to preserve Samuel's life as he goes down there.

You have the whole thing set up. Jesse brings his first three sons into Samuel's presence. Then Samuel, at the Lord's instruction, says, no, that's not the right one.

That's not the right one. That's not the right one. And finally, David, who has been out as a shepherd, is brought in.

Here we have another instance of God's very clearly indicating his choice of person. Because he's the youngest. David's the youngest in this context.

Notice that chapter 16, verse 13, as David is anointed, it says, Samuel took the horn of oil, anointed him in the presence of his brothers. From that day on, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. It's the same expression that was used with some of the judges.

You know, when God had something really specific for that judge to do, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him in power, clothes him, in effect. And then he's able to do that. At the same time, the very next verse, and that's why this is such a pivotal thing, verse 14, the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord, I know your NIV says tormented him, actually fell upon him, terrified him, startled him.

Those are the right words. Something that you can just, if you use your imagination, it is really an evil spirit that is doing terrible things to twist him all inside, I would suggest. And we certainly see that happening as we see the need for Saul to have something to pacify his spirit.

Well, just a couple of thoughts in this regard, and I certainly, as I said a moment ago, don't have all the answers here. But here are a couple of suggestions in terms of this whole evil spirit from the Lord. First of all, in terms of the Spirit, capital S, if you will, God's Spirit, suggesting some purposes, indicates that Saul was chosen.

I said that a moment ago. When he first is anointed by Samuel, we're going back now to the earlier chapters. It's very clear he's prophesying, and that's indicative that he's chosen. He leads Israel to victory.

Later on, this same spirit will come back into the context. Chapter 19, you can read that on your own, actually to protect David from Saul. So even though the evil spirit is tormenting Saul, the spirit is still making him prophesy at certain points to protect him.

And then my suggestion is, and I realize this gets into some very interesting theological territory, but I think as you put all these details together, and I just got it up here, and I've already said it, that what we've got is the spirit specifically, powerfully, and temporarily manifesting himself in Saul or perhaps on Saul to get some purposes done, and some of those things are there. So, I'm not going to suggest this is an indwelling spirit. Next point: this is the tragedy, and I think this actually gets into some of our answers to the earlier question.

Saul has those two instances where we learn the kingship is removed from him, but there's an ongoing disobedience, an ongoing rebellion, an ongoing self-servingness about Saul's narrative as we read it. And therefore, in that passage I just read, the

spirit is removed. In Psalm 51, which we're going to study in about two weeks, and which you've sung in Hebrew, I realize, okay? Take not your Holy Spirit from me.

David has seen what's happened to Saul. And I would suggest that as that Psalm comes out, and of course, David is writing under the inspiration of the spirit himself, something about that experience of seeing what happened to Saul may also be what's the impetus behind his cry, his plea after he's been caught in his own sins. Because Psalm 51 is written after the situation with Bathsheba and Uriah, among others.

David knows full well that he's forfeited the presence of the spirit, and God could do that in terms of removing it. And therefore, he prays that God will not remove the spirit. Well, here's the rest of the, or I should say, the other side of the picture.

We talked about the purposes of the spirit of the Lord in the presence. We've got some mentions of this evil spirit. And again, these are hard things to think through and talk about.

But as you read each of these passages, and you see what happens to Saul as a result of his ongoing proclivities towards disobedience and rebellion, I would suggest it's part of God's judgment against Saul. Again, that's a hard thing to say, and I don't have ways to put it all together, but it seems that that might be part of what's going on. Having said that, I think we need to come back to the place in our thinking that God does use all of these things, all the things to work his good purposes, to work his good purposes on behalf of Israel, to bring David into the kingship.

We're going to talk more about the extended period of time. David will show himself to be a leader during that time and also to be one who is eminently concerned not to do anything to, as he puts it, touch the Lord's anointed. David had lots of chances in that stuff you've read for today to wipe Saul out of existence, and he refrains from doing it because he will not be one who will touch the Lord's anointed.

He also doesn't want to be accused of usurping the throne. I mean, from a very pragmatic standpoint, that's part of the picture, too. It's because Saul was tormented by the Spirit that we actually have David being brought into Saul's presence.

And so, again, in God's very good providential oversight of all this, it's one of the things, very practically speaking, that gets David into the court as opposed to being out in Bethlehem shepherding sheep because here he's brought into the court process early on. Well, what we're going to do is look through David's life in terms of the good things that happened to him, first of all, and then we'll look at the not-so-good, but remember that both of them are used, both of those categories of things are used by God in his sovereignty and his providence to make all this work together for the good. As we've just said, David is called upon to be a soothing presence.

Music therapy, if you want to think of it that way. Some of you who are music majors may be going into music therapy. It's a big thing, and lots of people can tell you all the benefits of that sort of thing.

So, he does provide music to relieve Saul's distress. Chapter 17, of course, is our David and Goliath incident, and I don't need to tell you that story, but I need to make a couple of points in regard to it. We'll look at a map in a moment and see where it takes place.

But here's the thing. When David goes out to the battle, he's actually going just to provision his brothers and check on them. And when I look at the map in a moment, I'll show you why that's so significant and why his dad would have been concerned to send him out there.

But that's basically why he's going. However, here's the lesson among the many lessons that we might derive from this. It turns out that all the things that he's been doing up till that point, you know, slinging rocks at lions and bears and shepherding sheep, have been precisely, precisely the preparation that he needed.

Precisely. Even though he probably didn't think so, and even though his brothers sort of looked down on him and said, what are you doing here? You're supposed to be back with the sheep. But God had prepared him.

So, you know, transfer that to your life. All the things that are part of your life. God will use those.

Even though some of them may not seem terribly important to you right now, years ago, when I taught at a different institution, the president of the institution gave a chapel talk one day. He was about 50-ish at the time, and he told all the jobs that he had had, and they were fairly menial jobs for a long time, and said, you know, as he was going through those, he thought, what on earth is God doing at this point? I don't see why my life is like this. I don't see where it's going.

And yet, in retrospect, as he looked back, he could point to important issues and lessons and things that God used from each one of those as they wound together into the fabric of where his life was at this point. So, you know, David's slinging rocks at sheep. He's going to kill off the worst enemy of the Israelites in the person of Goliath.

The second thing I want you to note about this story is what David says because it does say something about his character. He is fully, fully convinced that the God of Israel will do what needs to be done to rescue Israel from the Pharisees. He's fully



convinced of it, and he's also totally vexed that Goliath has basically completely derided and disdained that God.

And so that, too, in terms of his confidence, and as Kristen said earlier his hard attitude, I think that's one of the things that we learned from that. Now, there's lots more to be said about the David and Goliath incident, but we've got to move on. He's a popular warrior.

In fact, he's such a popular warrior that it really makes Saul pretty angry. This refrain comes through a number of times. The women are singing and dancing and so forth and so on, and they say, Saul has slain his thousands, David his tens of thousands, which, of course, doesn't make Saul terribly happy.

But he's popular. David is popular. As a result of this, he becomes Saul's son-in-law because Michal, Saul's daughter, falls in love with him.

In fact, this is one place in Scripture where we have a woman actually falling in love with, and the Scripture says, the man and David pays a very interesting price to get her. As you know, Saul is out to still eliminate David, and so he says, well, I would just like you to show up with 100 Philistine foreskins in your hand, and David comes with 200, and for that, he gets his bride. By the way, this is a gory time.

Did you notice, as you were reading the text, that after David kills Goliath, what does he do? He sort of marches into Saul's presence, holding the head. It's just the way things were. And he also, in this case, will march into Saul's presence with 200 Philistine foreskins.

That's not exactly the kind of thing that we think of as being, well, savory. It's pretty gruesome stuff. He's also a, if I can get this thing to go, recipient of Jonathan's friendship.

Jonathan is older than he is. If you put together the chronology of this, we've got at least half a generation, maybe a full generation between them. And yet, Jonathan, who is utterly self-sacrificing in this, Jonathan, in making his covenant with David, in affirming David, in protecting David, is basically ruining his own chances to be king.

It's at the expense of Jonathan's following Saul in the kingship that Jonathan will establish his friendship, his covenant friendship with David. We've seen hesed operative in Ruth and Naomi, hesed on a horizontal level with Boaz and Ruth and Ruth and Naomi. Here we see it between David and Jonathan.

And it's a wonderful friendship which will carry over for generations because David is going to protect Jonathan's son later on. Well, we need to keep moving on just to give ourselves a little bit of a feeling of the geography of this David and Goliath

incident. And here we've got to back up a little bit and remind ourselves of the Philistine cities.

Remember those? The ones that I said you just really want to know for an exam coming up? Right? They're out here on the seacoast. The two inner ones are Gath and Ekron. So, the Philistines belong out here.

But what does our text in 1 Samuel 17 tell us? It tells us they were encamped between Socoh and Azekah. Here's Ezekiah. They're right in this area right here.

And don't think for a moment they're not intent on making their way right up into the hill country. Here's Bethlehem. And so you can see why David's father's a little concerned about sending David out there and see what's going on.

Because if things are going to go bad for the Israelites, they're going to march right up this valley, and they're going to take that hill country, and life is going to be pretty grim. So that's why this is such a critical time. Now, let's look at it on the ground.

Here we are standing on Ezekiah. Alright? Standing on Ezekiah and looking at the Elah Valley, which runs just like this. That's the Judean hill country.

Right about over there would be Bethlehem. And Socoh is where we have the Philistine camp. It says encamped between Socoh and Azekah.

So, all the way around here. Just imagine Philistine armies. Just think of it because it says the Israelite armies are on the other side of the valley over here.

And David is going to, this is one of these stories where you can pretty much locate where it happened. Some of the others, you're guessing a little bit. This one's really pretty clear.

So, we can imagine our David and Goliath confrontation somewhere right about in there. Very interesting kinds of things. But think of the protection that this whole area is.

Our buffer zone of the Shephelah is right out here. Think of the protection it had to be between the Philistine's cosmopolitan forces on the coastal plain and our little settlements that are up in here in the hill country. Okay, carrying right along, the bad times.

Picking up the map again. What happens at Nob? I'm tired of hearing myself talk. Go ahead, Rebecca.

Right, what you've got, and actually, even before Saul gets angry at the priests, you've got David on the run, right? And he goes there, and Ahimelech is the priest, and David says, help, we're on a mission from the king. Lie. Okay, he's telling a lie.

Therefore, he gets the bread of the presence, as Sarah suggested earlier. He's got this dedicated consecrated bread and takes it. He also gets Goliath's sword and they run.

And who's there that sees it happen? A very interesting, nasty character. Sarah? Ah, not at that point. Abner's going to show up later on.

This is not even an Israelite. Anybody remember somebody or other, the Edomite? It's your garden variety name. It's a name you see all the time.

Doeg. Aren't all your friends named Doeg? D-O-E-G, right. Doeg the Edomite is an informant.

He sees David, he sees this happen, and then, to pick up on Rebecca's point, he goes and tells Saul, Saul's thoroughly vexed and basically decrees the execution of all the priests at Nob. One of them gets away. And one of them gets away carrying something very important.

What is it? Anybody know? This is going to be extremely important for David in the future, and it's going to be something that Saul doesn't have. Chelsea? Yeah, it's the ephod. And what does the ephod have in it? The breast piece, which has the urim and the thummim.

Right? And so, later on, as you start reading the text, you see and David inquired of the Lord, should I do thus and so? And there's an answer from the Lord. And then again, and David inquired of the Lord, should I go up to Caela? Yes. It's because, most likely, Abiathar, who is the one that escaped, has brought along with him the ephod that has, indeed, the means of inquiring from the Lord.

So, that's going to be a really important thing. Now, the other thing that happens in this is when Abiathar comes to him, David says, oh no, I know that I'm responsible for the deaths of those people because I saw him there, and I should have realized this would happen. So, already, David is feeling the weight of that and feeling the guilt of it as well.

David does go over to the Philistines for a little while. It's kind of a temporary thing at this point. The king is Achish, and Achish is king of Gath.

Again, keep in mind that city of Gath. It's one of the inner of the Philistine cities. At this point in time, Achish is going to say, oh, this guy's really crazy.

We don't want him around. And so, David has to run farther. He doesn't stay with the Philistines at this point.

He's going to come back to them later on. He picks up a bunch of malcontents. I've got an army in quotation marks.

It's people who are disaffected. And you can read between the lines. They're seeing Saul's stuff probably falling apart.

They know David was a popular warrior, and a good one. And so, these folks are sort of changing allegiances, and they're going to continue to add themselves to David's forces. I've got a little circle around the wilderness area where we have him spending a whole lot of time, right out in here.

If you look, it's kind of hard to see. It's hard to see for me from here, so back there is probably hopeless. Here's Maon.

Here's Carmel. Here's Zipf. Three cities that show up in this section in these chapters that we've been reading about.

Maon and Carmel especially show up in the whole narrative with Abigail. Because we have in that story a guy named Nabal, or Naval, which means what? Fool of the absolute worst kind. When we get to the book of Proverbs, we're going to talk about fools and the different Hebrew words for fools.

This is the worst one. It's the most godless, immoral, hard-hearted type. And that's his name.

Interesting contrast with his wife, who, in order to kind of placate David, will come out. And I want to read the things that she says to David when she comes out with all the provisions that her husband had refused to give to David. And by the way, David had done a favor for them.

David and his quote-unquote army had been protecting Nabal's shepherds. So David wasn't just going in there and saying, please give me some stuff or else. He's saying, please give me what you owe me for protection.

But when Abigail comes out, she has some interesting things to say. I'm starting with verse 28. The Lord will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, speaking to David, because he fights the Lord's battles.

Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live. In other words, she's telling him, don't let blood be on your hands, and innocent blood be on your hands in this

context, because God's going to make for you a dynasty. She's speaking prophetically.

Verse 29: even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master, i.e., David, will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God. Verse 31, don't let my master have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. Right away from the get-go, Abigail is described as both a beautiful and a very intelligent woman, and she shows that here in terms of the way she deals with David.

So, some interesting times taking place here for David as he's on the run from Saul. A couple of things to look at. If you look at the picture on the left, you see what might help us figure out one of the stories that takes place.

This is one of a number of wadis, steep, steep V-shaped valleys, more than V-shaped valleys that have been cut through this wilderness area. It doesn't rain out there a lot, but when it rains up in the hill country over the millions of years, you've had water cutting down these valleys. You could be walking along the path on this side and, you know, chat with somebody on that side and yet can't get to them.

Now, let me read something from chapter 26. Yeah, this is another case where David is sparing Saul's life. He's gone into the camp.

Saul's been sleeping. Abner's been sleeping. They take Saul's helmet, and they take his spear, water bottle, excuse me, and spear, and away they go.

And then, it says in verse 13 David crossed over to the other side. There was a wide space between them. He called out to the army and to Abner, son of Ner, aren't you going to answer me? And then they had this exchange back and forth.

And Abner and Saul can't get at David because there's obviously too much space in there. It would take a couple of hours to go down to the bottom and climb back up again. And yet David can, in some ways, taunt Saul and Abner especially.

So that gives us a little feeling for maybe how that narrative might unfold in its topographical context. Here, we simply have a picture of the wilderness. I think I've shown it to you before.

But this is the kind of area that David would have been running through. It's barren. There are a few places where there are water sources and springs, but by and large it's barren.

David will go from stronghold to stronghold. You probably saw that as you were working your way through the text. But most of the time, it's pretty bleak stuff out there.

Oops, went too fast on that one. Moving right along, we do have, as you look at chapter 27, Saul doing, not Saul, Achish, excuse me, Achish doing something very interesting. David finally goes back to him.

Remember I said he went there earlier, doesn't stay long, a little uneasy with it. But now having run from Saul for long enough, verse 1 of chapter 27, David thought to himself, one of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is go to the Philistines.

So, he does. But here's the interesting thing. Philistines are here.

Let me do the cities again. Do you get the impression these Philistine cities might be important to know? Good, that's brilliant. Here's Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod.

Gath, Ekron. So, there they are. And that's sort of the centerpiece.

The five Philistine cities. Granted, they're pushing their way east, they're pushing their way north, but those are the cities. What Achish does is position David in a place called Ziklag, which is right here.

And you're thinking, well, that's kind of a boring place to be. But probably not. Because what we don't know until we start studying more broadly in this area, it's through the Negev, and you see western Negev sort of being half obliterated by my white ellipse there, but it's through the western Negev that you have, for centuries, a very, very good spice trade going on.

Spices come from Saudi Arabia, from points farther east, and one of the ways you get them to the Mediterranean Sea is your camel them right through the Negev, the camel being the ship of the desert. And so, there's a very important trade route going through there, and probably what Achish is doing is appointing David to kind of oversee that as stuff is coming through here. So he's appointing David as a sheriff if you will.

Now, what does David do? It's a scheme, or a ruse, or an outright lie, if you want to be bald-faced about this. What does David do in this position? It's really politically astute. It's not particularly truthful.

Let's watch it happen. Chapter 27. Verse 6, Achish gives him Ziklag.

Verse 8, David and his men went up and raided the Gesherites, the Gerzites, and the Amalekites, and you're thinking, oh yeah? So? But what he's doing, basically, is raiding semi-nomadic and nomadic peoples down here. The Amalekites haven't been wiped out. And so they're still down here, especially in the northern Sinai, western Negev area.

And so, David is doing something to kind of push back peoples that would be making life miserable for southern Judah. Let's keep reading. Verse 9, whenever David attacked an area, he didn't leave a man or a woman alive, took sheep and cattle, donkeys and camel and cows, and then he returned to Achish.

And what does he say? Here's the thing. Achish says, where did you go raiding today? And David would say, oh, well, I went raiding against what does the next verse say? The Negev of Judah. Against the Negev of Jerachmiel, or the Negev of the Kenites.

He's telling Achish that he's been beating up on Judah people, on Jewish people. I shouldn't say Jewish is not the right term to use here on Israelites.

That's what he tells Achish. He says I've been sort of attacking my own folks. The Negev of Judah.

That's stuff that belongs to the Israelites. The southern part of the tribe of Judah. So, what he tells Achish is, hey, I'm on your side.

Don't worry. I'm taking care of those Israelites down there. And yet in reality, what he's really doing is protecting those Israelite boundaries against the semi-nomadic sorts.

Now, why is that important? Well, he's getting in good with Achish so that Achish will trust him and not be suspicious anymore. And he's also storing up political capital for himself for the future. Because what's going to be the first tribe that appoints David king? Judah.

He's king of Judah first. And that's because they have a political debt to pay. He's been good to them.

All right. Well, at any rate, we have to deal with another story, actually, in between this Amalekite business. But let me at least mention it for the time being.

When David initially sets out to go to war with the Philistines against the Israelites, which we're going to look at in a second, he leaves his family behind in Ziklag. And the Amalekites come and raid. Obviously.

I mean, because they've been attacked by David. Now they see their chance. In chapter 30, David gets back at them.

And that's the important part of this whole thing. He will take on the Amalekites, recover all the stuff the Amalekites have absconded with, and bring it back. Our purpose here is going to be to spend the next ten minutes in a very interesting narrative.

But in order to understand our very interesting narrative, we've got to see what's going on. Let's look at the map on the right first. There might be a map on this next exam.

There might be. Here, you've got Philistine cities. Got them down already? Okay, that's their territory.

When we started introducing this whole thing, one of the things I said was the Philistines have a way of going beyond their territory and making deep inroads into Israel. And when the battle moves up north, here's how it works. They go up along here.

They go through Mount Carmel. They are going to make life very miserable by cutting the four northern tribes. I think I said that last time.

The four northern tribes off from the southern tribes. So, a Philistine presence all the way through here. Now, on the map, this is Mount Moreh.

You see it in the picture on the left. This is Mount Gilboa. You see it there as well.

In between, all that valley area. As you read the story of the events working up to Saul's death, one of the things we know is that on the east side of Mount Moreh, in other words, right about here or right about there, is a little place called Endor. Does that name ring a bell from the stories you read for today? What happened at Endor? Go ahead, Susanna.

There's a witch there. Good. And what about her? Right.

And we're going to talk about the implications of what her conjuring, as you said, means in a moment. But notice what's going on here. You're absolutely right.

Saul has gone in disguise. And why has he gone in disguise? Because he has not gotten a message from the Lord. There's no word from God.

And he's desperate. Because here are the Israelites encamped on Mount Gilboa, as the text tells us. Israel and encampment there.



Philistines all across here and on Mount Moreh. Saul is so desperate for a word from the Lord that he goes behind enemy lines to get it. That's taking a real risk with that whole host of Philistines like a cloud of locusts out there.

And he sneaks behind enemy lines to get to this witch at Endor. And, of course, as she says, and as Susanna said, what's going on here? You've supposedly expelled the witches. And he has to placate her and say, don't worry.

Please do what I've asked you to do. But the map is important to have in mind because it gives us a little sense in terms of the added risk that Saul is taking at this point. And then gives us a sense in terms of how very desperate this man is as he's reaching the end of his life.

Well, let's see how it works out. Chapter 28 is the one that we really want to look at. When he gets there, I'm going to start reading because it's such a fascinating thing here.

In verse 8, Saul disguised himself by putting on other clothes. He goes to the woman, and he says, consult a spirit for me. Bring up the one I name.

And she says I can't do that. Saul swears to her, as surely as the Lord lives, you won't be punished. And the woman says, whom shall I bring up? And he says, Samuel.

And then what happens? You kind of get the impression, by virtue of her reaction to this, that all along, her witchcraft has probably been a bit of a sham. Maybe she's been fleecing everybody up until this point. Because when Samuel really appears, she's absolutely horrified.

Notice, in verse 12, when the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice. And by the way, when people cry out at the top of their voices, it's really a piercing shriek. Why have you deceived me? You're Saul.

And then the king says to her, what do you see? I'm not sure what your NIV says next, but the woman says, I see Elohim. I see Elohim coming up out of the ground. What is that? I know that the text in the NIV says, I see a spirit, but the Hebrew word is Elohim.

Do you know what that means? Gods? God? Now, she's probably not meaning to say, I saw God as an Elohim who's created the heavens and the earth, Genesis chapter 1. But that word can also be translated, in a plural sense, some very strange manifestation here, that she's probably identifying as supernatural deity in some way in her mind, probably. At any rate, so I'm not so keen with the spirit translation. It's watering it down.

I see Elohim coming up. She describes it, and Saul knows it's Samuel. And now here's the interesting thing.

Whoops, we didn't want to hit that yet. Just, I'll back it up. Samuel has a message, and it's a very, very appalling message.

Verse 16. Why do you consult me now that the Lord has turned away from you and become your enemy? It's a horrible thing to hear. The Lord has become your enemy, Samuel says to Saul.

He's done what he predicted through me. He's torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to David. Because you did not obey the Lord or carry out his wrath against the Amalekites, the Lord has done this to you today.

So, we get again a reaffirmation of something we said last time. Obedience, obedience, obedience is what God wants. Even though obedience may be very difficult at times, obedience is what God wants.

The Lord will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. And, of course, Samuel is on the other side.

Well, the battle does indeed take place. Saul's mortally wounded. He asks his armor bearer to take his life.

He won't do it. So, Saul himself will fall on his sword. Verse 7. When the Israelites across the valley and all those across the Jordan saw the Israelite army had fled and Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and fled.

The Philistines came and occupied them. Do you see what's happened here? The Philistines have pretty much made a complete devastation of what was Israel at this point. Because Israelites have fled and Philistines are occupying their own towns.

This is utter destruction and Saul has died along with it. David when he inherits the kingdom is going to have a real mess to put together. We're going to see that on Friday.

But let's keep reading. Verse 8. The next day when the Philistines came to strip the dead they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. And notice what they do to the bodies.

It's an ugly thing. They cut off his head, strip off his armor, send messengers through the land of the Philistines to proclaim the good news. Rejoicing over the deaths of the kings.

Put his armor in the temple of the Ashtorahs and fastened his body to the wall of Beit Shan. So some pretty gruesome stuff. Now, here's what's interesting.

Verse 11 of the last chapter of 1 Samuel. When the people of Jabesh-Gilead heard of what the Philistines had done to Saul they journeyed all night long to Beit Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons, and they went to Jabesh, where they burned them.

Why are the people of Jabesh-Gilead so intent on rescuing, if you will, and honoring post-mortem the bodies of Saul and Jonathan and the brothers? Why Jabesh-Gilead? Sarah? Well, let me ask it this way. How is it related to the tribe of Benjamin? Actually, if they're going across Jordan, Benjamin's not going to be there. It's going to be the tribe of; I think it's Reuben or Gad, but I'm not sure which, actually.

But it's related to the tribe of Benjamin in a very interesting way. Think back to the end of the Book of Judges, Katie. Yeah, there's a relationship there, isn't there? Right? So you've got a real concern.

They're recognizing that Saul has done something good for them, and therefore, they're going to do something good as well. And Saul had done something good for them because going back to the end of the Book of Judges, as I said, that's where some of these women were taken from to replenish the tribe of Benjamin. So, you've got kind of a long threading connection going on.

Well, the Amalekite, interestingly enough, in 2 Samuel chapter 1, a guy shows up, says he's been at the battle. David says, who are you? He says I'm an Amalekite. And he claims to have killed Saul.

Now, of course, he's probably doing that because he thinks that David is going to reward him. And yet David again, as he's been doing consistently all through this whole process, David again is going to say, I, well, he's not going to say this, but we're going to read between the lines, I don't want to have anything to do with anybody who has done away with Saul or hurt Saul or harmed Saul and his sons in any way. David doesn't want to be accused, as I said earlier, of usurping the throne.

And so therefore he's not particularly pleased with the Amalekite. Says, were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed? And then strikes him down. And then finally, the second part of the chapter kind of affirms in poetic form what I've just been saying.

David isn't rejoicing over the fall of his enemies. He doesn't do that. His enemies being, in this case, Saul.

Instead, he comes up with one of the most poignant songs there is. Your glory lies slain on your heights, O Israel. Verse 23, Saul and Jonathan, in life they were loved and gracious, in death, they were not parted, swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

Verse 25, how the mighty have fallen in battle. Jonathan lies slain on your heights. I grieve for you, Jonathan, my brother.

You were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than the love of women. How the mighty have fallen, how the weapons of war have perished.

And so David reaffirms the profound depths of that covenant love that he and Jonathan had shared. Jonathan is now dead, and David feels the pain of that deeply. That brings us to the end of the consideration of Saul. As I said, the kingdom is in shambles at this point.

Saul's kingdom that started out well has pretty much disintegrated. David's going to have to put it together, and we're going to see how that works on Friday. Have a great day.